

Week 4

Matthew series: Jesus revealed

Matthew 4: from temptation to ministry

John 21:25 “Jesus did many other things as well. If every one of them were written down, I suppose that even the whole world would not have room for the books that would be written.”

No kidding John! There have been thousands and thousands of book, papers, and articles written on the Temptation of Christ. We have controversial movies. Seemingly every temptation of Jesus has to be sexual, yet in the actual temptation of Jesus in Matthew 4: we have none of that. Mary Magdalene will be forever attached to Jesus by no fault of either of them. She is not in the desert here in these verses. Yet, she to is attached to Jesus as sexual temptation. For some reason we put temptation and sex together. Not in this chapter 4.

These set of verses of Matthew 4 are famous. I find it interesting that this section is not the whole chapter. The wise men who made Bible chapters felt this was part of the beginning of Jesus ministry. Why? We'll discuss that in the coming paragraphs. If I told you the Gospels writers left things out, what does that mean to you?

Matthew 4:24 “News about him spread all over Syria, and people brought to him all who were ill with various diseases, those suffering severe pain, the demon-possessed, those having seizures, and the paralyzed; and he healed them.”

John 20:20 “Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book.”

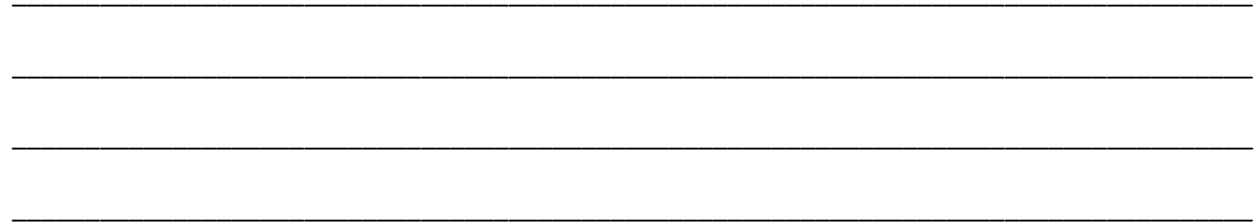
First of all, let me tell you a tale. J Vernon McGee tells a story of when he was a little boy. They were living in a fairly small town. So, small that the train did not stop there. The train did however pass over a wooden bridge. One year, the rains were so heavy that it washed out the bridge. The government spent months building a modern steel crossing for the train. Finally, the day came to open the bridge. Whistles could be heard for miles around. All 26-town folk came running to the new bridge to see what was the matter.

When they arrived, they were witness to two locomotives sitting on the bridge facing one another. One fine boy asked the engineer why? He said it was to check the safety of the bridge. The boy replied “is the bridge gonna fall down.” The engineer was indignant to the boy “nonsense, the bridge is safe and can't fall down.” The boy was relentless “why then blow the whistles.” The engineer replied with a

confident grin “it’s was not to prove it’s safe, but to prove its strong enough.” Do you have a personal encounter with God? Ex: surviving certain death.

Matthew 4:1 “Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.”

1 Samuel 16:14 “Now the Spirit of the LORD had departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the LORD tormented him.”



I tell this story because that is our Jesus. The temptation story was not to prove Jesus could be tempted but to prove he can’t be tempted. He is strong enough. Better than that, this is why we have two parts of chapter 4. The first part was written to give Jesus words and ministry strength. To give the actions and teachings of Jesus credibility. If he says we can overcome, it’s because through him we can overcome. Jesus talks continually about being our yoke, savior, and sacrifice. He will be all those things to people who need help in life.

It’s by no mistake that the second part of this chapter covers the finding of his Disciples. Jesus is the new Moses walking out of the desert. He chooses ordinary men to be the beginning of the kingdom of God. This is a statement by God that all are welcome regardless of title or status. Jesus is an ordinary man from an ordinary town. He calls ordinary people to follow him. When it said God is with us, it means all of us. One extra note is that Jesus also begins in an area prophesied by Isaiah. Matthew still wants to continue the theme of the Messiah.

This is also a staple of Jesus ministry. Helping people. Right at the beginning Jesus heals. Jesus does miracles. If you really see this from a higher view, it’s Jesus with the people. God is with us. This idea of Emanuel is riddled throughout this book. The crowds were always there. The disciples were always there. Even the religious rulers followed Jesus everywhere.

Matthew 4:23 “Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people.”

Daniel 4:34 “At the end of that time, I, Nebuchadnezzar, raised my eyes toward heaven, and my sanity was restored. Then I praised the Most High; I honored and glorified him who lives forever.”

Read Matthew 4 several times. There is a lot going on here. Extra reading if you want more. Exodus 34:28, 1 Kings 19:8, Deuteronomy 8:3, Deuteronomy 6:13,16, Ps 91:11-12, Isaiah 9:1-2

1. It is by no mistake that Jesus is led into the wilderness by the Spirit. In ancient times the wilderness was considered spirit inhabited. The Wilderness, as I said before, is where we expected to find God. We would also expect to find Satan and the Holy Spirit. I am just fascinated that our comforter The Holy Spirit led Jesus into a trap. That makes me convinced it

was not trap, but a trap for Satan. God always said he never gives us more than we could handle. Think about it *“lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.”*

Jesus was hungry for sure. I suspect this actual temptation began near the end of forty days when Jesus was weakest. The fact that Satan offered bread first makes sense. It also challenges the Moses account of Manna. Jesus said they can't just live on bread alone. That was true of the Israelites. They lacked spiritual food. The other two temptations reflect the kingdom of God and Jesus authority structure. Jesus never wavered in putting God the Father as head of the Trinity. Two things. One is that Moses built the original Temple for God. Jesus refused to occupy this new temple in place of his Father. Secondly, we have Jesus quoting scripture that is famous to Moses in both instances from Deuteronomy 6. Jesus battles Satan with scripture all three times. You need to realize that Satan knows the Bible. It is also a warning. Scripture leaves us from the head. Yet, how is our heart using it?

Matthew 4:7 “Jesus said to him, “Again it is written, ‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test.’”

Matthew 15:18 “But the things that come out of a person's mouth come from the heart, and these defile them.”

2. I just wanted to point out that God allows. 1 Corinthians 10:13 **“No testing has overtaken you that is not common to everyone. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tested beyond your strength, but with the testing he will also provide the way out so that you may be able to endure it.”**

If Jesus could be tested by the Devil, then we can. If the Spirit is willing to lead us into the heat, then we need to be mindful of God. It's not that God temps, but that God will allow a certain amount of fire in your life. Earlier I told you that God will work through fire to mold us. The whole Trinity is involved in this process. Spirit leads, God the Father draws us, and Jesus teaches us. Still, do not be deceived **“bad company corrupts good character.”** 1 Corinthians 15:33. The Devil will try you as he tried Jesus, Job, and many others. Yet, verse 11 means we can make Satan go away for a time. We should not take the spiritual for granted.

Matthew 4:11 “Then the devil left him, and suddenly angels came and waited on him.”

Proverbs 7:25 “Do not let your hearts turn aside to her ways; do not stray into her paths.”

3. It's interesting because sometimes we miss things when we read the Bible by no fault of our own. Peter and Andrew were followers of John the Baptist. The fact that John said one is coming more powerful than I makes sense. John also said he must become less than this man. Many of John's disciples began to follow Jesus. It's by no mistake that Jesus says in verse 17 the same thing John said in Matthew 1:2 *The kingdom is near*. There is consistency in the message from John to Jesus. Peter and Andrew moving on to Jesus makes sense. They recognized Jesus was greater.

Jesus draws fishermen and asks them to continue fishing for fish and men. These men went back to fishing after Jesus died. Yet they did become the cornerstone of the church by establishing a profession of fishing for men. I have read so many stories of people leaving family, work, and friends to seek Jesus. So many of these people crumbled in ministry. Life with God is not an island. We were meant to be in community, at work, and in the lives of people.

Remember, Moses fled to the desert and found a family. He was called from the desert to bring family to God. Sacrificing people for God is not Biblical.

Matthew 4:19 "And he said to them, "Follow me, and I will make you fish for people."

Exodus 6:7 "I will take you as my own people, and I will be your God. Then you will know that I am the LORD your God, who brought you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians."

4. Matthew is all about Prophecy. I read a text book that gave me great insight into the times of Matthew and Jesus. Yet, there is a struggle on who wrote this book of Matthew. The name Matthew is never mentioned. Who is he? Is he Levi the tax collector? Is this book an offshoot of Mark or Luke? What we can tell is that this writer believed prophecy was important to the Gospel. Placing Jesus in prophecy meant something to him and the readers. One other note is Jesus. He did not gain steam as his ministry grew. His ministry grew because it started with a bang. He healed, taught, and traveled all over the land surrounding Jerusalem. What is the Kingdom of God to you: miracles, wisdom, happiness, a throne, or power? Matthew begins the first four chapters circling the Holy city where the Messiah should reign. Doing the very things God would do.

Matthew 4:24 "So his fame spread throughout all Syria, and they brought to him all the sick, those who were afflicted with various diseases and pains, demoniacs, epileptics, and paralytics, and he cured them."

Luke 19:41-42 "As he came near and saw the city, he wept over it, saying, "If you, even you, had only recognized on this day the things that make for peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes."

What does it mean?

To be a Christian means you go straight into ministry, right? You leave your job just as the disciples appeared to do. I like watching the British TV show Doctor Who. He has companions that travel around with him. All the time? Well no, he comes to them from time to time for a purpose. Sometimes Jesus is alone and other times he is with his disciples. Many Christians believe these men left their jobs and family to be with Jesus full time for three years. I'm weary of that mind set. Paul made tents as he traveled. He taught devotion to your spouse. Yet Jesus is a home and Job wrecker? We assume a lot.

Put the Christian lifestyle in consistent perspective. Jesus first miracle is making wine. He is with family and friends at a wedding party. Jesus did not just preach, teach, and pray. He was more than that. Yet, within all his travels he was mindful of God and teaching moments. To be a follower of Jesus means your life will change. Some things will become God things. The message in this chapter is to bring God to the party. Not to ruin the party, but to make it better. Ministry is not about looking like God. It's about displaying the attributes of God when called upon.

I am beginning to realize this book is a manual on how to do Christianity right. Jesus did it right. We will see in later chapters how the disciples got it wrong. The religious rulers got God wrong. We think Jesus came to bring the kingdom. Yet, we are always disappointed by the Jesus we get. He does not do the kingdom our way. This chapter is the beginning of God building something. The birth narrative is perspective. Now we are going to see how God uses Jesus to build a case for the Christ. The real Christ, not the one the people assumed would come.

Matthew 4: 10-11 “Jesus said to him, “Away from me, Satan! For it is written: ‘Worship the Lord your God and serve him only.’ 11 Then the devil left him, and angels came and attended him.”

Psalm 78:4 “We will not conceal them from their children but tell to the generation to come the praises of the LORD, And His strength and His wondrous works that He has done.”