

# Matthew 4:1-11 – Jesus tested in the wilderness

## Sunday, 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2026

One commentator has written:

Jesus was tempted so that every creature in heaven, on earth, or under the earth, might know that Jesus Christ is the conqueror. He exposed satan and his tactics, and He defeated satan. Because of His victory we can have victory over the tempter.

As we share today, let us remember and take encouragement from Jesus' victory, which in turn can become our victory if we trust in God.

1. What is your 'food' weakness and why? If it's not food, what is your weakness?

**Read: Matthew 4: 1-4**

*Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. <sup>2</sup>After fasting for forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. <sup>3</sup>The tempter came to him and said, 'If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread.'*

*<sup>4</sup>Jesus answered, 'It is written: "Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God."'*

2. The heading for this reading in the NIV translation is: 'Jesus tested in the wilderness'. Other translations use tempted.

- a. Is there is a difference between being 'tempted' and being 'tested'?
- b. Are either of these reading helpful / why?

***1 Corinthians 10:13 No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it.***

***1 Peter 1:7 These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith – of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire – may result in praise, glory and honour when Jesus Christ is revealed.***

3. Jesus had the power to meet his own need (he could have turned the stones in to bread – in Matthew 14 & 15 we read of Jesus’ miracles in feeding the 5,000 and the 4,000), but recognised he needed to be dependent on God.
  - a. How often do we take matters into our own hands, using our own resources, to meet our own needs?
  - b. How can we become FROG’s (Fully Reliant On God). What stops us making that leap of faith?
  - c. On a scale of 1 to 10 (10 being fully FROG) how impatient are we in waiting for God.
4. We all have gifts and abilities. How do we live with the tension of using them for our own gain or using them to help others?
5. When tempted/tested, Jesus quotes Scripture – Deuteronomy 8:3

*<sup>3</sup> He humbled you, causing you to hunger and then feeding you with manna, which neither you nor your ancestors had known, to teach you that man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord.*

- a. How important is it to know scripture to help us through difficult times?
- b. If it is important, how can we improve our knowledge of scripture?
- c. Can we recite scripture passages – if not, may be the lyrics of a song/hymn – that help us in difficult situations.

**Read: Matthew 4: 5-7**

*<sup>5</sup> Then the devil took him to the holy city and set him on the highest point of the temple. <sup>6</sup> ‘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.”*

*<sup>7</sup> Jesus answered him, ‘It is also written: “Do not put the Lord your God to the test.”’*

6. Today there appears to be a culture of mistrust ... doctors, teachers, politicians, church leaders, solicitors, mechanics, builders. Which of these do we trust/mistrust and why?

7. When we pray, we need to be careful to pray prayers of faith and not prayers used to test God's providential care. If we trust in God, there is no need to test Him – the devil's suggestion was of an artificially created crisis, not of trusting God in the situations which result from obedient service. How do we pray? Share some of your 'top prayer tips' to encourage the group.
  
8. In this section of our reading the devil quotes scripture (Psalm 91:11-12) but Jesus responds by quoting from Deuteronomy 6:16. When misquoted or taken out of context the Bible can be used to justify/excuse many things.
  - a. Historically, in what ways have Scripture been misquoted to justify unacceptable activities/action?
  - b. Have you experienced the misquoting of Scripture i.e. because of your gender, race, sexuality.
  - c. Read 2 Timothy 3:16-17 & Hebrews 4:12

*<sup>16</sup> All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, <sup>17</sup> so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.*

*<sup>12</sup> For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.*

How important is it to 'handle' the scripture carefully and respectfully.

9. Jesus says in: John 6: <sup>35</sup> *Then Jesus declared, 'I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.'* In what ways can we remain 'spiritually' hungry and thirsty and not be 'bloated' on physical food, drink and activity?

**Read: Matthew 4: 8-10**

<sup>8</sup> *Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendour. <sup>9</sup> 'All this I will give you,' he said, 'if you will bow down and worship me.'*

<sup>10</sup> *Jesus said to him, 'Away from me, Satan! For it is written: "Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only."'*

10. What's your favourite short cut – either in a journey or when making something.

11. Satan offers Jesus a shortcut to power without the pain of the cross. In Romans 1:25 we read:

*<sup>25</sup> They exchanged the truth about God for a lie, and worshipped and served created things rather than the Creator – who is for ever praised. Amen.*

- a. In what ways might we compromise our faith?
- b. Jesus quotes Deuteronomy 6:13, that we should, 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.' What 'idols' are we susceptible to worshipping and why?

12. Jesus was encouraged to compromise his loyalty. In our lives, what might encourage us to compromise our loyalty to God and why?

13. What are the non-negotiables and what can be compromised in our faith?

Read: Matthew 4: 11 & Luke 4:13

*<sup>11</sup> Then the devil left him, and angels came and attended him.*

*<sup>13</sup> When the devil had finished all this tempting, he left him until an opportune time.*

14. Whilst the devil left Jesus, the devil was still on the 'prowl'. This is what it says in 1 Peter 5:8-9:

*<sup>8</sup> Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. <sup>9</sup> Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that the family of believers throughout the world is undergoing the same kind of sufferings.*

We need to be 'alert', of 'sober mind', to 'resist' and 'stand firm'. How are you doing?

15. '*The angels came and attended him*'. Spend a moment in silence and allow 'the angels' to attend you today.