

## Sermon - Wilderness Survival Part 1 – A Case Study

**4 Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil.**

**<sup>2</sup> And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungred.**

**<sup>3</sup> And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread.**

**<sup>4</sup> But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.**

Then. Key word. Something had to happen before Jesus steps into the wilderness transition. In Chapter 3 we find that he first takes the following steps in Matthew 3:13-17:

- He asks John to Baptize him. John thinks that's crazy and won't do it because he isn't worthy. Jesus explains to him to allow it because it is needed to demonstrate and fulfill all righteousness.
- In other words, Jesus is walking through the steps to show us how to be in right standing with God.

First, he must humble himself and recognize the need to do this. This requires sacrifice.

Next, he goes into the water, a symbol of burying self; then he rises straight up out of the water. The next steps the Holy Spirit lands on Him. Those around him hear God declare that this is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.

Likewise, if we want to please our Father, we also must follow these same steps.

- Recognize the need to get right with God.
- Turn from trusting in yourself and humbly submit to God and put your past behind you.
- Rise in the new hope you have by faith in Jesus Christ

Whenever you do these three steps, His Spirit comes alive in you, and you are born again in Christ. The Father is always well pleased and celebrates when we follow these steps and come correct.

Only then can you enter the next phase of transition. Only then are you ready to handle the wilderness.

Matthew Chapter 4

Notice, Jesus is not making decisions on his own. He is being led by the Spirit. The Spirit is requiring that he enter the wilderness....to again fulfill all righteousness or to demonstrate how we can make it through the wilderness transition.

Not to prove something to God, but to prove something to us and show us the way.

The devil and temptation are waiting for him there. Salvation doesn't you won't have some battles in the wilderness. Quite the contrary. It means you will know how to defeat your problems when they show up.

40 days, the number in the Bible for probation. Our Lord is hungry in His flesh. Notice, he is facing the same situation the Children of Israel were facing. We saw last week that they didn't handle things well when they ran out of food in the wilderness. Let's see how Jesus handles physical difficulties when the devil shows up to take advantage of our situation and condition.

The attack:

- Comes in the form of a question. The question is designed to cause doubt in your trusting in the word of God.
- If you're the Son of God, take matters into your own hands and turn these stones into biscuits. This seems innocent enough, and sort of makes sense but what the devil is really saying is this:
  - Why are you going through all this hunger if you're really the Son of God?
  - Why are you still waiting on God to bring you through?
  - Why is God letting you suffer like this if you really are His son?
  - If you're really the Son of God, you have the power to make things happen now; stop waiting on God and make things happen now.
  - You got this....make it happen on your own. Do it yourself.
  - Move your faith back, from trusting and depending on God as your hope, and go back to trusting in you.

Jesus' response to this deceptive attack is that he used what was available. Didn't have food but what he did have was, the word and the Spirit. He quotes from Deuteronomy 8:3.

- Man doesn't just live by bread alone. Bread is important, but if I don't have it right now, I have something more important that I need....the word of God.
- I need bread, but I need God more.
- I may be in need, but He's still my God, and I'm still His son.
- His spirit didn't lead me out this far to leave me out here to fail or to die....He is coming to my aid so by faith I wait on Him.
- God is still God and my Father and He hasn't given up on me....so I will not give up on Him.

You have to have the Spirit and the word in order to survive in the wilderness or else you will give up on God.

## Wilderness Survival – A Case Study Part 2 – It's Not About You

Background: In between your last season and your best season is transition. In between freshmen year and graduation is transition. Jesus shows us how to survive the wilderness.

**<sup>5</sup> Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple,**

**<sup>6</sup> And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.**

**<sup>7</sup> Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.**



Next attack, verses 5-6, the devil recognizes he is leaning on the word, so he tries to meet Jesus where he is. So, the devil takes him to the temple. Please note, the devil knows how to get to church and he knows the word.

- The devil is still taking people to church today.
- The devil doesn't have a problem with you coming to church, he'll sit with you, drive you there, and chip in on the gas.
- The devil doesn't care if you know the word; just doesn't want you to believe and trust in it.
- The devil doesn't care if you know the word, just doesn't want you to interpret it correctly.

Hey, if you're really the Son of God, use your power and authority to perform. Prove it. Throw yourself down and let the people see how God can deliver you. Use your faith in the word of God to perform. The devil quotes from Psalm 91:11-12 to back up his argument and what he wants Christ to do.

The problem with this is:

- He misuses the scripture to support what he wants Christ to do rather than using the word to meet what God intended it to do. It is a misapplication of the scriptures.
- Word without spiritual discernment has no power and can mess you up.
- So, the temptation here is to get Jesus to perform. Pride is involved in this type of performance. It is no longer about God getting the glory, it becomes about impressing others. Logically, that seems to make sense....have a huge performance in church and impress people to believe. Spiritually, that may not be what God is looking for. The means may not always support the end goal.
- Self-promotion.
- The other problem...this word is coming from the guy who knows the scripture but is not trusting in the word.

Jesus' response is to use another scripture to justify continuing to just trust and depend on the Father.

- He quotes again from Deuteronomy 6:16.
- "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God".
- Jesus recognized that the devil was trying to use this passage of scripture to tempt or test God rather than glorify Him.

Note: I have heard believers quote this passage from Psalm 91 and use it to justify reckless actions....and then turnaround and accuse others of not having faith.

## Wilderness Survival – A Case Study Part 3 – A Scouting Report – Now You Know

**Background:** This scripture is Jesus giving us an example of how to survive the wilderness or transition. We have covered the first two tests Jesus faced, the lust of the flesh and the pride of life.

Not waiting on God and making decisions on your own based upon what you want to do (lust of the flesh) and doing things for your own glory (pride) will delay or keep you from getting to the promised land of God's best that He has designed and planned for you.

Today we complete the trilogy by examining how Jesus deals with the temptation of the world (lust of the eyes).

**<sup>8</sup> Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them;**

**<sup>9</sup> And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.**

**<sup>10</sup> Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.**

**<sup>11</sup> Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him.**

Last attack, the enemy takes him to a very high mountain where he can view all the kingdoms of this world. He will give Jesus the world if he only worships him. This is a bold move. Why take this bold approach:

- The previous temptations involved a greater level of deception.
- It was less of a need because the world looks good to the eye.
- Shows him all the kingdoms and the glory. Indeed, the world and the things of the world look glorious.
- There certainly are many things in the world that I see that I want that looks wonderful and desirable.
  - Cars, land, homes, shoes, clothes, friends, people, things, etc.

Jesus' response to these temptations is consistent, he uses the Word of God as his defense. He knows the Word and is skilled in the application of the Word.

I noticed what Jesus attacks. He doesn't say that achieving and acquiring things in the world that we see is the problem. What he does attack is the temptation to worship things or someone other than God...that is the problem.

So having the stuff is not the problem, worshipping the stuff is the problem. Putting the stuff ahead of God is the problem. Worshipping others who can give you the stuff rather than trusting in God is the problem. Not waiting on God and trusting in Him, is the problem. How you get the stuff, might be the problem if God doesn't get the glory.



I recognized that my desire for some things became more important than the things of God and that became a problem for me.

Jesus' response is for him to bounce. He again uses the scriptures to justify continuing to stand on the promises of God. Deuteronomy 6:13....Only serve God!!!

Now observe. The devil offers him the kingdoms of the world now...no waiting. But Jesus already knows the plan of God and that in time, He would be the king of kings. Again, the temptation is to not wait or trust in God and instead move out on your own.

- The devil must have known about the prophesy and that Christ was to rule. He knew his destiny but offers him the opportunity to obtain this goal much quicker.

You can go after a good thing the wrong way. You won't be able to hold onto it. Only what you do for Christ will last. The chasing the things of the world will cause you to miss the move of God in your life.

### **Victory over the enemy!**

Jesus wins. Uses the Word to defeat the enemy each time.

Angels come and minister to Him. A time of refreshing and peace.

What does this tell us about the wilderness?

- The devil and temptation are coming. The enemy will tempt you through your flesh, eyes, and pride.
- The temptation is designed to keep you from reaching the goal God has for you to prosper.
  - Temptations from the enemy are designed to create doubt and move you from standing on the promises of God and turn/fall back into working things out on your own.
- You don't have to fail, wait on God by standing on the Word....you can experience victory even there.
- The problem that is tempting you now will eventually go away....an expiration date. But it may return for another round of beatdown.
- You can experience revival even in the wilderness.

Luke 4:1-13 has the same account; however, the order is slightly different, and the devil ended all temptations and leaves for a season.

- Just because you defeated those thoughts yesterday, doesn't mean he won't come back tomorrow or show up today for another go at it.
- The devil after a defeat says there is always next season.

You really can't start your ministry to others until you have gone through the wilderness and are skilled in the application of the word of God in your life. It takes active faith.

**So What?** This is scouting report, so you know how this is supposed to end. You now know what to expect.

It is part of God's plan. Christ follows the same seven step plan outlined in the Feasts.

1. The Cross – recognize you need Him.
2. Repent – change your mind about doing this your way. Bury the past.
3. Trust in God and the Word – this is your new hope....the new you.
4. Through the power of the Holy Spirit know you belong to the Father, so make Him proud.
5. Wait on God when trouble comes, He will show up....like the rapture.
6. Victory in a final battle.
7. Peace and restoration.

1 John 2

**<sup>14</sup> I have written unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one.**

**<sup>15</sup> Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.**

**<sup>16</sup> For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.**

**<sup>17</sup> And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.**