

“You are on the verge of wrecking your life.”

– Russell Moore, Tempted and Tried: Temptation and the Triumph of Christ



Lessons from the Wilderness – Appetite and Self Provision

Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. And after fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. And the tempter came and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread.” But he answered, “It is written, “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.” (Matthew 4:1-4)

The Place of Temptation: The Wilderness

- ❖ The Wilderness – a solitary, lonely, desolate and uninhabited place; a person deprived of the aid and protection of others, especially friends, acquaintances and family
- ❖ The Wilderness...
 - Follows the revelation of Jesus to the world at His baptism
 - Reveals the two sides of the coin – trial/temptation
 - Is where the devil waits and waits and waits

The First Temptation

- ❖ Jesus is hungry
 - Hunger and other appetites are given to us by God to prompt us toward the necessary – e.g. food, water, procreation, money, rest
 - Sin has warped our appetite drive – we are gluttons
- ❖ The tempter is sly
 - The tempter strokes the ego – *You can handle this on your own. Take matters into your own hands. Solve your own problem. (Food deprived? Make your own bread. Not satisfied with the sex you are getting? Have an affair. Unhappy with the money situation? Embezzle a few dollars. Etc. – Just take matters into your own hands, cause you’re the dude!)*
 - The tempter implies the Father is withholding something good – *He has left you among the rocks when what you need is food.*

➤ The tempter entices the senses – *Why doesn't the tempter tempt with pureed cockroaches in a maggot sauce?*

❖ Jesus is steadfast

- Jesus knows who He is – He is the Son of God on mission from God.
- Jesus knows where He is – not just in the wilderness, but in the human story; Jesus is where Eve and Adam were. (confer Genesis 3:1-6)
- Jesus knows who His Father is...and trusts Him – His quote from Scripture is not a chant to ward off evil, but a statement of His faith in and reliance upon His Father. (confer Luke 11:11-13)

So...

❖ Do you have a proper grip on who you are?

The tempter is an expert at playing on our self-perceptions, whether egotistical or self-debasing. The truth is we are sinners, but we are saved by grace through Jesus Christ and thus the very children of God. The Gospel provides us with a balanced self-perception.

❖ Are you aware of where you are?

Sometimes we are led into the wilderness and other times we wander there. The question is do we see what is happening around us and to us in time?

❖ Who are you going to listen to?

Are you going to be led away by your perverted desires into sin? Or are you going to listen to your Father, trusting His Word and that His purposes for you are good?

Help for the Wilderness

Know the Father before the wilderness. *"I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you."* (Psalms 119:11)

Develop faith in the Father before the wilderness. *"So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ."* (Romans 10:17)

Trusting the Father, subject your appetites to His good and perfect will through the power of Christ. *"We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. For one who has died has been set free from sin."* (Romans 6:6-7)

Next Week: *Lessons from the Wilderness – Jump and See*