

THE TEMPTATION TO TAKE SHORTCUTS

TEMPTATION: THE WILDERNESS TRIALS OF JESUS

Ben Deaver at Mosaic Church on April 9, 2023

Matthew 4:8-10

VISION CASTING

The mission of Mosaic Church is to unite people in the Way of Jesus.

MINGLE QUESTIONS

1. What is your favorite Easter candy?
2. What is something you enjoy doing during the Spring?

Yeast Joke

EASTER WEEKEND with TRINITY CANTON

Good Friday and Holy Saturday with Trinity Canton was awesome!

TEMPTATION: THE WILDERNESS TRIALS OF JESUS

Matthew 4:1

Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.

- The Battle in the Wilderness – God’s doing the testing. The devil’s doing the tempting.
- It’s like a boxing match that doesn’t finish here.
- Three rounds now with more to come later until the knockout.

Round 3

Punch.

Matthew 4:8-9 ⁸ Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor.
⁹ "All this I will give you," he said, "if you will bow down and worship me."

Were the kingdoms of the world the devil's to give?

- Jesus didn't contest the devil's claim to give the kingdoms of the world.
- **Luke 4:6-7** "I will give you all their authority and splendor; it has been given to me, and I can give it to anyone I want to. If you worship me, it will all be yours."
- **1 John 5:19b** ... the whole world is under the control of the evil one.
- The devil hates humanity. We're made in the image of God and were placed on earth to reign over earth as God's vicereagents, second in charge. The devil doesn't like that.
- In Ezekiel 28 we learn that...
 - The devil is influencing earthly world leaders.
 - He was said to be full of wisdom and perfect in beauty and in Eden, the garden of God.
 - He was blameless in his ways from when he was created until wickedness was found within him.
 - God threw him to the earth.
 - The first that came out of the devil consumed him. Rebellion against God is more self-destructive than it is God actively destroying.
- What must this have this temptation been like for Jesus?
 - He grew up a poor carpenter, from Nazareth, a backwoods place.

- He had a life of suffering ahead of Him.
- I think about Keyontae Johnson, one of our favorite Wildcats from the men's basketball team. He had \$5 million dangled in front of him to just walk away from basketball after he collapsed on the court with heart issues in 2020. Would he take the path of least resistance to the wealth he desired? Or was he playing for something more and greater riches ahead?
- Instant vs. Delayed Gratification
- Where are you being tempted to take a shortcut? Where do you need to trust the Father rather than be pulled into the world's shortcut?
- Shortcuts taken in the gym, in politics, in relationships, in all areas of life.
 - The things that are worthwhile take some level of work and maybe even suffering to gain or accomplish.

Block and counterpunch.

Matthew 4:10 Jesus said to him, "Away from me, Satan! For it is written: 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.'"

- Quoting Deuteronomy 6:13
- Jesus chose to trust the Father rather than take shortcuts to get what He wanted.

Jesus is the obedient Son.

- **John 14:30-31** ³⁰ I will not say much more to you, for the prince of this world is coming. He has no hold over me, ³¹ but he comes so that the world may learn I love the Father and do exactly what my Father has commanded me.
- **John 12:30-33** ³¹ Now is the time for judgment on this world; now the prince of this world will be driven out. ³² And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself." ³³ He said this to show the kind of death he was going to die.

- **Hebrews 5:8** Son though he was, he learned obedience from what he suffered...
- **Matthew 16:21-27** ²¹ From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life. ²² Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. "Never, Lord!" he said. "This shall never happen to you!" ²³ Jesus turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns." ²⁴ Then Jesus said to his disciples, "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. ²⁵ For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it. ²⁶ What good will it be for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul? ²⁷ For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father's glory with his angels, and then he will reward each person according to what they have done.
- Carrying your cross comes FIRST and then glory and reward.

We are children of God and co-heirs with Jesus.

- **Romans 8:17** Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.
- What's the relationship of us to the earth?
- Co-Heirs with Christ
- He learned obedience as a Son.
- The Cross comes before the Crown!

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Round 3 ends. Go back to your corners.

Matthew 4:11

Then the devil left him, and angels came and attended him. (Luke's account says, "He left him until an opportune time.")

- **Luke 22:42-44** ⁴² "Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done." ⁴³ An angel from heaven appeared to him and strengthened him. ⁴⁴ And being in anguish, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground.
- When Jesus breathed His last, the devil thought he had the knockout punch. Would Jesus be down for the count?

Jesus' ultimate victory over the devil is predicated on the fact of the physical resurrection of Jesus that we celebrate today.

1 Corinthians 15:54-57 When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: "Death has been swallowed up in victory." "Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?" The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

- Muhammad Ali standing over Sonny Liston in victory. Remember that iconic photo?

1 Corinthians 15:12-15 ¹² But if it is preached that Christ has been raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? ¹³ If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. ¹⁴ And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith. ¹⁵ More than that, we are then found to be false witnesses about God, for we have testified about God

that he raised Christ from the dead. But he did not raise him if in fact the dead are not raised.

1 Corinthians 15:16-19 ¹⁶ For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised either. ¹⁷ And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins. ¹⁸ Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost. ¹⁹ If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied.

1 Corinthians 15:20-24 ²⁰ But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. ²¹ For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. ²² For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. ²³ But each in turn: Christ, the firstfruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him. ²⁴ Then the end will come, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power.

- Jesus gets what the devil offered Him eventually, but only after a life of trusting the Father, suffering through the cross, and physical Resurrection.

He is Risen. He is Risen, indeed.

But do you believe this to be true, factually true?! Like it really happened and we can trust the Father?!

Sam Harris, *Waking Up: A Guide to Spirituality Without Religion*

- Sam Harris is known as one of the "Four Horsemen" of New Atheism, along with Richard Dawkins, Christopher Hitchens, and Daniel Dennett.

- I started reading *Waking Up: A Guide to Spirituality Without Religion* in light of my Word of the Year, AWAKE. I listen to his podcast, *Making Sense*.

“As manuals for contemplative understanding, the Bible and the Koran are worse than useless. Whatever wisdom can be found in their pages is never *best* found there, and it is subverted, time and again, by ancient savagery and superstition.”

Sam Harris, *The End of Faith: Religion, Terror, and the Future of Reason*

“Our world is fast succumbing to the activities of men and women who would stake the future of our species on beliefs that should not survive an elementary school education.”

3 Types of Doubt – Intellectual, Emotional, Volitional

Let’s turn to 1st Corinthians chapter 15. This creed that Paul refers to was in use for sure 2-3 years after Christ died. Bart Ehrman, a leading scholar and skeptic of the New Testament who also grew up in Lawrence, KS, puts this creedal statement to within one year of Jesus’ death! From a historical standpoint that is extremely early material about these events.

1 Corinthians 15:3-8 ³ For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, ⁴ that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, ⁵ and that he appeared to Cephas, and then to the Twelve. ⁶ After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers and sisters at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. ⁷ Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, ⁸ and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.

I would love to share five historical facts of the Resurrection that substantiate the event as history not based on the bible being true but historical evidence. This morning I'll just share one of the five facts and you can ask me about the others.

Fact: The tomb was empty.

3 Considerations of the Empty Tomb:

1. The Jerusalem Factor

- The following of the Risen Jesus took root in Jerusalem, the very place Jesus was buried. Where's the body?
- Remember Iron Man 2 during the jail break scene where Mickey Rourke's in prison and a look alike shows up and takes his place in the explosion? Or in the Bourne series where there's a look alike to take the place of David Webb so Matt Damon can become Jason Bourne?
- There wasn't even an attempt by the opposition to produce a fake, dead body.
- I've been to Jerusalem. It's not that big of a place. Jerusalem had about 25,000 people.

2. The Principle of Enemy Attestation

- Any source that does not have sympathy for a certain person, message, or cause comes to affirm something about it. When writers or enemies corroborate the given facts or data, it is more likely to be authentic.
- Failure to exhume the body. The Jewish leaders came up with the theory that Jesus' disciples stole the body. See Matthew 28:12-14. The Jewish leaders agree that the tomb is empty.

3. The Testimony of Women (The Criterion of Embarrassment)

- The Gospel accounts document that women were the first to discover an empty tomb. The testimony of women weren't considered reliable by the Jewish community. The only reason that all four gospels would include this detail is if that's how it really went down. Notice that even in the earliest creedal statement that Paul is using when writing to the Corinthian church that it doesn't mention the women being at the tomb first. The creed mentions the men because that was what was significant as eyewitness testimony to the ancient world. When Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John went to document the event they recorded the significant and true details.

The early church simply didn't care where the tomb of Jesus was. It wasn't until the 4th century that Constantine's mother went searching for the burial spot of Jesus Christ. Then the Church of the Holy Sepulchre was founded at the supposed spot.

- The deeper they dig the more evidence they find that corroborates the Scriptures.
- We can be more confident today in the historicity of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead than many things that may or may not have happened very recently. Think about it. Think about technology and deep fakes and falsified information. There's a scramble right now for discernment between fake news and true facts, what's produced by AI and real people. Friends, the Resurrection is based on true historical facts.
- You can and you should believe it and choose to follow this carpenter from Nazareth who died for YOU and rose again to lead the way into the abundant life of joy for YOU!
- As you reinforce solid reasons to believe this stuff, you can have hope in what's to come.

Hebrews 11:1 Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.

- The Hall of Faith is found in Hebrews 11, men and women who were looking ahead to something greater and trusting God for it.
- **Hebrews 11:10** For he (Abraham) was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God.
- **Hebrews 11:13-16** ¹³ All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance, admitting that they were foreigners and strangers on earth. ¹⁴ People who say such things show that they are looking for a country of their own. ¹⁵ If they had been thinking of the country they had left, they would have had opportunity to return. ¹⁶ Instead, they were longing for a better country—a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them.
- **Hebrews 11:26** He (Moses) regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt, because he was looking ahead to his reward.

Invite the Worship Team up

Hebrews 12:1-2 Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, ² fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

- Remember all those temptations that Jesus faced and overcame?! Remember how we fail the test over and over again? Guess what, Jesus' victory is your victory! Now you are free to relax and just develop as a human being, free from guilt and shame!

Watching the Royals in 2015 on our driveway. Our neighbor's stream was 7 seconds in front of ours. We would hear cheering and we knew there was victory but we didn't know exactly how it played out but we knew it was coming. Those 7 seconds represent where we are today. We know victory is ahead and it gives us confidence to live and love boldly here and now.

Put This Into Practice:

1. Experience the temptation to take a shortcut.
2. Choose to trust the Father like Jesus did.
3. Experience grace through Jesus' victory over evil.
4. Strengthen your confidence in the Resurrection.

Next Week: Ephesians

Lord's Supper

Leader: God's promises of forgiveness, His never-ending promises of mercy, and His continual willingness to strengthen our faith, are precious. Let's take a moment to dwell on these Gospel promises—which are for our comfort, and for the comfort of others.

[Reading of the comfortable words]:

REST *"Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." (Mt 11:28)*

LOVE *"God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life." (John 3:16)*

SAVING FROM SIN *"This saying is true, and worthy of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." (1 Timothy 1.15)*

JUSTIFICATION *"If anyone sins, we have an advocate—a defense lawyer—with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the propitiation [sacrifice] for our sins." (1 John 2:1, 2)*

The Lord's Prayer – Matthew 6:9b-13

"Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one."