

Wheelersburg Baptist Church 9/6/09 Brad Brandt

Matthew 4:1-11 "The Temptation of Jesus"—part three **

Main Idea: This morning, I'd like to begin with some general observations regarding Jesus' temptation in Matthew 4:1-11, and then we'll examine carefully His third temptation, as well as the outcome of His temptations.

Some observations concerning the temptation of Jesus:

1. The temptation Jesus experienced was real.
2. The temptation Jesus experienced was maximum in intensity.
3. The temptation Jesus experienced was related to His kingship.
4. The temptation Jesus experienced was instructive for us.

I. Scene #1: Consider the setting of Jesus' temptation (1-2).

II. Scene #2: Consider the specifics of Jesus' temptation (3-10).

A. The devil tempted Jesus to perform a miracle for Himself (3-4).

B. The devil tempted Jesus to prove Himself (5-7).

C. The devil tempted Jesus to promote Himself (8-10).

1. His strategy: He offered Jesus the best the world can give.

- a. The tempter seeks to entice through the senses.
- b. The tempter loves to make promises.
- c. The tempter tries to make evil appear good.

"Temptation will give oil and fuel to our lusts...It will lay the reins on the neck of a lust, and put to the sides of it, that it may rush forward like a horse into the battle. A man knows not the pride, fury, madness of a corruption, until it meet with a suitable temptation."
--John Owen, *Of Temptation*

2. His aim: He wanted Jesus to act rebelliously against God.

"Prosperity knits a man to the World. He feels that he is 'finding his place in it', while really it is finding its place in him. His increasing reputation, his widening circle of acquaintances, his sense of importance, the growing pressure of absorbing and agreeable work, build up in him a sense of being really at home in earth, which is just what we want. You will notice that the young are generally less unwilling to die than the middle-aged and the old." --The demon *Screwtape*

3. Jesus' response: He told Satan to leave and quoted Deuteronomy 6:13.

- a. The Lord commands that we worship Him.
- b. The Lord commands that we serve Him alone.

III. Scene #3: Consider the outcome of Jesus' temptation (11).

A. The devil did exactly what Jesus told him to do.

B. The angels gave Jesus exactly what He needed and deserves.

Make It Personal: We learn from the temptation of Jesus that...

1. We have a powerful enemy.
2. We have a far more powerful Savior.
3. We need the continual help of the Savior to overcome the enemy.

It's a fascinating thing to watch. Our dog Maddie, a boxer/hound mix, is one of the most focused dogs I've ever seen (and over the years I've had dogs that *weren't* focused!). For instance, when I go on my morning jog around the neighborhood, Maddie loves to run right beside me and she'll stay there without a leash as long as I continue to talk to her. "Stay, Maddie, right beside me." And typically she will...unless a cat runs in front of us. Then a battle rages in her brain—I can see it happening right before my eyes—as she contemplates, *Will I obey my master's voice, or will I follow my instincts and go after that cat?!*

One of my favorite ways to test her loyalty is to take a dog biscuit, place it on the ground right in front of her, and tell her to wait. You know she wants that biscuit, but as she hears my voice, "*Wait...wait...wait...*", she refuses to touch the treat. Not until she hears the magic word, "*Okay,*" does she reach down and take the food.

How is it that a dog with powerful instincts for food and chasing cats can resist those instincts? The key to her resistance of the temptation is to focus on her master. When her ears are attentive to her master's voice and when her eyes are locked on her master's gaze, she is able to overcome her natural tendencies and do that which pleases her master.

We're seeking to learn how to overcome temptation in our current series, and I want to highlight a lesson learned from my dog, Maddie, as we begin today. The key to overcoming temptation is to focus on the Master. As the hymnwriter put it, "Temptations lose their power, when Thou art nigh." I get into trouble when I take my eyes off of my Master, so if I'm going to withstand the powerful temptations that bombard me in this world, I need to make a conscious effort, not just to resist the temptation, but primarily to put my focus on my Master, Jesus Christ.

Quite frankly, the ability to resist is a by-product of living with a God-focus. As the psalmist put it, "How can a young man keep his way pure? By living according to your word (Ps 119:9)." And "Blessed are those who have learned to acclaim you, who walk in the light of your presence, O LORD (Ps. 89:15)." When my ears are attuned to my Master's voice and my eyes are conscious of His all-seeing gaze, then I can resist the powerful urges that would lead to sin and His displeasure.

That's why we're returning to Matthew 4 for the third time this morning. We're going to put our focus on the Savior yet again. We want to see Him as He faced what we face, for indeed, He was "tempted in all points as we are, yet was without sin (Heb. 4:15)."

There are three scenes in the account of Jesus' temptation in Matthew 4:1-11. We're given the setting of it in verses 1-2, the specific temptations in verses 3-10, and finally the outcome of His temptation in verse 11. In the past two weeks we've looked at the first two temptations. This morning, I'd like to begin with some general observations regarding Jesus' temptation, make a quick review of His first two temptations, then examine carefully His third temptation as well as the outcome of His temptations, and then conclude with a word of application.

Some observations concerning the temptation of Jesus:

1. *The temptation Jesus experienced was real.* You say, "But wasn't Jesus God? And if He was and is *God*, then how could He be tempted since James 1:13 says that "God cannot be tempted by evil"? The answer is, God can't be tempted, but Jesus Christ was God incarnate, God come in the flesh, the God-man. In His deity, temptation held no power, but He was tempted in His *humanity*. Hebrews explains, "Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil (Heb. 2:14)." And then Hebrews 2:17 adds, "For this reason he had to be made like his brothers in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people."

Jesus Christ never sinned. In fact, He could not sin for He did not inherit a sin-bent nature as we have inherited from Adam. His nature was divine for He was conceived of the *Holy Spirit* (Matt. 1:18). Jesus could not sin, yet He *had to be tempted* for He had to be made like us in every way, short of sin.

"But was it real?" you ask. "If God cannot sin, was the temptation Jesus faced *real* temptation?" Sure it was. Does a temptation have to result in sin in order for the temptation to be real? Think of it this way. Did you face any temptations this week that did *not* result in sin? Any pop up images on your computer screen that you immediately deleted? Any unkind responses to difficult people that popped into your head that never left your mouth? Were those real temptations? Sure, because even though by God's help you did not give in to the temptation, it was nonetheless *real*.

Please realize that our Savior faced *real* temptation. Indeed, Hebrews 2:18 says he "*suffered* when he was tempted." Not only was His temptation *real*, but...

2. *The temptation Jesus experienced was maximum in intensity.* The reality is, Jesus faced temptation to a qualitative degree that you and I have never faced it, for we've all fallen at some point in the temptation process. And once you fall into sin, you're no longer being tempted, for the temptation has given birth to

sin.

If we could use a "power scale" to measure the intensity of the temptations Satan throws at us, with "1" being a small temptation and "100" being the most intense temptation, here's what we'd find. We may resist a 20 or 30 but then eventually succumb to a 35 level temptation. But Jesus resisted the 20, the 30, the 70, all the way to the 100 power level of temptation. So not only was His temptation *real*, but what He endured was more intense than any temptation we've ever faced. The devil threw his most wicked darts at our Savior, and our Savior never sinned.

3. *The temptation Jesus experienced was related to His kingship.* In his Gospel account, Matthew presents Jesus as *King*. In chapter 1 he gives Jesus' genealogy, emphasizing His connection to King David (1:1 "A record of the genealogy of Jesus Christ the son of David, the son of Abraham"). And the angel announced what kind of king He would be in Matthew 1:21, "She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins." In Matthew 2 Matthew records the question that the magi asked King Herod when they arrived in Jerusalem, "Where is the one who has been born *king* of the Jews (2:2)?" Matthew 3 begins with John the Baptist announcing, "Repent, for the *kingdom* of heaven is near (3:2)."

So Matthew makes it clear that Jesus, then, is king. But what kind of king is He? He's a king who spent the first thirty years of His life in obscurity in Nazareth, and then He launched His ministry by being baptized in the Jordan River. And what's the first activity that King Jesus undertook following the divine announcement, "This is my Son, whom I love"? He begins His work by going into the desert to face temptation.

Why would He do that? What's the connection between His temptation and His kingship? At the very outset of His ministry, His temptation reveals what kind of king He is. Yes, He's a king who will reclaim and rule His universe, but that won't happen until His second coming. King Jesus came to earth the first time to rescue His people from their sins. And how did He rescue His people from their sins? He did so, first, by facing the very temptations to sin that His people face, in Matthew 4 and throughout His life. King Jesus faced temptation and never sinned. Then He concluded His earthly mission by enduring the consequences of sin on the cross, not for His sins, for He had none; He took the consequences of the sins of His people, dying in their place. And then, three days later He demonstrated His victory over sin, death, and the devil by rising from the dead.

Never forget that, friends. That's who we're seeing out there in the desert facing temptation. It's the King of kings who willingly humbled Himself to rescue His subjects.

By the way, we wouldn't even know what happened out in that desert had not Jesus later made it known. No one else saw this event, just Jesus and the devil were there. So Jesus must have shared the details of these three temptations with His apostles, or at least with Matthew who later, as directed by the Holy Spirit, recorded them in His Gospel. Why would Jesus want us to know about His temptation experience? For several reasons, some of which we've just mentioned. But here's another...

4. *The temptation Jesus experienced was instructive for us.* We have a King who faced what we face, and by His example He showed us how to respond when the enemy comes our way. What are some of the lessons He teaches us here regarding temptation? One, we should expect it, and especially when we are launching a new ministry for God. Two, we should expect temptation to come in a variety of packages, for Jesus was tempted not once, but three times and in three different ways. Three, we should expect the tempter to hit us where we are weakest. Four, we should expect the tempter to hit us where we think we are strongest. Where we're strong may well be where we are quite vulnerable. And five, when we are tempted, we must use the Scriptures to assess the temptation and then to respond to it.

Paul offered this commentary on how to stand against the wiles of the devil in Ephesians 6:10-11, "Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes." Suppose you're a soldier on guard duty, and one night you spot a hundred enemy soldiers approaching to attack. What do you do? You don't run out and attack the enemy all by yourself. Instead, you inform your commander of the danger because he has the power to do something about the enemy, and you yourself don't. Brothers and sisters, we have an enemy is one

hundred times, one *million* times, stronger than we are, and we are *not* told to be strong in ourselves. We commanded to be strong *in the Lord* and in *His mighty power*, for He is infinitely more powerful than our enemy, a fact which He demonstrated for us clearly in Matthew 4. So let's look again...

I. Scene #1: Consider the setting of Jesus' temptation (1-2).

Verse 1— "Then [right after His baptism] Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil." Notice that the Holy Spirit led Jesus to the place where He would be tempted. God is not the author of temptation, but He is in control of when and where His children face it. The actual temptation came from the devil, the renegade angel who once tried to usurp the place of God, and now does all he can to get at God through His people.

The devil is quite timely in his attack, as verse 2 indicates, "After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry." Humanly speaking, Jesus is vulnerable. I've never gone forty days without food. I can only imagine the physical weakness our Savior was experiencing after nearly six weeks without a meal. And that's precisely when the evil one attacked.

II. Scene #2: Consider the specifics of Jesus' temptation (3-10).

In the first temptation...

A. The devil tempted Jesus to perform a miracle for Himself (3-4). In verse 3, "The tempter came to him and said, 'If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread.'" Notice the tempter's strategy. *He appealed to a legitimate need.* A hungry man needs food, and unless he gets it, he could die. The question is, what is he willing to do to meet that need? Would he be willing to meet that legitimate need in an illegitimate way?

Watch the devil here. He seeks to entice Jesus to make His own food, to turn stones into bread. What's the tempter's aim? *He wanted Jesus to act independently of God*, to meet His needs in ways His Father had not authorized.

How did Jesus handle this temptation? Verse 4—"Jesus answered, 'It is written: 'Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"" Jesus quoted Deuteronomy 8:3, and in so doing He made four things quite clear. One, there is something more important than bread. Two, He wasn't going to use His power for personal gain. Three, He wasn't going to act independently of God. And four, He was going to live by God's Word, for that's the kind of life that pleases God, a Bible-directed life, for a God-pleasing life is a Bible-directed life.

In the first temptation the devil goes after the urges of the flesh. It's one of the tempter's favorite tactics in our day, too. The devil knows that we humans have desires for fleshly things, and by God's design. We desire food, drink, rest, exercise, sex, recreation, and so on. Nothing inherently wrong with any of those desires, for they are God-given. The problem is when we seek to fulfill those desires in ways or in degrees that violate God's revealed standard, and hence displease God. Jesus refused to do that.

Let's apply His example to our own lives. It's almost impossible to watch a television *commercial*, let alone a television program, without being bombarded by sexual temptation. Sex itself isn't the problem, for again, sex is a God-created, good gift to mankind to be enjoyed by a husband and wife within the bond of marriage. That's how God intends for legitimate sexual desires to be satisfied. But the tempter wants us to seek to satisfy legitimate physical desires in illegitimate ways, and in so doing, to dishonor God by our rebellious thoughts or actions.

Screwtape explains it well. Screwtape, of course, is the fictional demon in C. S. Lewis' classic, *The Screwtape Letters*, who wrote a series of letters to his junior demon in training, Wormwood, about how to tempt a human being to sin. Listen carefully to what he had to say about the demonic strategy in the use of sexual temptation:

It is the business of these great masters to produce in every age a general misdirection of what may

be called sexual "taste". This they do by working through the small circle of popular artists, dressmakers, actresses and advertisers who determine the fashionable type. The aim is to guide each sex away from those members of the other with whom spiritually helpful, happy, and fertile marriages are most likely. Thus we have now for many centuries triumphed over nature to the extent of making certain secondary characteristics of the male (such as the beard) disagreeable to nearly all the females—and there is more in that than you might suppose. As regards the male taste we have varied a good deal. At one time we have directed it to the statuesque and aristocratic type of beauty, mixing men's vanity with their desires and encouraging the race to breed chiefly from the most arrogant and prodigal women. At another, we have selected an exaggeratedly feminine type, faint and languishing, so that folly and cowardice, and all the general falseness and littleness of mind which go with them, shall be at a premium. At present we are on the opposite tack. The age of jazz has succeeded the age of the waltz, and we now teach men to like women whose bodies are scarcely distinguishable from those of boys. Since this is a kind of beauty even more transitory than most, we thus aggravate the female's chronic horror of growing old (with many excellent results) and render her less willing and less able to bear children. And that is not all. We have engineered a great increase in the licence which society allows to the representation of the apparent nude (not the real nude) in art, and its exhibition on the stage or the bathing beach. It is all a fake, of course; the figures in the popular art are falsely drawn; the real women in bathing suits or tights are actually pinched in and propped up to make them appear firmer and more slender and more boyish than nature allows a full-grown woman to be. Yet at the same time, the modern world is taught to believe that it is being "frank" and "healthy" and getting back to nature. As a result we are more and more directing the desires of men to something which does not exist—making the rôle of the eye in sexuality more and more important and at the same time making its demands more and more impossible. What follows you can easily forecast!

Men and women, that's the devil's aim. He entices us to satisfy our God-given desires in illegitimate ways, and we must refuse to do so. Paul told the Corinthians to *flee from sexual immorality* (1 Cor. 6:18), and if we're going to resist temptation in our day we're going to have to do a lot of fleeing. Don't buy the tempter's lie. Flee!

In the second temptation...

B. The devil tempted Jesus to prove Himself (5-7). Verses 5-6 "Then the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. 'If you are the Son of God,' he said, 'throw yourself down. For it is written: 'He will command his angels concerning you, and they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.'"

Watch how the devil used religion in this temptation. He used three legitimate, God-given objects in his attempt to get Jesus to dishonor His Father. He took Jesus to the House of God. He quoted from the Word of God, specifically, from Psalm 91:11-12. He talked about the angels of God. What's he doing? He's using religion to cover up his deadly intent.

And why would he do that? He wants Jesus to act presumptuously towards God. If you are the Son of God—and You are, remember, that's what the voice said—then throw Yourself down and take God at His Word. Show the crowd down there that you're a person who really believes the Bible, and let God above see that here's a Son who doesn't just say He believes His Father but *shows* it.

This was quite a temptation for Jesus, more than we might realize at first. Jesus later made this statement in Luke 24:44, "Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms." Notice that Jesus said that everything written in the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms, was written *about Him*, and that everything written about Him had to be *fulfilled*. Do you see the subtlety of this second temptation? "Jesus, it all points to You, and that includes Psalm 91:11-12. And it all has to be fulfilled by You, including Psalm 91:11-12. So why not *now*?"

Good question. Why not now? The answer is, yes, Jesus would fulfill this psalm, but not now, and not in this way. To do so now and in this way would be to test His Father, not trust Him, and that's something Jesus would never do. Oh how the devil loves to use religion to get us to act presumptuously towards God!

Watch Jesus' response in verse 7, "Jesus answered him, 'It is also written: 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'" Jesus quoted from Deuteronomy 6:16, and in so doing He made it perfectly clear that He would not fulfill one verse if it meant violating another. Specifically, He would not use His position to justify self-focused action, which meant He would not jump off the temple to prove His deity. He would not force His Father to send the angels. To the contrary, He would deny Himself, and not just this day, but all the way to the cross. In the words of Philippians 2, "Who being in very nature God...made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant." Servants don't make demands. They serve. And that's what Jesus came to do.

And we are His people. We're servants of The Servant. Do we look like it? Do we resemble Him? Beloved, why then is there so much fighting amongst the people of God? Why are the divorce rates virtually the same for Christians and non-Christians in America? Why are churches splitting and tarnishing our Savior's reputation? If we are servants, why do we get so ruffled when we don't get our way? It's because we've been listening to the tempter.

In the first temptation, the devil tried to get Jesus to perform a miracle for Himself; in the second, to prove Himself; in the third...

C. The devil tempted Jesus to promote Himself (8-10). Verses 8-9, "Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. 'All this I will give you,' he said, 'if you will bow down and worship me.'"

Notice the strategy of the tempter in this third temptation...

1. *His strategy: He offered Jesus the best the world can give. Watch him at work. First...*

a. The tempter seeks to entice through the senses. He took Jesus to a high mountain and showed Him two things: 1) all the kingdoms of the world (Rome? the Han dynasty in China? The Parthian empire? Others?), and 2) The splendor (lit. the 'glory') of those kingdoms. The devil *showed* Jesus all this, for the devil loves to entice through the human senses.

b. The tempter loves to make promises. "I'll give it all to You, Jesus." In Luke's parallel account the devil adds, "For it has been given to me, and I can give it to anyone I want to (Luke 4:6)." Is that true? Remember, the devil is a liar, so if he says he's giving you a good gift, you can be sure there's something he's *not* telling you. Like in this case, what's going to happen to those kingdoms, namely, they're going to be destroyed. Who wants a bunch of kingdoms that are all going to be destroyed in the end?

c. The tempter tries to make evil appear good. The verbs "bow down" and "worship" are in the aorist tense, indicating the devil is asking for just one simple act. *I'll give it all to You, Jesus, and all You'll have to do is bow Your knee to me once, just once.*

That's how the tempter works, my friends. He seeks to entice us through our senses. He makes promises without informing us of consequences. And he loves to make evil appear good.

Bruner explains, "The third temptation is the temptation to make our work God. This is the most powerful and subtle of all temptations. Jesus' work as Messiah was to win the world. His work can now be successfully accomplished if he will just bow one knee."

Then Bruner adds, "It is very difficult for serious Christians to distinguish between (1) their work for God and (2) God. We are constantly tempted to think that if one succeeds the other succeeds as well; and if one is defeated the other is defeated. Therefore we will sometimes do absolutely anything to keep our work for God from failing. But the moment we do *absolutely anything* to keep our work for God from failing we have made our work God and, perhaps without realizing it, we have worshiped Satan."

I'm a pastor, and I must confess Bruner has been reading my mail. I want my work for God to succeed. I want to make disciples of Christ locally and worldwide. I want to see people saved in this community, and I want to see this church grow. And I want to see the ministries of this church flourish and new ministries

established and missionaries sent to the world. I want to reach the world for Christ!

But Bruner is right. I'm prone at times to confuse my work for God *with* God.

Do you know where you're vulnerable? Maybe for you it's your work as a parent. God gave you the task of raising those children for Him, but you've made your work for God *your* God, so that you justify missing the corporate worship of God because you're spending time with your kids.

Or maybe your work is your work, your *job* I mean. God gave you a job, and you work hard at it. That's good. But you're tempted to give your job a higher place in your life than the One who gave you your job.

That's how temptation works, my friends. A temptation from *without* reveals what's *within*. As the Puritan, John Owen, pointed out 350 years ago, "Temptation will give oil and fuel to our lusts... It will lay the reins on the neck of a lust, and put to the sides of it, that it may rush forward like a horse into the battle. A man knows not the pride, fury, madness of a corruption, until it meet with a suitable temptation."

What was the devil after in this third temptation? Simply stated, this...

2. His aim: He wanted Jesus to act rebelliously against God. Oh, he didn't put it that way, but that's what it boils down to. The devil is offering Jesus a shortcut. You want the world, Jesus. I know that's why You've come to earth. Okay, I'll give it to You, without a fight, too. Just give me a little respect. That's all I've ever wanted.

The devil is trying to entice Jesus to achieve His messianic work of winning the world without going to the cross.

Peter later made a similar suggestion. It happened right after Jesus told the disciples He was going to go to Jerusalem, would suffer many things, be killed, and then raised to life on the third day. Peter took Jesus aside and began to rebuke Him, saying (Matt. 16:22), "Never, Lord! This shall never happen to you!" Do you recall Jesus' response? Matthew 16:23 states, "Jesus turned and said to Peter, 'Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men.'" Jesus recognized the source of Peter's proposal for a cross-less Messiah, for He'd heard it before in the wilderness. *Get behind me, Satan!*

By the way, I used to think that as I got older, the attraction of the world would lessen. But that's not the case. When I was a teenager, I remember thinking a lot about heaven. But now in my mid-life years, I must confess I find myself thinking a lot about keeping what I've got in this world. When I was seventeen, I could care less about the stock market, or how the economy was affecting my standard of living. But a taste of prosperity has changed that. Listen to the demon Screwtape again:

Prosperity knits a man to the World. He feels that he is 'finding his place in it', while really it is finding its place in him. His increasing reputation, his widening circle of acquaintances, his sense of importance, the growing pressure of absorbing and agreeable work, build up in him a sense of being really at home in earth, which is just what we want. You will notice that the young are generally less unwilling to die than the middle-aged and the old.

Beloved, the devil is more than willing to give us the world if that's what it takes to bump God to second place in our lives. "All this I'll give to you, if only..." But Jesus, of course, saw right through the devil's tactics. His response?

3. Jesus' response: He told Satan to leave and quoted Deuteronomy 6:13. Notice verse 10, "Jesus said to him, 'Away from me, Satan! For it is written: 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.'" Satan, you offer Me the kingdoms of the world, but you can take your offer with you as you leave My presence. And here's why.

a. The Lord commands that we worship Him. This is Fundamentals of Living 101. The God who created us commands that we worship Him. Life is to be about Him, and when life is about Him, life will be

all that He intended it to be for us. We are to put Him at the center of every decision, every action, every relationship, every investment, every dollar spent, every second lived. He commands us to worship Him. Furthermore...

b. The Lord commands that we serve Him alone. You cannot serve two masters, Jesus would later say (Matt. 6:24). So settle the issue and choose to serve Him and Him *alone*. So ended the third temptation.

III. Scene #3: Consider the outcome of Jesus' temptation (11).

Verse 11 says, "Then the devil left him, and angels came and attended him." Two things happened at this point. One...

A. The devil did exactly what Jesus told him to do. Jesus said, "Get away from Me!" And the devil left Him. Oh, he'll be back, and in fact, Luke 4:13 says he left "until an opportune time." Nonetheless, such is the power of Jesus' word when He speaks. What He says is what happens, and when He tells the devil to leave, the devil leaves.

At that moment something else happened...

B. The angels gave Jesus exactly what He needed and deserves. The text says they "attended" Him, a term that often means "to serve food" (8:15; 25:44; 27:55). Isn't that interesting? The devil tempted Jesus to turn stones into bread, but He refused, and then tempted Him to throw Himself into the arms of angels, but again He refused, and then tempted Him to bypass the cross for immediate recognition as a King, but once again He refused. Now, though He didn't ask for either bread or angels or kingly recognition, His Father sends all three to Him. The angels now show up and give Him the help He needs and rightfully deserves, attending to Him as servants to a King.

Make It Personal: We learn from the temptation of Jesus that three things are true...

1. *We have a powerful enemy.* 1 Peter 5:8 says he's prowling around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. It's the truth, beloved. We have a powerful enemy.

2. *We have a far more powerful Savior.* We've seen a taste of His power in Matthew 4, but He's just getting started. He's going to do miracles at the end of Matthew 4, including healing the diseased and setting free the demon-possessed. And He's going to deliver a powerful message we call the Sermon on the Mount in chapters 5-7 and conclude it by calling on people to believe His words and put them in practice. He's going to calm the storm in chapter 8, and give sight to a blind man in chapter 9. And it's all going to climax when He rides into Jerusalem on a colt in chapter 21, and goes to the cross in chapter 27, and leaves His tomb in chapter 28.

My friend, yes, we have a powerful enemy. But we have a far more powerful Savior! He's the King of kings who came to save His people from sin, death, and the devil.

3. *We need the continual help of the Savior to overcome the enemy.* This is the key to overcoming temptation, brothers and sisters. We need what God has graciously offered to us, the *continual help* of the ever-present Savior!

"What should I do?" you ask. "How can I experience the Savior's help so I can overcome temptation this week?" There's a song that answers the question, an old song in fact. Back in 1868 Horatio Palmer gave this counsel in a song entitled, "*Yield Not to Temptation.*"

Yield not to temptation, for yielding is sin;
Each victory will help you some other to win;
Fight manfully onward, dark passions subdue,
Look ever to Jesus, He'll carry you through.

Shun evil companions, bad language disdain,

God's Name hold in reverence, nor take it in vain;
Be thoughtful and earnest, kindhearted and true,
Look ever to Jesus, He'll carry you through.

To him that o'ercometh, God giveth a crown;
Through faith we shall conquer, though often cast down;
He Who is our Savior our strength will renew;
Look ever to Jesus, He'll carry you through.

Refrain

*Ask the Savior to help you,
Comfort, strengthen and keep you;
He is willing to aid you,
He will carry you through.*