

First Sunday of Lent

February 10, 2008

[] = Instructions for worship planners and worship leaders: delete from the worship folder
() = Information for the congregation: include in the worship folder and/or PowerPoint.

[Note: **Worship Alive Plus!** is designed to be useable/adaptable in planning contemporary, blended and “fresh traditional” worship.]

[Revised Common Lectionary © 2008 Fellowship Ministries,
by Kelly Ferrari, Julie Koenemann, Rev. Maxwell Quinn]

WORSHIP THEME: “Fight the War with the Word”

Life is difficult and at times it is a real daily battle. St. Paul tells us that we do not battle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers and authorities, against the powers of this dark world, and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. There’s a real enemy. There’s a real war going on daily!

+ WE PREPARE OUR HEARTS +

[Worship Planners: A Worship CD and/or the praise team can play in the background 10-15 minutes before the service. Then the first congregational song can begin at the scheduled service time.]

Jesus’ time in the desert as He faced temptation is how we learn to fight such a war. When the forces of darkness come against us, we can stand firm, holding fast and overcoming every temptation that comes to us. It was not because Jesus was God that He overcame temptation, but because of how He handled it. So, listen up! Stand up! Hold firm! Do what Jesus did! Fight the war with the Word.

WELCOME AND FELLOWSHIP¹

OPENING SONGS²

[choose 2 or 3 of the songs listed below or from elsewhere in this service]

O Worship The King

[www.worshiptogether.com]

Chris Tomlin

O worship the King all glorious above O gratefully sing His wonderful love
Our Shield and Defender the Ancient of Days Pavilioned in splendor and girded with praise

O tell of His might O sing of His grace Whose robe is the light and canopy space
His chariots of wrath The deep thunderclouds form
And dark is His path on the wings of the storm

O measureless might ineffable love While angels delight to worship above
Thy mercies how tender how firm to the end Our Maker Defender Redeemer and Friend

¹ Welcome everyone; briefly announce the theme of the service and offer an opening prayer on that theme; have them rise and greet one another. A Praise Team member can *lightly* play harmonies in the background, building gradually into the first song.

² For Traditional or Blended Music suggestions, see the options which come after the contemporary songs.

Ending

You alone are the matchless King To You alone be all majesty
Your glories and wonders What tongue can recite
You breathe in the air You shine in the light

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Mighty To Save

[Lead lines on www.praisecharts.com;

Church charts on www.iwillworship.com and chords only on www.pwarchive.com]

Ben Fielding | Reuben Morgan

Chorus

Saviour He can move the mountains
My God is mighty to save He is mighty to save
Forever Author of salvation
He rose and conquered the grave Jesus conquered the grave

Everyone needs compassion Love that's never failing
Let mercy fall on me Everyone needs forgiveness
The kindness of a Saviour The hope of nations

So take me as You find me All my fears and failures
Fill my life again I give my life to follow
Everything I believe in Now I surrender

Ending

Shine your light And let the whole world see
We're singing for the glory Of the risen King Jesus
Shine your light And let the whole world see
We're singing for the glory Of the risen King

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Step By Step

[ATBS 1:207; HMS 13:1103; MSPW 51; W&P 132]

David "Beaker" Strasser

O God You are my God And I will ever praise You
O God You are my God And I will ever praise You

I will seek You in the morning And I will learn to walk in Your ways
And step by step You'll lead me And I will follow You all of my days

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[Traditional Options]:

O Lord, Throughout These Forty Days [ELW 319; LSB 418; LBW 99; LW 92; H82 142; PH 81;
RS 553; UMH 269]

TIME OF CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS³

Pastor: It has been said that the root of most sin is pride. There's a lot of truth in that statement. It was certainly pride that caused Lucifer to fall from heaven in the first place. And so he became a master at deceiving others into wanting the same kind of recognition, fame, and power that he wanted. Fame and power are still great temptations to humankind. We love to be recognized! We love to have control. We are at our weakest when we are in the flesh, seeking to stroke our own egos. Let us confess these sins to our Father, as we learn to fight the war with the Word of God.

(A time of personal reflection and confession)

People:

Lord God, thank You for the gift of your Word. In it I can find all the answers to all my questions about how to live. You set forth Your commands to keep us from sinning and falling into temptation. You sent Your Son, Jesus Christ, to model it for us perfectly, so that we could follow His example. Yet, I have failed. I have sought my own glory, I have tried to become powerful in my own strength. Please forgive me. Holy Spirit, please help me to hide the Word of God in my heart to help me fight the battle against temptation. For it is written, "You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only shall you serve." May I serve You and You alone, Lord Jesus. Amen.

Pastor:

In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, your sins are forgiven you. Your salvation is assured by your trust and belief in the One who died to save you, Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

[Optional: Children's Message and/or Dismissal to Children's Church]

+ WE HEAR GOD'S WORD +

[It is suggested that the introductions be read out loud as well as the Scripture itself]

A Lenten Litany..... from Psalm 32 & Romans 5:12-19

P = Pastor C = Congregation

P: Oh, what joy for those whose rebellion is forgiven, whose sin is put out of sight! Yes, what joy for those whose record the Lord has cleared of sin, whose lives are in complete honesty!

C: All who receive God's wonderful, gracious gift of righteousness will live in triumph over sin and death through this one man, Jesus Christ.

³ Alternative to group recitation and placement: Don't print or project these words. Have the leader make use of some of the thoughts above, loosely and freely paraphrased on behalf of the whole congregation. ***It is also effective to weave confession and absolution between a couple songs of the opening set.***

- P: When I refused to confess my sin, I was weak and miserable, and I groaned all day long. Day and night Your hand of discipline was heavy on me. My strength evaporated like water in the summer heat.
- C: Adam's sin brought death, so death spread to everyone, for everyone sinned.
- P: Finally I confessed my sins to You and stopped trying to hide them. I said to myself, "I will confess my rebellion to the Lord." And You forgave me! All my guilt is gone!
- C: Jesus Christ brought forgiveness to many through God's bountiful gift.
- P: Therefore, let all the godly confess their rebellion to You while there is time, that they may not drown in the floodwaters of judgment. For You are my hiding place. You protect me from trouble. You surround me with songs of victory.
- C: We have the free gift of being accepted by God, even though we are guilty of many sins.
- P: The Lord says, "I will guide you along the best pathway for your life. I will advise you and watch over you. Do not be like a senseless horse or mule that needs a bit and bridle to keep it under control.
- C: Do not put your Lord God to the test.
- P: Many sorrows come to the wicked, but unfailing love surrounds those who trust the Lord. So, rejoice in the Lord and be glad, all you who obey Him!
- All: Shout for joy, all you whose hearts are pure!

FIRST READING Genesis 2:15-17; 3:1-7 (NIV)

In the familiar story of Adam and Eve and the fall, we get our first glimpse of Lucifer, or Satan, the fallen angel. Because Lucifer was banished from heaven for his rebellious pride and desire to be on the same level as God, he now successfully deceives the first humans into believing they too can be like God.

¹⁵The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. ¹⁶And the LORD God commanded the man, "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; ¹⁷but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die..."

¹Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden?'" ²The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, ³but God did say, 'You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.'" ⁴"You will not surely die," the serpent said to the woman. ⁵"For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." ⁶When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. ⁷Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.

GOSPEL Matthew 4:1-11 (NIV)

Satan leads Jesus into the wilderness where he tries to beguile and tempt Him with many offers of fame and grandeur. He tempts Him also with food, knowing Jesus has been fasting for 40

days and is very hungry. But our Lord knows exactly how to fight this battle--with the Word! He uses only Scripture to defeat the enemy, and He overcomes.

¹Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil. ²After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. ³The tempter came to him and said, "If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread." ⁴Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'" ⁵Then the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. ⁶"If you are the Son of God," he said, "throw yourself down. For it is written: " 'He will command his angels concerning you, and they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.'" ⁷Jesus answered him, "It is also written: 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'" ⁸Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. ⁹"All this I will give you," he said, "if you will bow down and worship me." ¹⁰Jesus said to him, "Away from me, Satan! For it is written: 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.'" ¹¹Then the devil left him, and angels came and attended him.

MESSAGE "Fight the War with the Word!"

[See "Sermon Starters & Seasonings" provided at the end of this service]

+ WE RESPOND TO GOD'S WORD +

[Optional location for Confession/Absolution, using materials found earlier in this service]

SONG OF RESPONSE (choose one)

Unfailing Love

[WT 7:60; www.worshiptogether.com]

Cary Pierce | Chris Tomlin | Ed Cash

Chorus

**Praise You God of earth and sky How beautiful is Your unfailing love
Unfailing love And You never change God You remain
The Holy One and my unfailing love Unfailing love**

You have my heart And I am Yours forever
You are my strength God of grace and power
And ev'rything You hold in Your hand
Still You make time for me I can't understand

You are my rock The One I hold on to
You are my song And I sing for You
And ev'rything You hold in Your hand
Still You make time for me I can't understand

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-or-

On Our Side

[WT 7:50;

[Lead lines on www.praisecharts.com and www.songselect.com;
church charts on www.iwillworship.com]

Chris Tomlin | Ed Cash | Jesse Reeves

Chorus

**If God is on our side Who can be against us
If God is on our side We won't be afraid
Though the mountains may fall And the sky will crumble
There ain't nothin' Gonna stand in our way**

Ev'ryone around the world Hear the joyful sound
See the heavens open up Hear the music coming down
Nothing's gonna separate us From the Father's love
I can't help but celebrate 'Cause we're not alone

Come one down to the riverside Wash it all away
Leave behind your troubled mind For an uncloudy day
Nothing's gonna separate us From the Father's love
I can't help but celebrate 'Cause we're not alone

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[Traditional Options]:

O Word of God Incarnate [BH 140; CH 414; ELW 514; HWC 269; LSB 523; LBW 231; LW 335]

O God, O Lord of Heaven and Earth [LSB 834; LW 319; LBW 396]

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH – Apostles' Creed

[NOTE: The following are contemporary song options for speaking the Apostle's Creed: *Because We Believe* ATBS 119; SPW 6; INTEGRITY 12 **OR** *This Is What I Believe* GB 249 **OR** The Apostles Creed Integrity 8]

I believe in God, the Father Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth.

And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died and was buried.
He descended into hell.
The third day He rose again from the dead.
He ascended into heaven
and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.
From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy Christian Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,

the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen

[OR]...

We believe in God , the Maker of heaven and earth.
He created the race of men to fellowship with Him, and to be for the praise of His glory.
He was in the beginning, and will be forever, world without end, Amen.

We believe in our Lord, Jesus Christ,
He was born of the virgin Mary, crucified under Pontius Pilate, and raised from the dead.
In His earthly sojourn He taught us how to live good and righteous lives.
By His blood shed on the cross He overcame death and the devil, setting free all who believe in Him.
He was in the beginning and will be forever, world without end, Amen.

We believe in the Holy Spirit,
The breath and power of Almighty God.
He lives within us and empowers us to fight the war with the Word of God.
He was in the beginning and will be forever, world without end, Amen.

We believe we are being saved
by the grace of God
through the blood of Jesus
in the power of the Holy Spirit,
who was in the beginning and will be forever,
world without end, Amen.

OFFERINGS

[Congregational Song Option at the Offering: Select one of the suggestions from elsewhere in the service that is yet unused]

PRAYERS⁴

[Prayer Topic Starters]

- Thanks for:
 - The most powerful warfare weapon in our arsenal – Your Word!
 - Strengthening us by the power of the Holy Spirit when we are being tempted and attacked by the enemy.
 - Angels sent to minister to us when the battle is too great.
 - The support of pastors, friends, teachers, and those in the Body of Christ who come alongside us.
 - The covering of Your blood, Jesus, Your atonement covering, that keeps us into eternal life.
- Please give us:
 - Strength to fight off the temptation to want to be “like God.”
 - Like-minded friends and family, to walk this journey with us, and help hold us accountable.
 - The desire to lead holy and righteous lives before You.

⁴ Formal language and “perfectly read” prayers are not recommended for contemporary worship. People appreciate the touching sincerity of informal prayer. “Heartfelt” prayer also teaches/models simple prayer language that anyone can use at home, in the car, the office, etc. These “**Prayer Topics Starters**” are offered to help facilitate spontaneity.

- Cause us by Your Holy Spirit and Your Word to:
 - Hide Your Word in our hearts – memorize the Scriptures – in order to effectively defeat the enemy.
 - Fast before You, knowing that fasting will draw us closer to You, and make us more hungry for the true bread!
- Local congregational and individual concerns

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, Who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.

For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

[A communion option to insert for churches celebrating the Lord's Supper on this day]

+ The Lord's Supper +

Here our Lord gives to us His own Body and Blood for the forgiveness of all our sins.

WE PREPARE

Pastor: Lord Jesus, You were tempted even as we are, yet You did not sin. And You took all of our sin upon Yourself, giving Your own life that we might live. We come to Your table, Lord, with grateful hearts. We offer our thanksgivings for Your amazing love. Amen. For on the night...[Words of Institution]

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

Pastor: The peace of the Lord be with you always.

People: **And also with you.**

(Worshippers turn to one another and share the peace which comes from the Lord with words such as, "God's peace to you.")

DISTRIBUTION SONGS – [choose as many you need]

Breathe

[ATBS 2:18; WT 3:10; MSPW 2:61; SD 26:11; SSA; VS 7:53]

Marie Barnett

This is the air I breathe This is the air I breathe
Your holy presence living in me

This is my daily bread This is my daily bread
Your very word spoken to me

And I I'm desperate for You And I I'm lost without You

I'm desperate for You I'm lost without You (repeat)
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Once Again (Jesus Christ)

[BOB 174; MSPW 2:78; SD 6:1; SD 45:13; WT 1:48; WT 4:56; WT 5:46]
[Text set into order as found in MSPW 2:78]

Matt Redman

Jesus Christ, I think upon Your sacrifice;
You became nothing, poured out to death.
Many times I've wondered at Your gift of life,
And I'm in that place once again.
I'm in that place once again.

CHORUS

**Once again I look upon the cross where You died.
I'm humbled by Your mercy and I'm broken inside.
Once again I thank You, once again I pour out my life.**

Now You are exalted to the highest place,
King of the heavens, where one day I'll bow.
But, for now, I marvel at this saving grace,
And I'm full of praise once again.
I'm full of praise once again.

CHORUS

Thank You for the cross. Thank You for the cross.
Thank You for the cross, my Friend. (3 X)

CHORUS

Once again I thank You, once again I pour out my life.

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[Traditional Options]:

The Death of Jesus Christ, Our Lord [LSB 634; LW 107]

I Am the Bread of Life [EH 335; ELW 485; WOV 702]

COMMON DISMISSAL

FINAL COMMISSIONING

Pastor: May God's blessing rest upon you this week and in all the days to come. May you remain strong in Him, fighting the war with the Word!. Amen.

People: In Jesus I am strong, and I will not be shaken!

CLOSING SONG

I Will Not Be Shaken

[SD 40:7; SSA]

Tony Guerrero

Chorus

**My soul finds rest in You My fortress and my Rock
My hope for life And my hiding place
My refuge and my God In You I've found my home
My shelter from the storm And I'll pour out my heart to You
And lean upon Your throne I will put my trust in You
I will put my hope there too I will stand upon Your word
And I will not be shaken I will let my praise show
Holding on to what I know Because I know
You're always there And I will not be shaken
I will not be shaken I will not be moved
I'm leaning on the throne Because You died for me
And called me to Your own And even when the strongest
Winds begin to blow I will stand my ground
I will not be moved I will not be shaken**

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-or-

Forever

[ATBS 2:4; HMS 16:1281; WT 4:16; SD 26:1; SD 14:5; MSPW 2:68;
www.worshiptogether.com]

Chris Tomlin

Give thanks to the Lord Our God and King His love endures forever
For He is good He is above all things His love endures forever
Sing praise sing praise Sing praise sing praise

Chorus

**Forever God is faithful Forever God is strong
Forever God is with us Forever forever**

With a mighty hand And an outstretched arm His love endures forever
For the life that's been reborn His love endures forever
Sing praise sing praise Sing praise sing praise

From the rising to the setting sun His love endures forever
And by the grace of God We will carry on His love endures forever
Sing praise sing praise Sing praise sing praise

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[Traditional Option]:

Fight the Good Fight [H82 552; HFG 613; (Pentecost; Boyd) (Rushford) H82 553 (Duke Street) LSB 664; (Grace Church; Genanoque) LBW 461; LW 299; PH 307]

Musical Notes

Music charts downloadable through:

www.Praisecharts.com

www.Wordmusicnow.com

www.Worshipleaderassistant.com

www.worshiptogether.com

www.musicnotes.com

www.musicnotes.com

www.songselect.com

Chord charts free downloads available at:

www.Iwillworship.com

www.pwarchive.com

Mp3 downloads available through:

www.Songtouch.com

www.Worshiptogether.com

www.Walmart.com

www.Itunes.com

New Songs to consider:

Our God Saves (Recorded on *Paul Baloche's Our God Saves*)

Brenton Brown & Paul Baloche © 2007 Thankyou Music (EMI Publishing), Integrity's Hosanna! Music, Music Leadworship Songs (Adm. By Integrity Music, Inc.)

Lead lines on www.songselect.com and www.praisecharts.com, and church charts on www.Iwillworship.com and www.pwarchive.com.

Keep your eyes on Songselect for this amazing new song:

You Are My God

Adam Cunningham © 2007 High Hurdle Music (Adm. By Fun Attic Music) Over Fork

SSS – SERMON STARTERS & SEASONINGS

The following ideas are merely intended to help get your own creative juices flowing and prepare your heart for God's Spirit to inspire and speak through you.

“Fight the War with the Word!” *Matthew 4:1-11*

Life is difficult and at times it is a real daily battle. St. Paul tells us that we do not battle against flesh and blood but against the rulers, authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. There's a real enemy. There's a real war going on daily! Watching Jesus' time in the desert as he faced temptation is how we learn how to fight such a war! When the forces of darkness come against us we can stand firm, holding fast and overcoming every temptation that comes! It was not because Jesus was God that He overcame temptation but, because of how He “handled it.” So, listen up! Stand up! Hold firm! And do what Jesus did! Fight the war with the Word!

Theological Reflections and Practical Applications

4:1, 2 Satan did not lead Christ to the temptation, the Holy Spirit did. *[Editor's note: Note that Jesus was “full” of the Holy Spirit at His baptism, and that, full of the Spirit, the Spirit led Jesus into the desert. The author is not saying that the Holy Spirit tempted Christ, (“God tempts no one” James 1:13) but rather, that the Spirit led Jesus into the desert where He could be tempted by Satan because he had to be “tested in every way” as we are (Heb 4:15). It is striking to me that the very Spirit which led Jesus into the wilderness was also the means by which Jesus defeated Satan using “the sword of the Spirit” (Eph 6:17), which is the Word of God.]* At the very beginning of His ministry Christ is proven to be holy and beyond the clever testings of the devil. This temptation took place immediately after Jesus' baptism (compare Mark 1:12). Spiritual victories are often followed by testings (compare Elijah in 1 Kin. 19). Following His public baptism, Jesus was led up by the Spirit **into the wilderness**, referring to the elevation of the Judean wilderness. The historical setting of the temptation, which was directed against Jesus' human nature, indicates that this was a literal experience which He really conquered, not merely a mental victory over His own thoughts. The reference to being **led up by the Spirit** makes clear the interrelation of these two members of the Godhead. In His earthly work, Jesus depended upon the ministry of the Holy Spirit to empower Him.

4:3, 4 It is written: Jesus' response to all three temptations was to quote the Word of God, showing His followers the power of Scripture in battling the Evil One (Deut. 6:13; 8:3; Ps. 91:11, 12). There was nothing *morally* wrong with turning stones to bread; the devil was tempting Jesus to do a miracle outside of the Father's will. This explains why Jesus quotes Deut. 8:3. Bread alone does not sustain life; ultimately God is the One who sustains all life. Thus it is our responsibility to trust God and remain in His will. No matter how innocent an act may be, the ultimate question is one of faith (Rom. 14:23) and God's will.

4:5, 6 throw Yourself down: In quoting the protective promise of Ps. 91:11, 12 to Jesus, the devil omitted the words “to keep you in all your ways.” The devil tempted Jesus to gain public attention through spectacle rather than through His righteous life and message. This is a danger that all of us must avoid, especially those who are often in the public eye.

4:7 Deuteronomy 6:16 emphasizes that no one should test God. The Lord asked the Israelites to put Him to the test in only one area: tithing. By giving to Him they could test whether He would fulfill His promises to bless them (Mal. 3:10).

4:8–10 Christ rebuked the devil for asking for worship, a temptation to do exactly the opposite of what every Israelite was called upon to do (Deut. 6:13, 15). Specifically in reference to Jesus, Satan was offering a crown without a cross. Jesus' experience serves as a pattern in spiritual warfare today: Jesus *resisted* Satan (Eph. 6:11, 13, 14; James 4:7; 1 Pet. 5:9), then He *defeated* Satan with consistent, meaningful use of the Scriptures (Eph. 6:17).

4:11 angels came and ministered: Having rejected Satan's offer of bread, assistance from angels, and earthly kingdoms, Jesus was immediately visited by angels who helped Him.⁵

Temptation

(Gk. *peirazō*) (Matt. 4:1; Luke 4:2; Mark 1:13; Heb. 4:15) The word means "to try" or "to make proof of," and when ascribed to God in His dealings with people, it means no more than this (Gen. 22:1). But in Scripture, the word is chiefly used in a negative sense and means "to entice, solicit, or provoke to sin." Hence the name given to the wicked one in Matt. 4:3 is "the tempter." Accordingly, "to be tempted" (4:1) is to be understood both ways. The Spirit conducted Jesus into the wilderness to try His faith; but the agent in this trial was the wicked one, whose object was to seduce Jesus away from His allegiance to God. This was temptation in the bad sense of the term. Yet Jesus did not give in to it but passed the test (2 Cor. 5:21; Heb. 7:26).⁶

Wilderness

The Correlation between the wilderness temptations of Jesus and the place of wilderness throughout the Scriptures is obvious. Moses was 40 years in the wilderness, the Israelites wandered for 40 days, King David was formed and shaped during his wilderness adventures. Moses, Israel, David, and Jesus.

Maxwell Quinn

Quotations

Crown:

Jesus refused the crown of Satan in the wilderness but accepts the crown of his people when we confess him.

Max Lucado, And the Angels were Silent

Hungry Bread:

Be Thou exalted, O God. Thou who wast made flesh in her whom thou didst make. Thou who didst hunger for our sakes, thirst for our sakes, was wearied on the road for our sakes (does the Bread hunger and the Fountain thirst and the Way get tired?). Thou who didst sleep, yet keeping Israel, dost not slumber; whom Judas sold, whom the Jews bought, yet did not possess; seized, bound, scourged, crowned with thorns; hung upon the tree, Thou dead, Thou buried, be Thou exalted, O God, above the heavens, and Thy glory above the earth.

St. Augustine

Wilderness:

Wilderness is the place where beauty and danger intersect.

Eugene Peterson, Leap Over a Wall

⁵Radmacher, Earl D. ; Allen, Ronald Barclay ; House, H. Wayne: *Nelson's New Illustrated Bible Commentary*. Nashville : T. Nelson Publishers, 1999, S. Mt 4:1-11

⁶Radmacher, Earl D. ; Allen, Ronald Barclay ; House, H. Wayne: *Nelson's New Illustrated Bible Commentary*. Nashville : T. Nelson Publishers, 1999, S. Mt 4:5-6

Illustrations

Temptation:

My boss had told me not to pick up the box until he got back. He said it was too heavy. I wanted desperately to demonstrate my worth, and attempted to carry the box myself. It was so heavy I dropped it. Not only did the contents of the box shatter – but I had dropped the box on the corner of a coffee table, and the coffee table splintered.

Satan doesn't just tempt us to do evil things – sometimes the most insidious temptation is to do something good in order to prove ourselves.

Maxwell Quinn

Testing vs. Temptation:

As the Union Pacific Railroad was being constructed, an elaborate trestle bridge was built across a large canyon in the West. Wanting to test the bridge, the builder loaded a train with enough extra cars and equipment to double its normal payload. The train was then driven to the middle of the bridge, where it stayed an entire day. One worker asked, "Are you trying to break this bridge?"

"No," the builder replied, "I'm trying to prove that the bridge won't break."

Jerry Shirley, Sermoncentral.com

The Word

Some seem to expect the Word of God to hit them like a jolt of adrenaline each time they read or study it. Although the "jolt" may hit us periodically, the benefits of the Word of God act more like vitamins. People who regularly take vitamins do so because of their long-term benefits, not because every time they swallow one of the pills, they feel new strength surging through their bodies. They have developed a habit of consistently taking vitamins because they have been told that, in the long haul, vitamin supplements are going to have a beneficial effect on their physical health, resistance to disease and, general well-being. The same is true of reading the Bible. At times it will have a sudden and intense impact on us. However, the real value lies in the cumulative effects that long-term exposure to God's Word will bring to our lives.

Troy Borst, Sermoncentral.com

On the Lighter Side ☺

Temptation:

This story comes from Readers Digest:

While my wife and I were shopping at a mall kiosk, a shapely young woman in a short, form-fitting dress strolled by. My eyes followed her. Without looking up from the item she was examining, my wife asked, "Was it worth the trouble you're in?"

Brian La Croix, Sermoncentral.com

Deliverance:

I had been teaching my three-year old daughter, Caitlin, the Lord's Prayer. For several evenings at bedtime, she would repeat after me the lines from the prayer. Finally, she decided to go solo. I listened with pride as she carefully enunciated each word, right up to the end of the prayer: "Lead us not into temptation," she prayed, "but deliver us some E-mail. Amen."

From Christianstories.com

Hokey-Pokey:

One night as my family was preparing for bedtime, my four year old daughter Claire began singing the BIBLE. As she came to the end, she combined another song. Here is what she sang. "I stand alone on the word of God, that's what it's all about." By mixing up the BIBLE and the Hokey Pokey, Claire nailed the way that each of us should view God's word.

Roger Walterhouse, Sermoncenral.com

Video Resources

Temptation Desert [Prior to Gospel or within Message]

This video focuses on the Word as the means of resisting temptation. It's available as a download from www.sermonspice.com. Simply type in the name of the video in the search bar. The video costs \$14 and runs 1:25. This video can serve as a lead in to the Gospel reading, or, as an insert within the message.

Defeating the Enemy [Good introduction to a Message on spiritual battle]

The classic video showing military preparation is a short lead-in to defeating the enemy with the Word of God. video is called Basic Communication, and illustrates, in a comedic way, selective hearing – how we hear what we want to hear. There is a reference to a massage in the bedroom – so screen the video at www.sermonspice.com in order to determine its appropriateness for your congregation. Simply type the name of the video in the search bar. The video costs \$15 and runs 3:08. This video is a powerful introduction to a message on spiritual battle. Ironically, the military focuses on weapons and strength. The Christian battle is best fought on our knees.