

Gathering Guide

for Communities and Friends

The Temptation of Christ (Part 2)

2/10/2019

Where We Are In The Bible

This week we find ourselves centered on verses 5 through 7 of Matthew Chapter 4. It is a fascinating narrative in which Jesus and Satan are somehow transported from the wilderness setting to the peak of the temple in Jerusalem. We also see how Satan attempts to use Scripture to entice Jesus to commit sin. Take time to read through Psalm 91 and think about its truth. Satan's use of this passage is an important warning to us to correctly understand and accurately teach God's Word.

Lean In

- We heard in the message how Satan misused Scripture when tempting Jesus. Can we expect him to do the same in our lives? Where do we see Scripture incorrectly and inappropriately applied today?
- If Jesus had jumped and God intervened in a miraculous way – it may have brought a certain validation that he was the Son of God. But what was the downside to this potential spectacle? What demands (or fervent requests) do we sometimes make of God to validate our position as His child? What dangers we may encounter?
- State in your own words what it means to “put God to the test”. Why would Jesus say that we should not test the Father? In view of this passage, why would God say in Malachi 3:10 to “test me”? What's the difference?

The Big Idea

Our Heavenly Father is not only our Provider as we discussed last week, but He is also our Protector. However, some have equated the Christian's protection from disease, difficulties, struggles, tragedy, etc., as a sign of God's approval. This lie from Satan has created doubt and confusion in many circumstances. It has also caused faithful Christians to make demands of God that may be opposite of His will for us. The life, death, and resurrection of Jesus show us that the approval of God can rest on his children even as they experience painful and sorrowful events in life.

Where To?

- If Jesus had jumped, do you think God would have been obligated to catch him? What is God's obligation to us when we take risks? Does it matter what kind of risk it is?
- Read Psalm 91. Do the promises of protection mentioned in this passage mean that ones who put their trust in God will be exempt from disaster, harm, pressures, and problems? Why or why not? Would you say the believer is protected *from* danger and sorrow or protected *in the midst* of hard times? Why is the distinction between the two situations an important one?
- Read Exodus Chapter 17:1-7. Notice in verse 7 how the Bible says God was tested by the Israelite nation. In what ways do we directly or indirectly cry out with this same question about God's presence? In what ways does God demonstrate His presence in our individual lives, our community groups, our church, our home, and our world? Why is it so easy to miss the signs of God's presence?
- Read the following scriptures and then express what you think it means for a Christ-follower to experience God's protection. (2 Corinthians 11:23-28; 12:7-10; Romans 8:16-18, 28, 31, 35-39) .

Prayer Focus

Lord, surround us with Your divine hedge of protection. Encompass us round about with Your strength and Your might. Let all who take refuge in You be glad, let them ever sing for joy. And may You shelter us, that those who love Your name may exult in You. For it is You who blesses the righteous man, O LORD, You surround him favor as with a shield. Amen. (Ps. 5:11-12)

