

# Matthew: Living Like Jesus

## Jesus is Tested in the Wilderness

→ *Survey: Let's understand the background and context of the passage.*

Tonight we will read the story of Jesus being tempted, or tested, in the wilderness. What do you think of when you hear the word wilderness? The wilderness is often associated with solitude, testing, and spiritual growth. In the Bible, it is both a place of hardship and a place where God's presence can be deeply felt.

The Jewish people hearing this story would think back to their ancestors, the Israelites, who were disobedient to God and wandered the wilderness for 40 years! They asked similar questions to what the devil asks Jesus in tonight's story: Will God provide? Will God protect? Is God sovereign? Maybe you find yourself asking those questions too. The good news of the gospel is that Jesus sets the example for us. In the ways that we fail, Jesus won - he stands in the place of our disobedience.

Jesus's time in the wilderness is pivotal in His life and ministry. Understanding his experience helps us learn how to confront our own temptations and deepen our reliance on God. In those moments of difficulty, what do you rely on & what do you turn to?

If you turn to Jesus, you are not defined by your circumstances, but you are defined by him who loves us and gave himself for us. The good news is that there is one who went through the tests and passed!

**Read: Matthew 4:1-11**

→ *Observe: Let's take a close look at what the text is saying.*

- Who led Jesus into the wilderness (v. 1)? For what purpose?
- What did Jesus do in the wilderness (v. 2)? For how long?
- What is the first test given to Jesus (v. 3)? What is the tempter questioning about Jesus?
- How does Jesus respond to the tempter (v. 4)? Are these his own words?
- Where does the devil take Jesus next (v. 5)? Does anyone know where this is?
- What test does the devil give Jesus there (v. 6)? Are these the devil's own words?
- How does Jesus respond to the tempter (v. 7)?
- What is the final temptation given to Jesus by the devil (v. 8-9)? How does Jesus respond? (v. 10)
- What happens after Jesus resists all three temptations (v. 11)?

**Read: Deuteronomy 8:1-5**

- Who led the Israelites into the wilderness (v. 2)? For how long? For what purpose?
- What similarities do you see between this passage and Matthew 4?

→ *Interpret: Let's seek to understand the meaning of this text in its original context.*

- What was the purpose of the wilderness? Why is it significant that it was the Spirit who led Jesus there?
- Let's split into 3 groups to take a closer look at the different temptations. What is the nature of each of these temptations? In other words, what is the temptation Jesus is facing?
- What do you notice about Jesus's responses to each temptation? Why is this noteworthy?
  - What does the devil's use of Scripture in the second temptation reveal about how Scripture can be misused?
- How does this passage help us understand Jesus's true purpose & mission? How does this story help set the tone for the rest of Jesus's ministry on earth?

→ *Apply: Let's explore where the text intersects with our lives and our world.*

- How does this story help put the temptations & tests you experience into perspective? What do you notice about Jesus's example of how we can handle temptations & what are some ways you want to respond differently in your life going forward?
- How might the practice of fasting, as Jesus did, help your relationship with God? Where are the places God might be calling you to fast in your life? Another way to think of it - what things in your life are distracting you from your living more purposefully? For those considering participating in Lent, how could the next 40 days help you draw closer to God?
- Anything else that God brought to mind during this study?