

THRIVE AT HOME – Dial 91:1 – Week 3

Monday – A Brief Introduction To Jesus’ Temptations - Luke 4:1-13

Temptations are all around us. Many times in our lives, there is something or someone that tries to deceive us and move us away from what God wants us to do. This is usually so subtle that we are rarely aware of it. It happens when we least expect it, when we are least prepared for it. And when it does come, we are caught off guard. C.S Lewis in his book *Screw Tape Letters* gives us two categories many Christians fall into. One group over emphasizes the work of the devil and makes him the cause of everything that happens. From headaches to fevers, from lying to cheating, all events are the result of the devil’s work. The other group of Christians do not acknowledge the evil one at all. They live their lives as though he does not exist or even if he does, has no relevance in any of their situations. Both categories, Lewis says, are wrong. Wisdom gives us the ability to recognize the work of the evil one and to be able to discern how and why temptations come. In the temptations of Jesus Christ we see that He is not over-emphasizing the power of the devil, but neither is he negating it completely. He gives adequate responses to each of His temptations and uses scripture to defend against the attacks of the devil. Many times we trivialize the temptations of Jesus by thinking that since He was God, it shouldn't have been much of a problem. We are under the assumption that because He was God He could do anything very easily. But that is dismissing what Christ has done and reduces him to a mere magician. Whenever we read about the temptations of Jesus in the Gospels, we have to understand that He was a man and faced the temptations as a man. The temptations were very real and extremely difficult to overcome. But our greatest saving hope is that He did overcome them.

Tuesday – The First Temptation of Christ - Matthew 4:1-4, Deuteronomy 8:3, Matthew 6:33

At the heart of the first temptation is the question, where should one’s dependence lie? The temptation the devil puts forward at a time when Jesus was at a very vulnerable state was, “If you are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread”. There is, of course, nothing wrong with eating. We see over and over again Jesus Christ having a meal with the disciples, feeding the five thousand and the Eucharist itself involves food. But in this temptation we see the evil one prompting Jesus to make food the utmost priority. That rather than depending on the Father, to solely depend on Himself and act on his power as the son of God. To exercise control over the natural world apart from the Father. But we see Jesus (though in a vulnerable state) submitting Himself to the Father. He quotes from Deuteronomy that man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God. He shows that though He has the power to exercise control over the natural world he would act only in submission to the Father. He chose dependence on God the Father over His basic instinct for food. Many times we feel like taking matters into our own hands. We feel that because we have the means to do it, we can do it. But dependence on God trumps everything else. Though we feel we have the resources to do a certain task or feel that we are capable enough by ourselves, we need to submit ourselves to what God wants us to do first and then proceed. In Mathew 6:33 Jesus says seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness. God is and should always be the one to whom we give our utmost loyalty—everything else proceeds from Him.

Wednesday – The Second Temptation of Christ - Matthew 4:5-7, Galatians 4:7

In the second temptation of Jesus according to Matthew’s Gospel, Jesus is taken on top of the temple and asked to jump in order to prove His identity. The location is very important here because the temple is very political in nature. Under the Roman rule Herod had put a statue of a golden eagle to show allegiance to Augustus. This was abominable to the Jews. When patriotic Jews had tried to break it down, Herod rounded them up and executed them. For the Jews, the temple was seen as a place that either Rome ruled or God ruled. If Jesus had jumped from the top of the temple and landed unharmed, then it would be direct proof to all the Jews that Jesus was indeed the Messiah and would have crowned Him their King. Though politically this would have seemed very appealing and the easiest way to claim His position as the ‘Son of God’, Jesus refuses the offer. Jesus showed that His identity was not something for Him to claim through such acts of glory, but by an act which was completely contrary, through the cross. Jesus refuses any offer other than what is rightfully given to Him by the Father. He is unwilling to test God and take the easy way out. We, as human beings, always have the tendency to take the easy way out—to get benefits without hard work, to want more appreciation than what we deserve, to gain more material possessions than what is rightfully ours. Our tendency to make ourselves much greater in the eyes of the world far outweigh our security in our identity as children of God. We fail to see the great value that God gives us as His own children and accept offers that can leverage our standings in the world, whether it is our jobs, in the church, within our family or anywhere else. But in this passage we see Jesus completely secure in his identity as the Son of God. He does not get enticed by the offers of the world which ultimately lead to devastation. May God open our hearts and our minds to truly understand our worth and value as His children that we may not be seduced by the offers of the world.

Thursday – Third Temptation of Christ - Matthew 4:8-11, Deuteronomy 6:13

In the third temptation of Jesus according to Matthew’s Gospel, Jesus is shown the kingdoms of the world from the top of a very high mountain. A new offer is now placed before Him—if He shifts His allegiance, all that He sees will be given to Him. The offer is one of absolute world domination, giving Jesus the opportunity to be the ultimate world ruler. At the heart of this temptation is the question of power. How do we acquire power and what do we do with it? Though we might not all be world rulers or country rulers, we all have power in some way or the other. We all exercise a level of power in our different situations. We can either use it for good or use it to propagate our own self interest. In this final offer by the devil, Jesus responds by saying, “Worship the Lord your God and serve Him only”. Jesus, powerful as He is, chooses to serve God with the power He has. He refuses an offer by which He could have used His power for His own self interest and submitted it to the feet of the Father. Just and true rulership can be harnessed only by absolute devotion to God. If we do not give ourselves to God then we will use the power we have for our own benefit, in the process condemning all those whom we exercise power on and ourselves to inconceivable harm. History is proof that rulers who have used their power to propagate their own self interest have led themselves and their nations in a downward spiral to chaos. Only by giving our complete allegiance and loyalty to God can we ever use our power in the right way. Whatever position God has placed us in, we are answerable to Him. Through our loving God who always wants to guide us and by our loving submission to Him, we can use our power to advance the Kingdom of God.

FOR FAMILIES

Unpack this past Sunday’s Next Gen at home to help your kids grow in their faith! Use a talk point in the car or around the table and have fun with the activities! Your home can THRIVE this week!



Don’t forget to put your KEY in a spot that reminds you to forgive daily!



Secret Server for the Day

How to Play: Put your names in a jar and everybody pulls one and keeps it a secret for the day or week. Your goal for the day or week is to serve that person in small ways: Helping clean up, getting something for them, saying something kind. At the end of the day or week, everyone guesses who their server was!

DINNER TABLE OR CAR RIDE QUESTIONS:



- What does serving someone else show about how we feel about them?
- What’s your favorite way someone has helped you before?
- What’s your favorite way to help someone?
- What are some ways we can serve others at home, school, or church this week?
- Is it sometimes hard to serve others? What can help it be more fun or easier?