

The Battle in the Desert

Matthew 4:1-11

I. Adam and Jesus had parallel roles.

- A. They both came as kings who represented humanity.
- B. Adam was tested in the garden.
 - 1. Would he be a faithful covenant representative?
 - (a) The answer was “no.”
- C. Jesus’ temptation was his test.
 - 1. Would he be a faithful covenant representative?
 - (a) Fortunately for us, the answer is “yes.”
- D. God used Satan as the instrument for testing.
 - 1. Satan attacks Eve and Jesus with the same tactics.
 - (a) He uses lies and manipulations, deceit.
 - (b) This is spiritual warfare.
 - 2. Satan knows human weak points, vulnerabilities.
- E. The apostle, John, wrote of three vulnerabilities (I John 2:16, NASB).
 - 1. The lust of the eyes: physical sight and perception.
 - 2. The lust of the flesh: physical, emotional desires
 - 3. Boastful pride of life: elevating self, advancing self.
 - 4. Satan attacks all three with Eve and Jesus.
 - (a) He does the same with us.
 - (b) These temptations battles display our vulnerabilities
 - 5. Lust takes a normal need and makes it the ultimate thing.
 - (a) It is a normal desire that is twisted.
 - (b) That thing has become an idol.
 - (c) We pursue it because we think it will fulfill us.
 - (d) We are seeking “life” from the thing we desire..

II. The tactics of the enemy.

- A. We can expect to be attacked like our representatives.
 - 1. Create confusion (“Did God really say...?”).
 - (a) Stir up conflict between emotion and convictions.
 - (b) Create insecurity that tempts toward control.
 - 2. Undermine trust in God (“God knows...”).
 - 3. Entice with false promises (“You will be like God”).
- B. 3 Vulnerabilities (Genesis 3:6)
- C. The attack on the Redeemer King.
 - 1. Jesus is physically vulnerable because of hunger.
 - (a) But he is spiritually strong because of fasting.
 - 2. For Jesus to redeem us he had to be like Adam and us.
 - (a) He was like us in all things except sin.
 - (b) He had chosen not to operate in his power as God.
 - (c) He had to operate as we do.
 - (d) Trusting God, walking in the Spirit, obedience.

- (e) The Spirit worked through him, empowering him.
- 3. Satan’s approach: “if you are the Son of God...”
 - (a) In the synoptic Gospels, Jesus always referred to himself as the, “Son of man.”
 - (b) He was the Son of God, but he had to be like us.
 - (c) Satan is trying to get him to use his power as the Son of God. If he does that, he has stopped being like us.
 - (d) He is tempting him to use divine power without the Spirit’s leading.
- 4. He tempts us to take control, too.
 - (a) To Eve: “God doesn’t love you. Better take care of yourself” (paraphrase).
 - (b) To Jesus: “You’re the Son of God. You have the right to feed yourself” (paraphrase).
- 5. If Jesus did that, he would not be following the Spirit.
 - (a) He would have been operating independently of the Holy Spirit.
 - (b) It would be an improper exercise of power.
 - (c) He also would have broken bread with Satan.
 - (d) Eve fails. Jesus succeeds, because he used the sword of the Spirit.

III. Temptation is based on lies. We need to fight with truth.

- A. Satan’s lies always promise life but lead to death.
 - 1. Jesus speaks truth to the lie.
 - (a) Man doesn’t live (find life) in bread alone.
 - (b) But by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.
- B. Ego is the next target.
 - 1. If you’re really the Son of God...prove it.
 - (a) Jesus knows that would be testing God.
 - (b) God does test us, but we are not to test him.
 - (c) Testing is not trusting. We need to trust (Psalm 84:12).
- C. Finally, Satan attacks the eyes.
 - 1. He shows Jesus kingdoms, power, splendor, of this world.
 - 2. It is also a more subtle attack on perception.
 - (a) What do I believe those things will do for me?
 - (b) It is about worship.
 - (c) It is about selling one’s soul for worldly gain.
 - 3. Why do we hesitate to give ourselves to Christ?
 - (a) Because we believe that the world offers us something better.
 - (b) Jesus says, Worship only the Lord your God.
 - (c) It’s about priorities.
- D. We need to be people of the Word.
 - 1. “Sanctify them by the truth. Your Word is truth.”