

Sovereign Grace Church
“Tests and Temptations” outline
April 8, 2018

Matthew 4: 1-11

Jesus has just been baptized by John and, as He ascends the banks of the Jordan, the Holy Spirit comes upon Him and the voice of the Father thunders from Heaven, “This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased!” With this affirmation Jesus is about to begin His formal public ministry as the Messiah of God.

At this point Satan knows that the battle is about to get heated and he immediately seeks to derail the Messianic program before His work can even commence. He engages Jesus at a point of physical weakness with a series of intense temptations.

But God also knows that Jesus is about to commence the most important work since Creation itself. Indeed the work was greater than Creation in that God was not bringing forth something from nothing....but good from evil. Given that Jesus was to accomplish His work as the 2nd Adam, He was in need of real spiritual strengthening. Thus the Spirit leads Jesus into the clutches of Satan. But whereas Satan's goal was to to destroy Jesus, God's goal was to empower Him! Destruction or empowerment? The end may have been foreordained....but it was, nonetheless, directly through the human will of Jesus!

Introduction: Jms 1: 13; I Thess. 2:4

1. Preparation vv. 1-2
Lk 4:1; Eph. 5: 18

2. Temptations/Tests vv. 3-10

- **1st Temptation: Bread/Material Goods vv. 3-4**
Dt. 8:3; I Cor. 6:13

- **2nd Temptation: Presumptive Security vv. 5-7**
Psm 91: 11-13

- **3rd Temptation: Power w/o Righteousness vv. 8-10**
Eph. 2:2

3. **Rest v. 11**
Heb. 4: 14

Closing: Matt. 6: 13; Rom. 12

Questions for Conversation and Reflection

1. **When was the last time you were tempted to do something wrong? Did you give in to the temptation or were you able to resist it? If you failed, why? If you resisted, to what/whom do you attribute your success? If it was God's grace, was it a grace that acted alone?**
2. **Do the temptations you experience tend to be recurring ones? Have you ever been delivered from a recurring temptation? How did this happen? Are you still tempted to leave your toys on the floor? Why not? Do you believe that it is possible that some day our temptations to envy and lust will lose their attraction? How do you think this might happen?**
3. **What is the difference between a temptation and a test? We know that God will not tempt us and that the devil will....but can we tempt ourselves? How can this be done? Is there such a thing as a temptation to tempt ourselves? Is the temptation to tempt ourselves a sin? Or is it just very foolish?**
4. **Are you spiritually stronger now than when you began your life with Jesus? How do temptations and tests contribute to our spiritual transformations? How can we be of service to our fellows in their spiritual struggles?**