

## THE TEMPTATIONS OF MINISTRY #3: "Identity and Validity"

Matt 4:3-7

*The temptations were an attack of Jesus identity – his validity for ministry.*

### I. IDENTITY AND VALIDITY

- A. Strategy of hell is to challenge our identity: *V3 If you be the son of God...*
  - 1. Questioning his identity: Who you are
  - 2. The issue of identity has to do with authority
    - a. 'The right to act on God's behalf' (police – size is not the issue)
- B. Your identity and authority will be challenged
  - 1. The devil will always challenge your right to act on God's behalf
    - a. *Matt 13:55* Is this not the carpenter's son... b. *John 1:46* Can anything good come from Nazareth
    - c. *John 7:5* even his brothers didn't believe in Him
  - 2. The devil will always challenge your authority – the right to act on God's behalf
    - a. *Matt 21:23* By what authority are you doing these things – and who gave you this authority
    - b. That can come from people/devil/from ourselves
      - 1. Who's the Pastor here? 2. Maybe I don't have what it takes – maybe I was just excited
- C. The devil tries to set the standards of identity/validity: *You have no validity/your calling is not real unless...*
  - 1. **What you have** (bread)
    - a. Where's all the people b. Building c. Ministries
  - 2. **What you can do:** Throw yourself off the pinnacle... you should be able to do certain things
    - a. Prayer for the sick b. Counseling older people – beyond your experience
  - 3. **Whether you have attention:** Pinnacle – get people to look at you
    - a. Stage/microphone vs. unseen service b. Invitations to preach outside your own church

### II. OUTSIDE VOICES

- A. The temptation is to take your identity and authority from outside of God
  - 1. V3 the tempter came to him...
    - a. He already knew God's will – had an understanding of God's purpose
  - 2. But the devil ensures that there will come other voices from outside of God's word/will
- B. Look at some the voices
  - 1. **Other people's opinions:** The Devil will make sure someone speaks to you – against God's will
    - a. Discouraging brethren: *Deut 1:28* our brethren have discouraged our hearts...
      - 1. JW: Looking out the window – this is what pioneering is going to be like
    - b. Religious people: 1. You should do this... 2. You should do it like this...
  - 2. **Worldly standards:** Events – success strategies
  - 3. **Internal weakness:** Some of the tormenting voices come from within
    - a. I don't feel qualified/ready; 1. Moses: Can't speak 2. Jeremiah: I'm young

### III. OVERCOMING THIS TEMPTATION

- A. **Survival strategy #1: Ignoring outside voices**
  - 1. I refuse to listen/give my mind to other reference points/opinions - other people's opinions
- B. **Survival strategy #2: Referencing off God**
  - 1. *V4/7/10* It is written...
    - a. Who I am/what I am called to do/what I have the right to do is based on God's word
      - a. *1 Sam 17:45* I come in the name of the Lord of Hosts...
- C. **Survival strategy #3: Trusting God**
  - 1. The problem is when you resist some these voices – things don't immediately change
    - a. Small building/small crowds/small offerings/small attention
  - 2. We have to trust God that His will/His way will be better
    - a. Outreach when little response - pray no one else is there - deal with morals even if it costs...
      - 1. Believing that in the long-term God is going help me
    - b. *Matthew 4:11* Then the devil left Him, and behold, angels came and ministered to Him.