

Sunday, February 21, 2021 pm

THE SCRIPTURES JESUS USED WHEN TEMPTED

Matthew 4:1-11

From time to time we have been gleaning some lessons from the Old Testament. For the most part, that has been my focus on the 3rd Sunday evening of the month. This month, I would like to continue to do this but with a little different approach. In this lesson I want us to consider how Jesus answered Satan when He was tempted.

I. Jesus, an example in dealing with temptation

- a. From time to time we address temptation in lessons. And it is something we need to consider. Temptation is where sin begins. If we can master temptation, we can overcome or resist sins. And there are many things we can notice about temptation –
 - i. 1 Corinthians 10:13 – there is no temptation we face that we cannot overcome,
 - ii. James 1:12-14 -God tempts no one. We can overcome temptation, etc.
- b. And of course, there is the example of Jesus. Matthew 4:1-11. Concerning this we note:
 - i. We note this was at a vulnerable period in His life – He had just spent 40 days and nights in the wilderness fasting, without food (Luke 4:2 says “He ate nothing”)
 - ii. Jesus was tempted 3 times and in 3 areas. We typically note that these are the 3 areas through which all temptations come – 1 John 2:15-16
Jesus was tempted in all points and yet without sin – Hebrews 4:15-16.
 - iii. Jesus used scripture to overcome the temptations of Satan on that occasion. We often notice that Jesus quoted passages from Deuteronomy 6:13, 16 & 8:3. And then we might observe that when we are tempted, we can use scripture to help us deal with temptation.

II. What Jesus said when tempted

- a. The above points about temptation, and even the temptation of Jesus are extremely helpful points. But in this lesson, I want to dig a little deeper. I want us to take a look at exactly what Jesus said in His responses to Satan. We want to see how these answers help us deal with temptation and then make some final observations.
- b. READ Mathew 4:1-11
- c. ***Temptation 1 – Satan tells Jesus to make bread from stones sinch He is so hungry. Jesus replies, “It is written” - Man shall not live by bread alone –***
 - i. Context – Taken from ***Deuteronomy 8:3***
 1. NOTE: Deuteronomy is Moses recounting the law and their wanderings as he prepares to die and they prepare to enter the Promised land. It is a book filled with commands to keep obeying God and the promises should they do that (and promises if they fail).
 2. See Deut. 8:1-4. The point: While in the wilderness, God provided for Israel. In particular he gave them food on a daily basis. It was the manna which was an unknown food prior to that. Provided daily to Israel in a barren land. Moses also noted in vs. 4 that their garments did not wear out.
It demonstrated that God had the power to sustain and protect them.
 3. In the text, we have a reminder to keep EVERY commandment of God (that belongs to you).
In so doing, God could provide and sustain. IF he did it miraculously while in the wilderness (with the manna), then He could sustain them in whatever way was needed. This was about trusting Him to provide for them.

4. "But by every word" – to please God and fully trust Him, Israel needed to abide by His laws. That was the emphasis of Deuteronomy.
People often want to emphasize the promises of blessing that God made to Israel, and He did. BUT they were conditional – He also pronounced curses if they rejected Him. Deuteronomy 28 describes some of the blessings and then the cursing if they rejected Him.
NOTE: Why must God's law come first? Because He HAS the power to bless! But He DEMANDED obedience! And still does!
 5. Jesus in answering Satan with this text was saying, I will trust God to provide for Me HIS way!
- ii. Lesson for us – Do we really trust God over material things, INCLUDING necessities? That was one of the points Jesus made in the Sermon on the Mount, as He addressed the subject of worry in Matthew 6:24-34. This is a hard saying, especially in a prosperous society like ours.
 - iii. Lesson – Do we truly live by "every word that proceeds from the mouth of the LORD"? Or do we pick and choose which ones to live by? 2 Peter 1:3 tells us we have "all things that pertain to life and godliness"; 2 Timothy 3:16-17 – that which God has given us through His word is able to make us complete.
Incidentally, WHEN we obey God's word, we are not looking for a divine handout, especially in matters where we have responsibilities (cf. 2 Thessalonians 3:10-11).
 - iv. A key element in overcoming temptations is giving God the place He deserves in our lives.
How often do we give into temptations because it becomes about US more than Him?
- d. ***Temptation 2 – Satan takes Jesus to the pinnacle of the temple, and encourages Him to cast Himself down. Satan quotes scripture from Psalm 91:11-12 noting that God would deliver Him. Jesus said, "You shall not tempt the Lord your God" –***
- i. Context – Taken from ***Deuteronomy. 6:16***. In this context (which also applies to the next temptation) beginning in vs. 1, Moses calls for Israel to keep the commandment (which will be to "love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your strength" (vs. 4-5). They were to diligently teach this to their children formally and informally (vs. 6-9).
Then, beginning with vs. 10, we read (through vs. 19) that as they inherited the land and began to live in prosperity, they were warned to NOT forget the LORD, and they were NOT to go after other gods.
 - ii. IF they did, the anger of the LORD would be against them even to destroy them. And then we read, "You shall not tempt the LORD your God, as you tempted Him in Massah." Recorded in Exodus 17:1-7, Massah was reference to a time when God provided water for Israel by commanding Moses to strike a rock on their way to Sinai. They had been complaining (again) and demanding water. Moses explicitly rebukes them saying "*Why do you contend with me? Why do you tempt the LORD?*" (vs. 2) Vs. 7 notes that they called the place, "Massah" (tempted) and "Meribah" (contend).
 - iii. Moses was warning the people to quit putting God to the test. The types of testing referenced here shows both ingratitude and rebellion. This would like one trying to "push someone's button" to see how far they can go. Such would CONTINUE to be the character of Israel and Judah all throughout their history.
 - iv. Jesus, replying to Satan was saying, I am not going to test God like that. This showed His trust in the Father, that He would sustain Him as He promised. This is a great illustration of faith!
 - v. Bonus – Satan quoted from Psalm 91:11-12. Context – Psalm 91 is a psalm of trust in God. It is simply about one who is faithful to God and acknowledging that God can deliver.

In this psalm we also read in vs. 14 that the psalmist loves the LORD, and knows His name – IOW, He is faithfully following the LORD.

This psalm is NOT about someone testing God (i.e. “pushing His buttons”) to see if He will deliver him.

- vi. Lesson – Are we trying to tempt God by flirting with things that tempt us? How many go places, do things, say things, FAIL to obey Him and then expect Him to bail them out? You do NOT run toward the sinful behaviors you are struggling with and then expect God to save you.
 - vii. Lesson – Are we truly satisfied (content) with what He has given us? Recall Paul in Philippians 4:11-12 where Paul had learned to be content.
 - viii. If you want to overcome temptation, REMOVE whatever you can that tempts you. It will NOT completely eliminate temptation from your life, but it will surely make it easier.
 - ix. Lesson – don’t let Satan lie to you (don’t lie to yourself), and tell you that you will be ok, or that you can handle it, etc.
- e. Temptation 3 - You shall worship the Lord your God only – Satan takes Jesus upon a high mountain and shows Him all the kingdoms of the world. Offers them to Him if he simply bows down to worship him. Jesus of course rejects this too, declaring, “You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only you shall serve.”**
- i. Satan was offering Jesus an easy way for Himself. It was also a selfish way that would leave us without hope.
 - ii. Jesus quotes Deuteronomy 6:13, where most versions say, *“You shall fear the LORD your God and serve Him.”* Note: The original, including the LXX uses the word *fear*. It was a warning to Israel that they must FEAR GOD and let that keep them faithful. The context was about Israel going into the land, forgetting about God and going after the idols of the land around them. Moses is simply giving a strong warning, DON’T DO THAT! In Matthew 4:10 Jesus changed the word “fear” to “worship”. They are different Greek words, but consider that what Jesus was doing was MAKING APPLICATION to the situation. Satan was talking about worshipping Him, Jesus said NO, you FEAR God ONLY and in so doing your worship will be directed TOWARD Him ONLY. Consider Hebrews 12:28-29, *Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. For our God is a consuming fire.*
 - iii. Lesson – is God really first in my life? Are there idols that I am struggling with? ***if so, no wonder I am so easily tempted in those areas.*** James 4:1-4 was a rebuke because they lusted for what they wanted, rather than what God wanted. Friendship with the world is enmity with God.
1 John 5:21 concludes succinctly, “Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen.”
- f. So here we have the temptations of Jesus and HOW He used scripture to answer them.

III. Final observations

- a. Romans 15:4 – whatever things were written before were written for our learning. We learn in this the TRUE blessing of studying the Old Testament. This is a great example of how devoting time to the Old Testament can open up the New Testament as you seek to apply it.
- b. Do not forget the context in which an Old Testament statement is made in the New Testament. Sometimes, a single statement is made, while the entire context is intended. That was a method of teaching. Some believe that Psalm 22:1 was what Jesus quoted on the cross intending them to understand that the whole thing was being fulfilled in Him.
Do not forget the brevity of the gospels. We have sermons that likely lasted an hour or more, but the condensed version we read takes about 5-10 minutes.

- c. Finally, we find here HOW to use scripture to give us some real answers to help us in dealing with our temptations. Its not just about reading scripture, though that is certainly something we must do, rather it is about learning it and applying it (Matthew 7:21). So in that sense, the lesson IS about how we deal with temptations.

We learn so much from Jesus, both His teachings and example. Here we find that in dealing with temptations, He again is the example to follow. You may be struggling with something in your life right now. Turn to Him and His word and let that guide you as you deal with whatever it is. Hebrews 2:18 tells us, *For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted.* How are you dealing with temptations? Think about it!