

Matthew 4:1-25 (Follow Me)

- Opening Comments – (Forgiveness)
- Opening Prayer
- Quick Review – Matthew 1 and 3

1 Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil. 2 After fasting for forty days and 40 nights, he was hungry. 3 The tempter came to Him and said, “If you are the son of God, tell these stones to become bread.” 4 Jesus answered, “It is written: Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.” 5 Then 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. 7 Jesus answered him, It is also written” Do not put the Lord your God to the test.” 8 Again, 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. 10 Jesus said to him, “Away from me Satan, for it is written, “Worship the Lord your God and serve him only. 11 Then the devil left him, and angels came and attended him. 12 When Jesus heard that John had been put in prison, he returned to Galilee. 13 Leaving Nazareth, he went and lived in Capernaum, which was by the lake in the area of Zebulun and Naphtali, - 14 to fulfill what was said through the prophet Isaiah: 15 Land of Zebulun and land of Naphtali. The way to the sea, along the Jordon, Galilee of the Gentiles—16 the people living in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned. 17 From that time on Jesus began to preach, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near.”

18 As Jesus was walking beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers; Simon called Peter and his brother Andrew. They were casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. 19 Come follow me Jesus said, and I will make you fishers of men. 20 At once they left their nets and followed him. 21 Going on from there, he saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John.

They were in a boat with their father Zebedee, preparing their nets. Jesus called them, 22 and immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him. 23 Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people. 24 News about him spread all over Syria, and people brought to him all who were ill with various diseases, those suffering severe pain, the demon-possessed, those having seizures, and the paralyzed, and he healed them. 25 Large crowds from Galilee, the Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea, and the region across from Jordan followed him.

- Let's start off with 4 facts.
- 1. We are living in a spiritual world. – (2 Cor. 4:4)
- 2. We are involved in a continuing spiritual war. - (Job 5:7)
- 3. Satan is a powerful and consistent enemy. (1Peter 5:8)
- 4. Each one of us is affected and has an eternal stake in this.
- Jesus, 100% man and 100% God, has now stepped onto the scene.
- In the first part of these scriptures we see the presence of temptation.
- I hope you noticed that in all three cases He quoted the word of God.
- **He said, It is written, It is written, and again, it is written.**
- There are 3 temptations in this scripture.
- **1. Self-gratification:**
- As humans, we often are tempted for wants that are apart of God's will.
- As humans we all have some good desires that God has built into us.
- God created us to look to Him as a good Father, who takes care of us.
- That is what he provided for Adam and Eve in the garden.
- So Satan suggested to Eve that God was withholding good from them,
- That they needed to eat from the Tree of Knowledge.
- And both chose to fulfill their own desires apart from God's will,
- And that is the point when sin entered into the world.
- God designed us to have desires for food, water, sex, and relationships
- And this is where Satan works on us.
- He tempts us to overindulge, to go where we are not supposed to.

- He wants us to go the core of self-gratification, to live apart from God's will.
- One scriptural example can be found in **Gen. 25:29-34**,
- Where Esau sold his birthright for a cup of soup,
- Another is when Judas sold out Jesus for 30 pieces of silver.
- So how did they make out with that?
- Was it worth those moments of self-gratification?
- Is that what we do in our own lives when temptation knocks on the door?
- Do we stop and look at the big picture?
- Do we succumb?, or do we earnestly seek God's will for our lives?
- We again need to follow the example that Jesus set.
- Jesus trusted in the all-satisfying, all sufficient goodness of His Father.
- **The second temptation was self-protection**
- We are often tempted to question God's presence.
- In times of weakness and despair, we might question God's plan for us.
- We might even question His love for us,
- When things just don't seem to be going our way.
- Do we complain to Him about the circumstances of our lives?
- Do we ask Him if He's with us or if He has deserted us,
- Even though He has been faithful to us over and over again in the past?
- If we take a look back at the book of Exodus,
- We can see that that is exactly what the Israelites did in the desert.
- They were always moaning or groaning about something.
- Moses goes up to the mountain and receives the 10 commandments,
- And he returns finding the people worshiping a golden calf.
- But Jesus was tempted... What did He do?
- Jesus rested in the shelter of His Father's unshakeable security.
- He rested in the unshakeable security of the Word.
- Jesus again models the behavior that we need to display in our own lives.
- **The third temptation was one of self-exaltation**
- In this very competitive world we are often tempted to assert ourselves.
- When we do, we rob God of His worship.

- Remember the parable of the Pharisee and the Publican?
- One praying in total self-exaltation and the tax collector in total humility.
- In the desert, Satan was whispering in the ear of Jesus, You are the son of God, so why be a servant? You're a king, so why be crucified?
- You can have it all now, so why not take it?
- That's what Satan is whispering in our ears as well.
- He is showing us all the glittering things in this world
- Possessions, Power, Pleasures, Satisfied lust, Great Accomplishments.
- He wants us to grab them now.
- In Genesis 1, Satan told Adam and Eve, that if they ate the apple,
- They would be like God, .. And they believed him.
- Do we believe Satan and his promises?
- Instead of a humble obedience to God in this world,
- In our pride we often try to attain what we want to have now.
- Our pride is the root of our rebellion.
- Proverbs tells us that Pride comes before the fall.
- What did Jesus do?
- He refused to exchange the end time-exaltation by the Father,
- For a right-now current uplifting of a snake.
- It is comforting to know these 2 scriptures:
- **1 Cor. 10:13 – no temptation has seized you except what is common to man, And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear./ But when you are tempted, he will also provide you a way out so that you can stand up under it.**
- **Hebrews 4:15 – For we do not have a high Priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one that was tempted in every way that we are, yet He is without sin.**
- Could Jesus have sinned?
- He was fully tempted, and Jesus is fully man and fully God.
- But here's the answer.... God cannot sin.
- Does God tempt us? -

- No, Satan tempts us – and God tests us. **James 1:13 says, “No one undergoing trial should say, I am being tempted by God.**
- The first step is to put God on the throne and give Him our loyalty,
- To give Him our undying commitment,
- Our unquestioned obedience and all of our heart.
- After Jesus spent that time in the desert, He was ready to start His ministry.
- Jesus was called Rabi – which means teacher.
- He was looking forward to teaching the people about the kingdom.
- But Jesus was also a Pastor, He was a shepherd, and a disciple maker.
- His first crucial step was to gather His flock.
- He knew that to make disciples He needed to train the first ones.
- The words we need to focus on are **Follow Me.**
- Jesus called the disciples into a new life’s work,
- And notice what it says here, they “immediately” followed him.
- The fact is this.....Jesus calls all of us into a new life.
- He wants us to make Him the focus of our life,
- So we can live the abundant life He called out for us in John 10:10.
- Receiving Jesus as Lord and Savior was our first step,
- But some think that was the end of their journey,
- But actually it was the first steps in a lifelong adventure.
- So why do we need to follow this Jesus?
- We know that Jesus is fully human and fully divine as well.
- He is the sovereign over the wise and the defender of the weak.
- Moses led the Israelites out of Egypt and slavery in the first Exodus,
- And it was Jesus who inaugurated the new exodus,
- He’s the one who freed us from the bondage of sin.
- He ended the mournful exile, citing Jeremiah 31:15,
- And brought hope to God’s suffering people.
- And yet he loves his fiercest enemies.
- He came for the despised, for the destitute,
- And even those who wanted to destroy and kill Him.

- Jesus is the Savior King and the Righteous judge.
- He is filled with the Holy Spirit and loved by the Father.
- Jesus is the new Adam and the true Israel.
- He is the light of the world and the hope of all the people, and
- Jesus is worthy of far more than us attending church when we feel like it.
- It is worthy of far more that a relationship that is at best casual
- Jesus is worthy of our total abandonment, and our supreme adoration
- **So what does it mean to follow Jesus?**
- It means to live with a total abandonment for His glory.
- It's to leave everything behind us, and to live for one thing.
- And that is to honor and glorify Him.
- It is to ask ourselves before doing anything, will this glorify God?
- If it doesn't bring honor and glory to God, we should not do it
- To follow Jesus is to live with joyful dependence on His grace.
- He chose us – He provides the power to use us,
- And He in turn receives His glory through us
- To be a follower of Jesus we need to be a committed learner and follower.
- To read, study, contemplate, and to live His word as best that we can.
- To follow Him is to live in total trust in His authority,
- As the author and finisher of our faith, and Captain of our salvation.
- That's what we promised when we were born again of His Spirit.
- To be sure that we keep Him on the throne of our lives.
- He is the Lord of every detail of our lives.
- To follow Jesus is to be in total and urgent obedience,
- And to live a life that is circumspect, and totally obedient to His word.