

## **Faith in the Home**

### **First Sunday of Lent: Matthew 4:1-11, "If you are..."**

We all desire recognition. We want to be loved. We want to be important to someone or some group. We want to be validated. We desire to be seen as good. The question is how? How do we prove that we are good? Does the size of your house, and the stuff you have in it prove how good you are? Does what other people think of you truly define you as good?

Two, of the Ten Commandments (9 and 10) deal directly with coveting, desiring things that we do not have and placing our hopes in these things rather than God. These commandments point out the discontentment that we have in our hearts. In our nation with our economy there are certainly lots of stuff for us to desire and consume, but the desire for stuff is just a band aid for the discontentment we often feel about ourselves. The world and the devil fill us with lie upon lie about what gives us self-worth, and how we should see and define ourselves. After Jesus was baptized, He spent 40 days and nights fasting in the wilderness in order to be tempted and tested by Satan. When Adam and Eve were first tempted by the serpent in the garden they fell and were condemned under God's Law. But Jesus, both the Son of God and Son of Man, would face Satan and ultimately withstand his attacks.

How did Satan attack Jesus? Three temptations were listed. In the first two, Satan questioned Jesus' very identity, "If you are the Son of God..." The first seemed simple and harmless. Jesus did not have anything to eat for 40 days. "If you are the Son of God," Satan tormented, "then turn a stone into bread." It's not wrong to need food. How we go about getting it matters, but Satan is really saying, "If you are the Son of God, prove it." Oddly enough this was what Jesus came to do. Isn't that what much of our salvation depends on? Knowing that Jesus is the Son of the God? Yes, but what we do and how we do things matters.

Which leads us to second temptation that was recorded. Satan took Jesus out of the wilderness into Jerusalem to the top of the Temple, where again, he tempts Jesus, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down and let God's angels catch you." Satan even quotes from Psalm 91 to tempt Jesus here. Had Jesus done this and let the angels catch him surly people in Jerusalem would have noticed.

Finally, the easiest way to have the world given to Jesus comes when Satan shows Jesus all the kingdoms and says they are all yours if you worship me. Could you imagine knowing that you had to go through most gruesome death to win back your creation, but

then having the opportunity get it without suffering? As each temptation came, and Jesus filled with hunger, fended off Satan with God's Word and a firm trust in His identity in God.

When Jesus was baptized His Father proclaimed, "This is my beloved Son, with Him I am well pleased." This also applies to us because we have been baptized into Christ's death and resurrection. Because you believe, "With you, God is well pleased." You don't have to prove your self-worth or your goodness. You do not need anyone else's validation or assurance because you have God's assurance in Christ. Even when you sin and fall short, Christ loved you to the point of suffering for you and dying for you rather than worshiping Satan. You are loved by God. Nothing else or no one else can fulfill your needs like God can and does, and will continue to do. Nothing and no one can make you good, except God, who sent His Son to save you, and Jesus did just that.

***How can we teach and model applications from this story to our children?***

1. Turning off temptation isn't simply telling ourselves to stop desiring whatever is tempting us. When temptation comes it is important to switch your mind to something else (It may help to physically leave where you are as well). If you believe something other than God will bring contentment (a better house, an opportunity to cheat on a spouse, a porn fix, an amazon purchase, whatever it is), one spiritual weapon to combat evil desire and discontentment is thanksgiving and praise to God for what you do have. Even if you can honestly say all that you have is the shirt on your back and God Himself, give thanks to Him. That praise and thanksgiving will remind you who are in Christ, and allow the Father to "Lead you away from temptation."

2. At the dinner table or before your children go to bed, ask them what they are thankful for. Then pray and thank God for it. We are in a spiritual war, and training our children to have gratitude will only help build them up to be grateful people.

3. Expose yourself and your family to others who have may have less than you. Whether it is going to a goodwill, a homeless outreach center, or giving to a charity to that helps poor children in Asia or Africa, these are the kind of things that help you battle discontentment and allow God to grow for you not just a spirit of gratitude and contentment, but one of generosity.

4. Remember that God's grace is more than sufficient to make you good in His eyes, and give you value as a child of God. God sees His Son's blood shed on you and "with you, He is well pleased."