

The Temptations of Ministry #1: "Temptation of the Flesh"

Matt 4:1-4

Before Jesus began to minister – He was tempted. Going to look at the temptations of ministry.

I. THE TEMPTATIONS OF MINISTRY

A. Rule of life: Testing comes before usefulness

1. Jesus was on earth with a purpose: The will of God. Helping people
 - a. But He had to be tested first: *V1 Jesus was led by the spirit into the wilderness to be tempted...*
2. It is called being tempted: To scrutinize/assay/examine/prove
 - a. This shows what is inside of us: Reveals – to God/us/Pastor/others...

B. 2 aspects of temptation

1. It is personal: No one can do it for you – the temptation may be personalized for us
2. It involves pressure: *V2 when he fasted for 40 days and nights, afterwards he was hungry*
 - a. There will be situations that come that you will feel under pressure/will feel pressure

C. It's all about the future

1. The enemy pressures us in the present – to act in the present
2. But it is actually about our future in God
 - a. When He finishes temptation – he begins to minister
 1. Your calling in God
 2. You equipping in God
 3. Other people's lives hang in the balance

II. THE TEMPTATIONS OF THE FLESH

A. Ancient conflict: needs of man vs. the will of God

1. Temptation of the flesh is based on needs: Legitimate needs or felt needs
 - a. It will always come in the form of "I need this"
2. The temptation is to put your needs 1st/above the will of God: Feed yourself
 - a. Focusing on you/your needs/your feelings: Self-absorption
 1. Emotions: *I'm hurt/I'm lonely/I'm upset*: Sets us up for all kinds of trouble
 2. Conflict: My feelings are highest/most important
 - b. Has to do with finances/bread: Want increase/security –
 1. The temptation is to put that before/above will of God
 - a. Our jobs: Hours - location
 - b. Our spending: We need this!
 - c. Has to do with our validity/worth: *V3 if you be the son of God...*
 1. Sexual temptation flows from this: You feel less of a man – we are flattered by attention

B. Ministry is the voluntary shift of focus from us to others

1. Refused to make bread: Not by bread alone – every word... Will of God most important
 - a. We make decisions based on God/others

III. SURVIVING THE FLESH

A. We see some keys to surviving the temptation of the flesh

1. **Saying no to the flesh:** Not eating made him hungry – but it actually helped Him to resist temptation
 - a. Every decision to say no to the flesh strengthens us
 1. Disciplining laziness
 2. Doing things we don't enjoy
 3. Fasting: V2 when he fasted 40 days...
2. **Arming yourself with the word:** *V4 it is written...*
 - a. Reading the word
 - b. Responding to temptation with the word
 1. Speak out loud/in your mind a scripture – a portion of scripture

B. But there is supernatural help available in temptation: More than will power

1. Help in temptation

- a. *Hebrews 4:15-16 For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.*

2. Help after temptation

- a. There is a grace that comes on a man who does right
- b. Private battles produce public effectiveness