

The Strength of Our Savior Matthew 4:1-11

As we begin this morning I want to show you a video clip from the 1940's. This is the Tacoma Narrows Bridge, also known as "Galloping Gertie." This bridge, stretching across a sound in Washington State collapsed in a 45 MPH wind storm. It took 2 years to build and 4 months to collapse. Needless to say, this bridge that was intended to safely transport cars from one cliff to another had a structural flaw that rendered it useless. All of us agree that if you are going to get on a bridge over a sound, suspended several stories above water, you'd hope the engineer didn't just barely make it through college but was first in his class.

We have been studying Matthew together as a fellowship and Matthew has been giving us an eye witness account of the most significant life that has ever lived - Jesus. Matthew has been telling us from the life of Jesus that this one has come as King to be King, to establish his kingdom on the earth that he created, and have his people reign with him forever and ever.

In our text today we see a pivotal moment as Jesus begins his ministry, a sinister moment of darkness when the Devil himself comes to derail the mission of the Lord Jesus Christ.

READ TEXT

Jesus is voluntarily subjecting himself to temptation for our sake. This is why he is led by the Spirit. Today I want us to learn 4 truths about Jesus and his mission as we see him overwhelmingly conquering temptation as we see the strength of our Savior, and after we have seen him, we will put our trust in him.

1. Jesus Gives Us A Better Longing

Right after the awesome declaration of his Son-ship, the Devil comes to him specifically questioning who he is - going against the Word of the Lord. We can't say enough how important it is to know who *he* is. He is the eternal Son of God who has come condescending to us, without ceasing to be what he was, becoming what he was not, so that he could save us and raise us from depravity to glory.

Jesus is fasting, he is hungry, truly man, truly God in one person, our one Lord Jesus Christ. The enemy, who has been tempting since the beginning, comes to offer him food, comes to tell him that there is something that he is lacking. But even though he is hungry, he lacks nothing.

Remember where he is, the desolate wilderness. Remember who is with him, the Spirit. Remember why he is where he is, the Spirit leads him into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil after he steps into the waters of baptism identifying himself both with the saving acts of God and the ones act need saving. Why? To be our Savior. Where every other man (every other one who had flesh) had failed when faced with the lure of the enemy, Jesus is tempted in all ways like us yet without sin. (Hebrews 4:15)

"Command these stones to become bread," the Devil says, "aren't you the Son of God? Surely the Son of God, shouldn't lack anything, especially something so essential as simple bread." Have you ever heard these words before in your own life? Listen closely and learn this lesson

from the playbook of the enemy: Satan will tempt you by telling you that God is not enough, there is something else in this world that satisfies other than Jesus.

But learn from Jesus, what does he say? *Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.* Desiring God, obeying God, must become more important for us than even our physical needs. Physical needs are based upon what we know, upon what we see, but we are not to live our life based upon what we may think is a need, we are to live our life based upon what he says. Here is what we know, our stomachs may hunger, our eyes grow dim, but still our trust will be in him who says he will never leave us nor ever forsake us. Physical pains are for a moment, but he is for all eternity. He is fulfillment of all of our needs. All of your needs will be met just by simply knowing Him.

This is why these times in our country are so good for the church. We are in an election year, during the time of great crisis in our culture. We are losing our moral moorings as a culture and are losing our ability to determine what is right and what is wrong. Questions have arisen in the last 5 years that have never arisen in history and all of the questions have to do with what should be basic right and wrong. More questions will come as we drift further from the dock of truth and into the sea of relativism. This election year is a historic election year for so many reasons, and never before have I seen such divisiveness between Christians over which candidate is best suited to lead this country. I asked my little 5 year old who she was voting for this morning and at first she hesitated for the longest time in deep contemplation. Her hesitation is right where all of us need to be not just in this election but in every election. I wonder in all the cross talk how often what is said in those conversation reveals the longing of our hearts. What is the better that we longing for? Less taxes, better healthcare, feeling safer - not bad things to hope for but not ultimately what we who claim the name of Jesus are to hope. What is our hope? Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done, even so come quickly Lord Jesus. Learn from Jesus and make sure that as we go into the voting booth our hearts are set on seeing the Kingdom of God come and make every kingdom, every politician bow to him. Don't settle for anything this world can offer - seek Jesus.

Oh that he would take our hearts to the place where nothing else will do except Jesus. Like the then contemporary Gospel singer George Beverly Shea used to sing: *I'd Rather Have Jesus.*

Number 2:

2. Jesus Has Come to Show Us True Religion

The Devil, not quickly giving up on his adventure to see the Son fall, tries a new tactic. If Jesus is going to stand on the Word of God then the Devil wants to see how much Jesus is ready to live by every Word of God. So he takes him to a high place and shows that he knows Scripture too.

Every false teaching is just that, a false teaching. When the Mormons come to your door, they will have the Bible, it will be thicker than yours but they have their scripture. When you run into a Jehovah's Witness in the Walmart parking lot and he gives you a tract, he will probably have his copy of his scriptures. You may go to a church that says they teach Jesus, they have historically done so, but then you learn that they condone practices that are forbidden by Scripture. Or, you may go to the church that you have always gone and after sitting through the preaching you

realize that the preacher is not teaching Christ alone but Jesus plus other stuff, even if the other stuff is good stuff. What this kind of preaching says is that Jesus is really not enough, the cross is not enough, and you need to add your flavor to Jesus to make him really good. Or, you go to hear a sermon from Matthew 4 and the sermon is centered on how you can handle temptation and it all sounds great but then you go home and think about it and realize that the sermon was not about Jesus, the sermon was about you. The sermon did not exalt Christ even though it may have made you feel good.

Knowing Scripture doesn't make you a Christian, being religious doesn't make you a Christian. The Devil is very religious, knows more Scripture than you, and he is still the Devil. So what is the point of Scripture? Scripture is not so much for man to use as it is to use man to point us to God. God uses Scripture to reveal himself to us. Scripture is not to be used by us for our ambition but is to be used by God for his goal. And his goal is glory!

Scripture must be the place that we stand so that we will not fall. A wrong view of Scripture will lead you over a cliff. How do you know if you are reading Scripture right? Here is how it starts: Scripture is intended to reveal Jesus not manipulate him. If you are at the heart of your desires then you are not worshipping God, you are worshipping yourself.

Satan quotes from Psalm 91 but look at how he uses it. He uses it for his own purposes. He quotes from verses 11 and 12 but conveniently leaves out verse 13. Listen to it:

*For he will command his angels concerning you
to guard you in all your ways.
On their hands they will bear you up, lest you
strike your foot against a stone.
13) You will tread on the lion and the adder; the young lion and
the serpent you will trample underfoot.
- Psalm 91:11-13*

Satan doesn't want us to use Scripture as God intends, because God intends to conquer Satan and all those who gladly follow him.

3. Jesus Has Come to Conquer The World

If Satan can't get him with Scripture, he will appeal to his very purpose and offer him a counterfeit. Satan offered him a kingdom that would not last, but Jesus has come to have an everlasting kingdom.

Right now Satan has his grip on the kingdoms of the world and Jesus has come to remove his death grip over the world. Jesus has come to enemy territory to redeem, to recapture, and to restore the kingdom of this world. As Revelation 11:15 says, *The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever.*

The way that Jesus conquered the world was by a cross, the way that he would conquer the world was by *taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men and humbling himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed upon him the name that is above every name, so that at the*

name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth, and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father (Phil. 2:7-11)

Look at what Jesus says to Satan, he speaks in the future - *you shall*. He knows what is coming, the time, when after the cross and resurrection, after making full penalty for sin and raising up humanity, Matthew 28:18 - *All authority has been given to me*. We, as his followers, as those who have received him by faith, we go in his authority everywhere we go!

You see, number 4:

4. Jesus Has Come to Be Our Savior

What is Jesus doing, why is God leading him into the wilderness to be tempted by the Devil. Jesus is making all things new in himself. He is telling a new story by reversing the old story, changing the outcome for his glory. Each time he quotes Scripture to the Devil it is from Deuteronomy, each time recalling Israel's wanderings in the wilderness of Judea where God was testing them to see what was in their hearts. And what God saw in the hearts of Israel was stubbornness and rebellion. They were unable to obey because of the failure of Adam.

But, now Christ has come and where the first Adam failed to be faithful in the garden, Christ was faithful even in a dessert. Where Adam had plenty of food and failed, Jesus has no food and refused the food offered by the snake.

He has come to be our Savior, to begin a new day, a day not of disobedience but of obedience, a day where life will reign instead of disobedience and death.

Learn from Jesus. What was his weapon against Satan? Scripture. Trust what God says, learn to hear his voice clearly even when you hear another voice saying almost the same thing. Make your stand where Jesus stood - the Word of God. Before Jesus battled Satan in the wilderness you and I could no hope of victory in temptation, but now that Jesus has won, now that Jesus is our savior and we are in him, the victory is already ours.

We are his people. What does this mean? This means that in this life we are not seeking a temporal kingdom but longing for the day when King Jesus will come and establish his everlasting kingdom. We know that nothing in this world will ever truly satisfy us and so we continually long for our only satisfaction - Jesus. We are not compromising with Satan, but battling him in an ongoing battle as we stand securely in the strength of our Savior, the one who conquered sin and death.

Now I want you think with me this morning. At the end of this message, where are you standing? Is the bridge that you are walking leading to nowhere, is your bridge as flimsy as the one we showed earlier? Or, are you standing on the Rock of Ages? One will collapse, the other will save you.