

God Can Relate (March 17, 2021 - Upper Room)

Read: Matthew 4:1-11

Jesus Is Tested in the Wilderness

¹ Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted[Ⓜ] by the devil. ² After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. ³ The tempter came to him and said, “If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread.”

⁴ Jesus answered, “It is written: ‘Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.’[Ⓜ]”

⁵ Then the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. ⁶ “If you are the Son of God,” he said, “throw yourself down. For it is written:

“He will command his angels concerning you,
and they will lift you up in their hands,
so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.’[Ⓜ]”

⁷ Jesus answered him, “It is also written: ‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test.’[Ⓜ]”

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.”

¹⁰ Jesus said to him, “Away from me, Satan! For it is written: ‘Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.’[Ⓜ]”

¹¹ Then the devil left him, and angels came and attended him.

Hebrews 2:14-18

¹⁴ Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might break the power of him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil—¹⁵ and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death. ¹⁶ For surely it is not angels he helps, but Abraham’s descendants. ¹⁷ For this reason he had to be made like them,[Ⓜ] fully human in

every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people. ¹⁸ Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted

Read the March 17 installment in the Upper Room

Lesson background: based on the above scripture

Sources: www.enduringword.com , www.workingpreacher.org

- Temptation is a certainty for everyone.

- Throughout the scriptures, the wilderness represents a place of preparation, a place of waiting for God's next move, a place of learning to trust in God's mercy (think ...Noah, Moses, Elijah, the Israelites, our Lenten journey)

- **Forty days** is a familiar period of testing in the Bible, both in the days of Noah and for Israel in the wilderness. Jesus will succeed where Israel as a nation failed.

- Jesus did not need to be tempted to help Him grow. Instead, He endured temptation both so that He could identify with us ([Hebrews 2:18](#) and [4:15](#)), and to demonstrate His own holy, sinless character.

- Jesus' temptation was more severe than any temptation we will encounter.. It was more severe because He was tempted directly by **the devil** himself, while we contend mainly with lesser demons. It was also more severe because there is a sense in which temptation is "relieved" by giving in, and Jesus never did yield. Therefore, He bore levels of temptation we will never know by experience.

- Jesus could have stood against Satan with a display of His own glory; He could have stood against Satan with logic and reason. Instead, Jesus used the word of God as a weapon against Satan and temptation.
- We effectively resist temptation in the same way Jesus did: by countering Satan's seductive lies by shining the light of God's truth upon them. If we are ignorant of God's truth, we are poorly armed in the fight against temptation.

Daily application from this lesson:

- **Temptation will happen to me.**
- Reading scripture can help to strengthen my armor against the temptations I will face
- God wants to me to share my fears, my temptations, my hungers with him
- The more I practice compassion and empathy, the more I can "be a Jesus" to those whom God puts in my path
- **Jesus has walked in my shoes... and walks with me each moment of my life**

Reflection:

1. Describe a time that you had someone show you compassion and empathy. How did this make you feel?
2. How is it comforting to know that Jesus fully understands your human joys and trials?
3. What prayers, scriptures, or spiritual practices help you when you struggle with expressing compassion or empathy?

Thought for the week:

I will seek to show empathy and compassion with all I say and do