

# Matthew 4:1-11

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[ 0 : 00 ] Well, each night before he goes to bed, my son, who's two, Judah and I, we get into bed and! whoever else can cram into the bed and we read a bit of the bible together. Now once we've done that, we, with varying degrees of success, try and do a few of the children's catechism questions, which definitely doesn't go to plan as always. But then we pray for a few family and friends and then the last thing we do is we pray the Lord's Prayer. Now, Judah, I know that Judah, he doesn't really understand most of what we're praying when we recite it, words that are probably very familiar to you. And we've prayed it a number of times, I'm sure, like even today. But there's a line when I was prepping this week that really stood out to me, and it's one that we skip over all the time.

We move over those words so quickly. But in the prayer that Jesus taught his disciples, where he taught us to pray only a few chapters later, he tells us that there is an evil one that we need delivering from, and that there is temptation we need help to be led away from.

But you know that, don't you? Evil isn't just kind of an abstract psychological construct. You know that he is personal, and he is prowling. And you know, don't you, that temptation isn't just a theological category or concept. It is real, tailor-made testing, which you've seen lead to tragedy again, and again, and again. So make no mistake this evening, there is an evil one who seeks to lead you into temptation, and lead you into eternal tragedy. Which is why we're called by Jesus to pray, lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.

But our passage this evening, our passage this evening, in that opening verse, tells us why, although we should never trivialise the evil one, you do not need to fear him. Just read it with me. Then, verse 1, Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. Jesus was led into temptation. We pray, lead us not into temptation, but here, he is being led into it.

[ 2 : 47 ] We pray, deliver us from the evil one. But here is Jesus being led to confront the evil one and deliver his people.

Our passage this evening is the story of Jesus delivering his people from the evil one. By overcoming temptation. This is the moment. We skip over it all the time and try and get a few tips for overcoming temptation.

But this passage is the ground, it is the basis. It's what underpins your praying for deliverance. This is the testing where Jesus triumphs, so that you never have to fear the evil one.

But we're going to take that line from the Lord's Prayer, lead us not into temptation and deliver us from evil, as our kind of two headings. So, the first heading is, Jesus is led into temptation. He's led into temptation so that he can live like us.

Jesus is led into temptation so he can live like us. Jesus is heading out to deliver his people from the evil one, but the way he does it seems really surprising.

[ 4 : 01 ] Like if you were here this morning, you know that only a few verses earlier, Jesus has been the centre of this incredible supernatural display. Heaven opens, the Father declares, this is my Son whom I love.

The Spirit is poured down, descending like a dove. So you might be forgiven for expecting some dramatic supernatural display of power. After all, he is the Son of God.

So why doesn't he just summon legions of angels to come and defeat the evil one? Because he could do it. He has the whole host of heaven at his disposal.

And he could summon them in a moment to vanquish this evil one. But he doesn't. The Father seems to understand that Jesus is the Son of God.

We heard that this morning. The evil one seems to know. Just look at verse 3. If you are the Son of God, then verse 5 again. If you are the Son of God. And Jesus certainly knows that he's the Son of

God.

[ 5 : 10 ] He has all authority and power. And he's being led into the wilderness to be tempted. Instead of this mighty display of power for all to see, Jesus is actually taken away from public view.

Into no man's land, the wilderness of the Jordan. And there in verse 2, he fasts for 40 days and 40 nights. And he's hungry, starving, weakened in every way and then tempted by the devil.

But the answer to the question is actually quite simple. Jesus is led into temptation rather than leading a whole host of heaven. Because he must be like us if he is to deliver us.

You're all through the temptations that are set before us. Because Jesus, before Jesus, the evil one, is tempting Jesus to be Superman. To be like God.

He says, transform rocks into bread. He says, jump off towers and land unharmed. He repeatedly highlights that Jesus is the Son of God.

[ 6 : 24 ] And tries to get Jesus to reveal his glory. Rely on it. Display your divinity. Rather than be truly human. And depend on the help of your Father in heaven.

The devil is literally willing Jesus to summon his legions of angels. Just look at verse 6. He'll command his angels. They'll come to your aid. Exalt yourself, Jesus.

Show your glory. But Jesus resists the temptation every day. He chooses suffering rather than glory.

He chooses dependence rather than divinity. He chooses to be a man. Subject to all the struggles and temptations that come with it. And he does it all.

He endures it all. Because he's come to be our deliverer. Not just to defeat Satan. And he can only do that if he's truly man.

[ 7 : 21 ] Not just Superman. And the devil knows that too. That's why the temptations are as they are. Jesus can only deliver us from evil.

If he undoes any claim that the evil one might have on us. Jesus could defeat the devil in a moment of glory. Never forget that.

He is God. But he doesn't. He chooses to subject himself to frail humanity.

Tempted in every way. To undergo the trials that we face. But that means suffering. And to be tempted in every way that we are.

Jesus is led into temptation. To live like us. Because this will be the basis for our deliverance. Jesus has not come to be the devil defeater.

[ 8 : 25 ] He's also come to be our deliverer. We're going to be focusing on how he does that in our second point. But for the first point. I just want you to understand. This is the prerequisite of him being our saviour.

Is that he suffers the trials of those he comes to save. Jesus comes. And just think about this. The eternal son of God. Subject to the same suffering and struggles that he faced.

But the thing that makes him unique is that he does it perfectly. Do you know what? Never for a moment do his actions.

Do his thoughts. Do the motivations of his heart ever waver. Jesus is sinless. In the face of his temptation. He was like us in every way.

Yet without sin. Now that is an incredibly glorious truth. But I think it can make Jesus feel quite remote sometimes. When we're struggling and tempted with sin.

[ 9 : 26 ] We worry that Jesus isn't really able to sympathise with us. That you don't really know what it's like. Because I'm going through this struggle. And you never really did. Because you were perfect. But when we think like that.

We've misunderstood. We think Jesus. You can sympathise with my frail body. And the bits that break my physical hurt. You can understand my emotional distress.

Because I read about tears rolling down your cheeks. As you stared at the grave of a friend. But my battle with sin. Do you really understand? Now the one thing that seems to dominate so much of my life.

That seems to trap me and snare me all the time. You don't really understand. He's perfect. How could he? But when we think like that.

We really do misunderstand. The gloriousness of what's going on here. Because Jesus' perfection. At every phase of his temptation. Doesn't mean that he's unable to identify with your struggle.

[ 10 : 29 ] And fight with sin. He's far from it. It actually means that he is able. To infinitely more understand. Your struggle than you are. When temptation comes.

We battle don't we? We fight. But we're so quick to give in so often. Temptation is almost like a weight. But it comes. And the burden of temptation. It pushes down. More and more. And heavier and heavier. Until we break. And we give in. But Jesus never gave in. So he experienced the full weight. Of all that temptation. He experienced that struggle. Infinitely more. Than we who are so fleeting with that temptation. And given so quickly. The weight of temptation. We endure.

[ 11 : 28 ] The weight of temptation. We endure. Is minimal. In comparison to what Jesus endured. Sin seems to just spring forth. In a moment. And with almost no enticement. But it is precisely because Jesus didn't give in to temptation.

That he knows your struggle. Even better than you do. Think about this. The devil had to deploy. All the resources of hell. Against Jesus. And he remained without sin. Pressing down. Harder and harder. Yet he remained faithful. Jesus understands our temptation. And struggle with sin. Infinitely more. Because he endured it. Until there was nothing left to tempt him with. He felt the full force. Of hell's ferocity. He lived like us.

[ 12 : 26 ] Perfectly. Just look at the last verse of that passage. He even needed. Not to summon angels to defeat Satan.

But to minister to him. Because he had emptied the tank. And needed the help of angels to minister to him. So when you're struggling. When you're finding it hard. When temptation is crouching at your door. He knows how hard it is to keep going. He knows how hard the struggle is for you. But then just think. Jesus now is sat at the right hand of the Father in heaven. And he looks down at your battle with sin. He sees you struggling to be patient with your spouse. He sees you struggling. With the temptation to click on that link or not. To lie on that expense form. To not grumble about difficult situations.

[ 13 : 28 ] He sees all the temptations and struggles. I think we imagine Jesus up there. Like an angry boss. Going. I cannot believe.

That you've put yourself in this situation again. How on earth. Like have you done this again. Or just kind of a. An absent parent who just goes. Not that type of this. But that is not how Jesus views you. In the face of your temptation. To a Jesus. He sees your struggle. Your fight with temptation. He knows it infinitely more. And he is moved. He is moved with love and compassion. He knows what it's like. He is endured far worse. So it moves him to pray. Father. Lead them not into temptation. Deliver them from evil. Jesus is at the right hand of the Father in heaven.

[ 14 : 29 ] Interceding for you in the face of your temptation. Knowing your struggle infinitely more. Jesus was led into temptation to live like us.

He lived everything we've lived. Every temptation. Every trial. Yet without sin. That brings us to our second point. Jesus was not just led into temptation to live like us. But Jesus delivers us from the evil one. By living for us. By living for us. There is so much comfort to be gained. By knowing the temptation that Jesus endured. And what it means as we struggle and fight temptation. But I want us to move now. Just from the kind of empathy. And sympathy that Jesus experiences. To him. How he remedied. And remedies it. How he moves it. Just from seeing and being moved by it. To actually doing something about it. How does Jesus deliver us from the evil one?

[ 15 : 29 ] Well. He delivers us from the evil one. In these verses. By reliving. The history of his people. He delivers. Us from the evil one.

By reliving the history of his people. We've seen that Jesus comes. And identifies with his people. And temptation and testing. But this is the good news. Not just the comforting news. Jesus comes and does what God's people have failed to do. He obeyed. That we skipped over it in our first point. But I'm sure you noticed. That Jesus is in the wilderness for 40 days and 40 nights. That 40 is a number that throughout the Bible is used for times of testing. But in the context of our passage.

It's meant to make you think about one moment in particular. And that's God's people who were wandering in the wilderness. For 40 years before they passed the test. And were able to pass into the promised land.

[16:26] So it's no coincidence. That Jesus begins here in the wilderness. Just like Israel. For 40 days. But the number 40 is just our first clue that Jesus is reliving the history of his people.

Because. Just look again at verse 3 with me. We'll look at each of the temptations in turn. But the first one to verse 3. The tempter came to him and said. If you're the son of God. Tell these stones to become bread.

The first temptation. Jesus is starving. Jesus is being called to miraculously feed himself. Rather than to trust in his father to sustain him. It seems like the perfect temptation.

Because. Just imagine having not eaten for a day. Or two days. Or three days. And that length of 40. Starving.

Thirsty days. In the wilderness. But this isn't just kind of a craftily devised temptation of the devil. No this.

[17:29] Is Jesus replaying the history of his people. That Jesus answers this temptation from a quote in Deuteronomy 8.3. It is written. He says. Man shall not live on bread alone.

But on every word that comes from the mouth of God. God the quote recalls the story of the Israelites being given manna from heaven. They were wandering in the wilderness.

But God supernaturally provides for them. Again and again. Even when it looked like he wouldn't.

But we know how the story goes don't we? Instead of trusting their heavenly father.

They grumble and question his goodness. They gave into temptation and they distrusted God. But here. Here though. Jesus is reliving the history of Israel.

Hungry in the wilderness. But trusts his father to sustain him. This test is about trusting his father. Jesus is tempted. And Jesus triumphs. Where God's people have failed.

[18:28] And then you move to verse 5. And he continues to trace Israel's history. That this temptation. At this time. It's not so much about trusting his father. But testing him.

Just read verse 5. Then the devil took him. To the holy city. And set him on the pinnacle of the temple. And said to him. If you're the son of God. Throw yourself down. That this verse.

He said. Keeps on going. Saying angels will help you. Angels will help you. You seem to trust your father. Says the devil. But will you test him? In response.

Jesus again. Quotes from Deuteronomy. This time from chapter 6. The context. Might not be as familiar to us. But. Jesus is pointing to the moment. In Israel's wilderness wandering. When they're at Massa.

And they didn't believe. That God would ultimately. Bring them into the promised land. Instead. They have the audacity to say. Is the Lord with us or not? They put God to the test.

[19:30] And Jesus here. Is replaying the history of his people. But doing it perfectly. They put God to the test.

But here Jesus. Is tempted to cast himself down. To see if God was with him. He says. No. I trust my father. And then verse 8.

Again the devil took him. To a very high mountain. And showed him. All the kingdoms of the world. And all their splendor. All this. Everything in the world. I will give to you. He said.

If you bow down. And worship me. You know. This final temptation. There's no. Veiled attempt. To disguise. What the evil one is doing. There's no subtle.

Questioning. Of Jesus' trust. Or whether he would test God. He comes straight out. And says.

Commit treason. Against the living God. Jesus is offered the world.

[20:32] All Jesus would have to do. Is worship the devil. Rather than God. Have God's good gifts. And reject God in the process. Gain the world.

And forfeit your soul. That's what Satan is saying. Jesus responds wisely. Quoting Deuteronomy 6. Verse 13. Worship.

The Lord your God. And serve him. Only. The quotation doesn't really point. To a particular moment. In Israel's wilderness wandering.

Of God's people. Rule. But I think that's the point. Because although there is something unique to Jesus. About this temptation. There's a temptation that comes to all.

For God's people isn't it? Chase the world. And all it has to offer. Without reference to who it belongs to. Build your kingdom.

[ 21 : 29 ] In the little corner of God's world. And forget the true king who rules over it all. What good is it to have stuff.

And forfeit your soul. There's a temptation that comes to us all. But. Jesus feels it uniquely. He is here. Set out on a journey. To save his people. Equipped with the spirit. Hearing the voice of the father saying. This is my son.

Set out on a mission. To save his people. To deliver them from the evil one. He knew the sufferings. The humiliation. The degradation. That was going to cost him. To deliver his people. And here is the evil one saying. Just don't do it Jesus. Just don't do it. I will give you all the kingdoms of the world.

[ 22 : 26 ] And their glory. If you'll just worship me. You don't have to go to the cross. Just bow to me. But where we commit treason.

Saying. Suffering now and glory later. Isn't really for me. Saying cost. And sacrifice. Isn't really for me. Jesus.

Without. A blink of an eye. Was obedient on behalf of his people. Jesus says. Knowing. And being obedient for.

Knowing. That being obedient to his father. Meant suffering and persecution. And trial. He said that's more worth. Of anything. Than the world has to offer.

So I hope you can see. That Jesus is reliving the history of God's people. But this time doing it perfectly. He delivers his people from the evil one. By living for them.

[ 23 : 27 ] Reliving their history. And representing God's people. United to God's people. Jesus. Disarms the devil. By passing. By passing.

By passing. Every test and temptation. So Satan has nothing left to say. At the end of these temptations. He has nothing left to say. There is no more accusation.

Because perfect. Perfect. Perfect. Is the message at every step. And God's people. United to him. As he relives their history.

Certainly there are no accusations. Against God's people either. Because the verdict for his people. United to him. As he passes the tests for them. Is perfect.

Perfect. Perfect. At every step of the way. The evil one. Has no more ammunition to fire. Because Jesus has taken it all.

[ 24 : 26 ] The devil is a prowling lion. Roaring. Seeking to devour. But because Jesus passes the test.

He's toothless. He has no bite. On God's people. Because they have the verdict. Perfect. Because Jesus relives their history. But he's not just reliving.

The history of God's people. In the abstract. This isn't just kind of a. Hey isn't it cool. That Jesus is picking up on patterns. In the Old Testament. And following in the footsteps. So this moment.

In Matthew 4. Jesus is reliving your history. Your history. Every time. Temptation comes.

And you give in. Every time. You've stumbled. It's almost pointless. To give examples. Because we know. Our failure to obey God. And when we face temptation. Do you know.

[ 25 : 26 ] Those little patterns of sin. That constantly seduce us. And those bigger moments. When we look back. And just go. I cannot believe. I did that. All of those moments.

Jesus is here. Living. Perfectly. Your history. So that Satan has no accusation against you.

United to him. The devil is toothless. He comes to bite. But he has nothing. In Jesus. You have perfect righteousness.

Always obeyed. Is your verdict. United to him. Jesus delivers us from the evil one. By living for us. And giving us the perfect verdict. You need not fear the evil one. Because although he roars. He's toothless. And he can never call me guilty.

[ 26 : 25 ] Because I'm united to Jesus. And have his perfect obedience. As confidently. As Jesus declares. Get behind me Satan. Be gone.

You can say the same. Because you have his perfect righteousness. As he relives your history. To God.

Praise God. That Jesus was led into temptation. Because through that temptation. He empathizes. And sympathizes. With your struggle. Infinitely more than you do.

But this is also the moment. When he led. His people. Out of captivity. For Satan. For Satan. He delivered them. Pray that line.

In the Lord's Prayer. With confidence. Pray it. With confidence. Because. Jesus was led. Into temptation. So that we might not fear.  
[ 27 : 22 ] The evil one. Let's pray.