

Lesson 4 . . . Temptation in the Wilderness

Gospel of Matthew

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Notes From the Podium

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These notes are intended to augment your own reading and study of the lesson. Please use as an aid to help document the main message of the lecture.

Matthew 4:1-25

I. Jesus in the Jordan

- A. He is washed with the sins of the world.
- B. He is bathed in the love of His Father.
 - 1. “This is my beloved son in whom I delight”
 - 2. Jesus is filled with that love “which moves the sun and all the stars”. – Dante

II. Jesus, driven into the desert by the Holy Spirit

- A. He goes on the attack. (Note our Lord’s responses to Satan come from Deuteronomy.)
- B. Jesus does what the Israelites could not do in the desert.
 - 1. He is faithful.
 - 2. He does so not by the power of His divinity, but by the obedience of His humanity.
- C. Finally, the firstborn son, the true Israel, is faithful to His Father.

III. Eden destroyed

- A. Eden is now turned into a desert.
- B. We will see again those first temptations that destroyed the garden in the beginning.
- C. Jesus is the new Adam.
 - 1. Our Lord is not fractured by original sin.
 - 2. His passions do not war against His intellect.
 - 3. He cannot be tempted in the same fashion that we are.
- D. Satan will tempt our Lord in the same fashion that he tempted our first parents.
 - 1. The temptations are good in themselves.
 - 2. Satan, who can create nothing, must use something that is good and try to make it appear to be something it is not.

IV. Jesus fasts

- A. 40 days and nights
 - 1. The Israelites were in the desert for 40 yrs.
 - 2. Moses received the law over 40 days on the mountain.
 - 3. Noah endured 40 days of rain.
 - 4. “40” – Symbolic of a long period of time in which fidelity is important.
- B. Afterwards, our Lord is hungry.
 - 1. Only when he turns His eyes back toward the world does He notice His hunger.
 - 2. He is ordered – lower desires are secondary to the higher desires.
- C. The purpose of fasting
 - 1. The ordering of Love
 - 2. Differentiating between the one thing that is necessary and everything that is less
 - 3. “*Iniquitas est desertio meliorum*” – All iniquity is the desertion of the greater for the lesser.
 - a. Sin = Conversion



Notes From the Podium (cont)

- i When we sin, we turn our faces away from our Lord.
 - ii We turn toward something that is less.
 - b. *Iniquitas* (iniquity) is the desertion of the greater in favor of the lesser.
 - D. “*Pros ton theon*”, “He is in the bosom of His Father.” – St. John
 - 1. Even in His humanity
 - 2. He directs His humanity and all those who will be incorporated into Him toward the face of His Father.
- V. The Temptations
 - A. When?
 - 1. Satan wait until after Jesus has fasted.
 - 2. Satan strikes when we are weak.
 - B. “**If** you are the son of God...”
 - 1. Does Satan not know?
 - 2. Or is he trying to place doubt into our Lord”
 - a. This is what Satan did in the beginning.
 - i. The woman had no reason to doubt the goodness of God.
 - ii. She only lacked the fulfillment of union with God Himself, so this is all there was to tempt her with.
 - iii. “Did He really tell you not to eat from the tree in the garden?”
 - b. Doubt was inserted.
 - 3. Satan hopes to make Jesus doubt the goodness of God.
 - a. “**If** you are the son of God, He wouldn’t want you to be hungry...”
 - b. “**If** you are the son of God, command these stones be turned into bread.”
 - c. As if to say, “If God won’t do it, you do it for yourself.” (Interestingly, this is the same thing he said to the woman, “Take it for yourself”.
 - 4. Jesus responds:
 - a. “It is written ‘man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.’”
 - i. Satan wants our Lord to act outside of His Father.
 - ii. Our Lord never does any miracle for Himself, but always to manifest that He is the son of God.
 - b. Christ is the “word that proceeds from the mouth of God.”
 - i. The Bread come down from heaven
 - ii. The Bread that satisfies not the lesser hunger of the belly, but the greater hunger of the soul
 - C. Satan takes Jesus to the pinnacle of the Temple in the Holy City.
 - 1. “If you are the son of God, throw yourself down...”
 - a. Satan knows that the Fr. dwells in the temple.
 - b. It is as if he is saying, “You will pass right by the face of your Father”.
 - c. Satan quotes from Psalm 91:
 - i. “For God commands the angels to guard you in all your ways. With their hands they shall support you, lest you strike your foot against a stone.”
 - ii. Satan selectively quoted, as the very next verse of that Psalm reads: “You shall tread upon the asp and the viper, trample the lion and the dragon.”
 - 2. Jesus responds
 - a. He does not take the bait and make the Father prove His love.



Notes From the Podium (cont)

- b. He trusts as the woman and Adam did not.
- c. “It is written, ‘you shall not tempt the Lord your God’”
- D. All the kingdoms of the world...
 - 1. Satan says, “All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me.”
 - a. Are they his to give?
 - i. Yes
 - ii. Adam had dominion, but like Esau, he sold his birthright and gave it over to Satan.
 - b. Note that the smaller temptations led up to this one.
 - i. First a small desire – hunger
 - ii. Ultimately, mortal sin – “Fall and worship me.”
 - 2. Jesus’ response
 - a. He is no longer tranquilly quoting Scripture.
 - b. The suggestion that He should fall down and worship anyone but His Father receives a rebuke.
 - c. Our Lord has passed the test and will now vanquish Satan.
 - i. *Hupage* – “Be gone!”
 - ii. “You shall worship the Lord your God and Him alone shall your serve.”
- E. All this the new Adam, the son of Israel, does in his humanity.
- F. Satan departs and the angels come and minister to Jesus.
- VI. Note the differences:
 - A. Satan can only attract us by offering to give us something, never just with himself.
 - 1. Glory
 - 2. Honor
 - 3. Pride
 - 4. Bread
 - B. Our Lord attracts us with Himself.
 - 1. He uses Himself as the bait.
 - 2. He is about to go fishing...
- VII. John is arrested; Jesus withdraws to Galilee.
 - A. “Repent, for the Kingdom of heaven is at hand.”
 - 1. *Metanoietie* – to have a 2nd thought, to change one’s mind
 - 2. He wants us to turn and see, not a theory, a philosophy, or a way of life, but The Way.
 - B. He is going to draw people to Himself.
- VIII. Simon and Andrew
 - A. Why these two brothers?
 - 1. We do not know.
 - 2. We see time and again that our Lord’s election is inscrutable.
 - B. Jesus sees them casting their nets and He casts a net of His own.
 - 1. He uses Himself as the bait.
 - 2. He only needs to show a glimpse of Himself to attract.
 - C. Why do they follow Him?
 - 1. Jesus says, “Follow me...” and “immediately they left their nets and followed Him.”
 - 2. They only needed a glimpse.
- IX. James, the son of Zebedee and John his brother are with their father.



Notes From the Podium (cont)

- A. The price of the Kingdom has increased.
 - 1. Now to follow Jesus means leaving not just a boat and a net, but also a father.
 - 2. All love must be subject to the Father.
 - B. “He called them and they immediately left their boat and their father and followed Him.”
- X. Teaching and Healing
- A. Our Lord has moved from solitude to the multitude.
 - B. He will not be alone again until death.