

Jesus Is Tempted

Matthew 4:1-11

MEMORY VERSE

HEBREWS 4:15

“For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.”

WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

A beautifully wrapped gift box or bag containing something worthless like a brick, a rock, a piece of wood, or nothing at all.

A tray of various items (paper clip, eraser, ring, watch, etc.) covered with a large piece of paper or a towel and as many pencils and sheets of paper as the number of children in your class.

ATTENTION GRABBER!

"Guess the Gift" Game

Prepare a beautifully wrapped package or gift bag and display it for your class. Inside the gift bag or box, place something completely worthless like a brick, a rock, a piece of wood, or nothing at all.

Describe for your class that the contents of the package are really special, valuable, interesting, expensive, etc., and have the class try to guess the contents.

After a little while, open the package and reveal the worthless contents. Explain to the class that today we're going to learn that this is what Satan does. He offers us something that looks really beautiful. He even lies about the contents, but once the paper is taken off, what he has offered is revealed to be completely worthless. He is a liar through and through.

LESSON TIME!

Did you know that Jesus was tempted? His enemy, Satan, came to Him and tempted Him with three different temptations. God wrote it all down so we could learn from Jesus' example what to do when we are tempted. **God's word in our heart keeps us from sinning.**

Before we read this story of Jesus being tempted by Satan let's remember that Jesus is the Son of God. He could have supernaturally put Satan away from Him. He could have zapped him over to the other side of the Earth, but He didn't. Jesus also had taken on human flesh and went through this time of tempting to be our example. Watch closely what Jesus did to stand against temptation. He's showing us how to stand when we are tempted.

MATTHEW 4:1-2

Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.

And when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, afterward He was hungry.

After His baptism, Jesus obeyed God, as He always did, and went off by Himself into the wilderness. He knew that He would meet Satan and that He would go through a time of temptation. Notice that God led Him there. Satan never takes Jesus by surprise. Jesus went there specifically to be tempted by the Devil so we could learn a valuable lesson.

Do temptations that we face take God by surprise? No! He knows everything that we are facing. We need to be careful not to think that temptations in our lives are more powerful than the Holy Spirit who lives in us. If we realize that God is not surprised by the temptation and then we obey and do what God wants us to do when faced with a temptation then we will be able to stand against it.

Next we see that Jesus stayed in the desert nearly a month and a half, and the whole time He fasted. What is fasting? It's when you don't eat any food for a period of time while you concentrate on praying and fellowshiping with God. Jesus spent forty days without the distraction of food so He could give all His life, physically and spiritually to God.

What feeling do you experience when you don't eat for a while? It says Jesus was hungry. When we get hungry enough, we'll do almost anything to get food. We are weak and desperate and vulnerable when we are hungry. But Jesus wanted His entire focus on His Father.

MATTHEW 4:3-4

Now when the tempter came to Him, he said, "If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread."

But He answered and said, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.'"

Satan often chooses to come to us when we are weakened or vulnerable in some physical way. It may not be hunger. Maybe we are very tired or sick. So we need to especially be on guard during those times.

What does Satan use here to try to tempt Jesus? Bread. Satan first tempts Jesus' physical nature. We each have a body that has needs. When we are weakened because of our physical needs for food, sleep or health, Satan comes and tries to tell us to forget God for a minute and think only about our bodies and ourselves. He tried to do that to Jesus, but Jesus does the very thing He wants us to do when Satan tempts us. He uses scripture to shoot down Satan's temptation. Here Jesus quotes Deuteronomy 8:3. Jesus is showing us that **God's word in our heart keeps us from sinning.**

Jesus had this verse hidden away in His heart and was able to use it in response to Satan's temptation to satisfy His hunger by making bread out of the stones around Him. By saying this verse to Satan, Jesus is saying, "Satan, even my desperate hunger will not make me do my will instead of God's will." Living by God's word is far more important than worrying about what we want or need.

Memorizing Mania

Prepare a tray of items for the class and cover it with a large piece of paper or a towel.

Explain to the class that you are going to remove the cover from the tray for 10 seconds and that they must study and try to remember as much of the contents as they can.

At the end of 10 seconds cover the tray again and have the class write down what they saw on the tray (for younger children, have them raise their hands and tell you what they remember seeing). Use this activity to share the importance of memorizing God's word to help us not to sin. **God's word in our heart keeps us from sinning.**

MATTHEW 4:5-7

Then the devil took Him up into the holy city, set Him on the pinnacle of the temple,

and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down. For it is written: 'He shall give His angels charge over you,' and, 'In their hands they shall bear you up, Lest you dash your foot against a stone.'"

Jesus said to him, "It is written again, 'You shall not tempt the LORD your God.'"

The next temptation Satan tries is to tempt Jesus' spiritual nature. Often Satan tries this with us. If he can't tempt us physically, he tries to tempt us spiritually. He says, "You say you trust God. Why don't you test God to prove how trustworthy He really is?" He wanted Jesus to throw Himself off the high point of the temple and trust God to protect Him. That's silly. If we really trust God, we don't have to do something drastic to prove it. Perfect trust is quiet and it waits on God. It peacefully depends on God at every turn.

What does Jesus do when Satan tells Him He should do something to test God's trustworthiness? Jesus recites scripture in response to Satan to show us that **God's word in our heart keeps us from sinning**. Being tempted is not sin. Giving into temptation is sin. Jesus doesn't give into this silly suggestion of Satan. He simply says that we should not test the Lord.

MATTHEW 4:8-11

Again, the devil took Him up on an exceedingly high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory.

And he said to Him, "All these things I will give You if You will fall down and worship me."

Then Jesus said to him, "Away with you, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the LORD your God, and Him only you shall serve.'"

Then the devil left Him, and behold, angels came and ministered to Him.

This is the third temptation Satan tried with Jesus. We have seen him tempt Jesus' physical nature, His spiritual nature, and now he tempts Jesus' purpose for being on the Earth. He told Jesus to worship him and he would give Him all the kingdoms of the world. Yet Jesus knew that God is the only one worthy to be worshipped. The world could not be restored through the worship of anyone else. The kingdoms of the world could only be bought back by the precious blood of Jesus who would take away the sins of the world.

Satan always lies to us. He offers us things if we will only follow his path instead of God's. We have to remember, as Jesus did, that Satan is a liar. He offers us things that, at first, appear beautiful and worthwhile. His way often seems like a shortcut or the easy way to do something. Here he was saying to Jesus, "Worship me, and you won't have to go to the cross and suffer to gain these kingdoms back, I'll just give them to you!" It looked like an easy shortcut for Jesus. But Jesus shows us what to do when Satan tempts us and lies to us; He responds with scripture again, because Jesus is showing us that **God's word in our heart keeps us from sinning.**

When Satan comes with a temptation, our own thoughts and words and responses are weak, but the Bible tells us that God's Word is a sword. God's word will cut up Satan's temptation and reveal it for what it is, a worthless lie. We can stand against Satan's temptations when we stand on the word of God. We can stand against Satan when we use the sword of the Spirit, the word of God.

Hiding God's Word

Write down this verse on the blackboard and help the children to memorize (Psalm 119:11). "Your word I have hidden in my heart, That I might not sin against You." PSALM 119:11

Have the children read the verse out loud together. Erase one or two words and have the children read the verse again, this time including the erased words from memory. Continue to erase the words until they are all gone and the class knows the verse from memory.

Explain to the children how easy Bible memorization can be. Share with them a time in your life when you were tempted and the word of God protected you from sin.

Can you see why memorizing Scripture is very important in our struggle with the enemy? We need a strong sword against his temptation. The Bible is that sword. Did you notice that in verse ten Jesus sent Satan away by quoting the word of God? It says in verse eleven "Then the devil left Him..." The word of God tells us that we can send Satan away any time he tries to tempt us. James 4:7 tells us, "Resist the devil and he will flee from you."

Another good verse about temptation to memorize is 1 Corinthians 10:13--"No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it."

So in this verse, we see that the temptation we face is the same for everyone else. Don't kid yourself that you are tempted more than someone else or can't help yourself and must give in. God is faithful. He knows what we can stand and will only allow what we can handle. That also shows us that we have the ability, in Christ to say no to all temptation. Then we are told that God provides a way of escape. The next time we are tempted we need to pray and look for that way of escape that God provides for us. What a powerful verse to memorize!

Jesus showed us how to resist the devil by hiding God's Word in our hearts. We must memorize the Word of God; so when Satan attacks, we can stand strong on the Word of God. As we pray and trust in God, He will deliver us from temptation. He will prove Himself faithful, because **God's Word in our heart keeps us from sinning.**

God's Word Has the Answer

Have the children tell different temptations that come to mind (examples: getting angry with siblings, cheating on a test, disobeying parents, etc).

Look up Scripture verses that deal with each specific temptation (you may want to pre-prepare the verses, anticipating the various temptations your class may come up with).

Do several if time permits and have the class get involved with looking up the verses.

PRAYER

Lead the children in a prayer asking God to help them to "hide" His word in their hearts and keep them from sin. If there are any children who have not yet responded to the gospel, give them opportunity to do so.