

Matthew 19-03-31a

Good morning, welcome to the Sunday morning services at Grace and Truth Bible Church. It's great to see the vast sea of faces before me this morning. Got two here, two in the overflow room, and the rest of you are scattered afar.

But we're privileged to gather in the name of the Lord Jesus and to spend time together in fellowship and in the study of God's Word. We will continue this morning our study in the Gospel of Matthew. This is the 31st of March, 2019, and we'll be resuming in the latter portion of Chapter 3, and just by way of review, and then the center portion of Chapter 4. For Matthew Chapter 4, we're in the section that addresses the temptations of the Lord Jesus in the wilderness by Satan himself, live and in person.

One appearance only in this particular venue, but he availed himself in ways that we'll see this morning that are pertinent and helpful for us. So let me make a couple of quick administrative notes. The re-digitizing process continues on a couple of our older series, Fundamentals, if you've been listening to that, and I know there's at least two households that have been pulling those down, and there was a section of them that had been digitized by a machine that almost kept up, but the lessons ended up skipping, and they were shorter by five to seven minutes, but there were just gaps all the way through.

So the first 10 tapes, which is 20 lessons, have been re-digitized, and actually the first 12 tapes and 14 lessons, I'll be posting 11 and 12 tape this afternoon. But those will finish up here pretty soon, and as soon as I get to lesson, the 20th tape, we're back to the ones that have no problems. Also, 2 Samuel is being digitized, and there's been a hiatus in the digitizing for various reasons, but that's resuming.

And then also Genesis is up, but the original digitizing we did so many years ago that they sound like an AM radio playing over a wired landline telephone, and I'm redoing those for better quality and more ease in hearing them. So those three series, Fundamentals, 2 Samuel, and Genesis, if you're listening to those, and give me a heads up if you are, because that helps me sort the priorities, and I'm trying to keep ahead of the people who are listening so that you have an uninterrupted shot at them for whatever schedule you're on. Having said that, let's take a moment to go to the Lord in prayer, and then we will resume our study of Matthew chapter 4. Father, it is a wonderful reminder as we look around us and see the advent of spring and the renewal and refreshment of life that has seemed to be largely disappeared and dormant.

And it reminds us of Your mercy that is renewed to us every morning. It reminds us of the fact that appearances can be deceiving. Things are not always what they seem, and something that looks like it has no life actually does harbor life within, and by Your power and by Your grace these things can be renewed and restored and blossom and bring forth fruit.

We trust that that will be the case in our lives, especially as we look at the provision that You've made for us with the presence and power of Your Holy Spirit, and the truth and power of Your Word. And we pray that as we look at this portion of Your Word this morning and see the Lord Jesus responding to the challenges placed before Him, that it will be meaningful, that it will be pertinent, that each of us will find it helpful and motivating as we examine our own lives and as we try to live in a way that pleases You, that brings glory to our Savior and that accomplishes Your purpose of preparation and equipping for the good works that are possible for us here and the service and stewardship in the ages to come. We pray all these things in Jesus' name, Amen.

We're going to be doing a little bit of flipping back and forth. This is the fourth gospel that we have studied. It's the first in order and the last that we've studied together.

Some of the studies have been a while back, and in covering the gospel of Mark, in covering the gospel of John, in covering the gospel of Luke, I followed a method of pretty much sticking to the gospel at hand and not doing a lot of comparison back and forth. I think it's useful to listen to the message as it is told in a book by that author. We can occasionally gain insight by going to complementary passages, passages that talk about that same principle or that same doctrine or that same thought.

But in narrative, sometimes it's good to do a discrete study. Maybe you just go through Kings and you don't look at Chronicles. Maybe you look at Luke and you don't look at Matthew or the other gospels.

Other times, as we did in our Kings and Prophets study, it provides us a lot of insight to do synthetic study and find everything that bears. Having done the other three gospels more or less discreetly, I'm going to do a little bit more mining of the information in those just because you already know how to follow that gospel, look at its theme, and look at what it includes and what it leaves out in terms of that message, that narrative. We can study almost any subject and choose what to include and choose what to exclude when you're telling a story, when you're relating an experience or an event.

There are things that you include because it is pertinent and interesting to the people you're talking to and other little side trips that may come to your mind, you hopefully exclude those. So I say that to say that this morning we are going to be looking at the other gospels because their observance of this particular phase of the Lord Jesus ministry, which is its inception, is different and not just slightly different, it's quite different. And so what you might want to do in preparation for that is we're here in Matthew chapter four, use a bookmark or something to mark that and then flip over to the gospel of Mark chapter one.

Now for me, I've got these fun little money bookmarks, each one is different and I use them all the time when I'm studying. I pulled them out of my reference books up there, but this one is a three dollar bill and it has a picture of President Clinton on it. I'm not

saying anything political by that, this just came to me somehow and it's convenient size for a bookmark and it makes me smile.

So this is issued by the disgruntled states of America and so on, three dollar bill, President Clinton and so on. Anyway, I've got that in Mark. Then in Luke we're going to be in chapter four, chapter four of Luke and for this one I have a ten thousand dollar bill laminated.

I looked this up and I think there was no actual bill that looked like this. I think there actually was a ten thousand dollar bill, but it didn't look like this. But this is just a useful bookmark for Luke.

So that's in Luke four. Then turn over to John chapter one and a fellow that used to live in Peel, Arkansas, he's gone to glory now, but twenty odd years ago we visited him and his family and he'd made up these, this is a million dollar bill and the guy's name was Bill something and so there's a picture of him on the front laughing and it says, wild Bill, one in a million, dang I'm good and so on. Anyway, million dollar bill for the gospel of John since that's the gospel of the deity of the Son of God, the highest denomination goes there.

So just for your own convenience we'll be flipping back and forth a little bit. Now to the matter at hand, which is the temptation of the Lord Jesus as recorded in the gospel of Matthew, let's just start at verse one and get to the second temptation which is where we pick up this morning. Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.

We saw that the purpose here of the Spirit's leading was to be tempted, to be tested by the devil. Now Jesus is about thirty years of age here and what is the timing of this direct confrontation with Satan? It's right after a direct confrontation with the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit descends in all the gospels that record this, it is the appearance of the Spirit first, then it is the testing, point of application.

God does not let us be tested above what we are able to bear, but with every test provides a coping mechanism and we saw that it doesn't say way of escape, it is a way of meeting the test because sometimes we do not escape out but we endure through, we prevail over, we tunnel under, we break through, whatever is required, but God makes provision. Here the supernatural testing by Satan in person is preceded by the supernatural presence and power of God's Spirit. There's a pretty clear message here in the sequence that we want to be sure that we are availing ourselves of the presence and power of the Holy Spirit in our lives in advance of whatever tests and challenges come our way.

This is the power with which they are met. Now it is not the only ingredient, but it is an essential ingredient. We cannot stand before the wiles of the devil.

We cannot resist the devil and have him flee from us in our own strength. It requires divine power. Do you remember the formula for divine power in the life of a believer? How does divine power exist and manifest itself? What are the ingredients? It is the Spirit of God and what else? The Word of God, both.

Jesus has the Spirit. It has been symbolized in the form of a dove descending bodily upon Him, right? What else is required to successfully meet these challenges? The Word of God. And you know, because you are familiar with this story, that Jesus is going to answer each of these challenges from the Word of God with Scripture.

Even when the test itself has a scriptural component, He is going to answer with better Scripture and better interpretation of Scripture. But the Spirit is present and the Word is present. We could stop right now and go reflect on the essential application for ourselves, which is to cultivate the free communication that the Holy Spirit has in our soul, availing Himself and using as His voice the Word of God that we have heard, that we've studied, that we've read, that we've reflected on in our prayers, that we spend time, as Psalm 1 says, meditating on the law of the Lord day and night.

This gives the Holy Spirit something with which to speak. Jesus said He doesn't just talk on His own. He's not going to prompt.

He's not going to sign. He's not going to give us an emotional shot of something. He's going to bring to our minds the things that we have learned from Scripture.

He activates. He ministers. He empowers and enables the Word within us.

You can have the Word without the Spirit and you're a Pharisee and you get spiritual gas. Remember, knowledge puffs up. You just bloat.

You can bloat on that because you're not able to metabolize it. You're not able to properly interpret and apply it without the active, unrestrained ministry of God's Holy Spirit. Jesus has that Spirit.

It has been formally signed to Him and God the Father has encouraged Him in that beautiful triune baptism picture. And immediately the Holy Spirit says, time for testing. But He is equipped to handle that testing because of the Spirit.

The Spirit takes Him into the test and the Spirit is going to sustain Him through the test using the Word of God. So that's an important observation. But in this, you say, well, couldn't He enjoy the happiness of the Spirit and the peace of the Spirit for a few days instead of immediately being driven into the wilderness? Two observations about that.

First of all, Jesus was not without the Holy Spirit until the baptism. You remember that anointing in Scripture was commissioning for a special job, a special purpose. And the Holy Spirit has been present for the Lord Jesus ever since He was born.

He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit. His life is defined in the presence and power of the Holy Spirit. But this unique sign is the mark of special enablement and a special operation of the Spirit in sustaining Jesus in this great proclamation ministry He is about to undertake, which precedes and leads into the salvation ministry He will accomplish on the cross.

In the same way, we are believers. We have the Word of God. We have the Spirit of God.

But there are times when you know that you are about to face a challenge. There is an imminent departure in your family. You know someone is not long for this world and they are soon going to be absent from the picture and there will be a lot of changes.

You can have a child leaving home. You can have a change of work. You can have a change of location.

There are things that we see coming and we know that it's going to require extra concentration and extra spiritual attention to do it in a way that honors God, that reflects His glory, that others will be able to see, that we're not just doing this to get it done, but we're trying to do it in a way that is pleasing in God's sight. And we're trying to be that living sacrifice that understands what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God and pursues it. And seeing that coming, not everything takes us by surprise.

Jesus knew that He was going to have an active ministry and the mark that it was beginning was the baptism and there is a special presence, a special mark of the Holy Spirit and Jesus is spending extra time reviewing His memory verses and rehearsing and reflecting on the truth of God. Most of the time, our spiritual life, our time of devotions, our time of prayer is a small fraction of the day. Most of the day, we are living life, right? This is just the way God set it up.

I used to wonder, well, if having the Spirit in the Word is so important, why can't I just do that all day long? If you're a professional pastor in the sense that you've got a big church and you don't have to do any other work, you can probably do quite a bit more of that. But even then, you look at pastors who are full-time and salaried by their church or whatever. They still have to spend an awful lot of time doing pastoral care, pastoral functions, weddings and funerals.

God did not set life up to where we can just dwell by the oasis and drink the living water from the eternal wellsprings. We're set up to live life most of the time. But when you know there is a time of special challenge coming, what can you do? Allocate extra time for prayer.

Allocate extra time for reflection and review and rehearsal in our minds. Spend extra time in the Word, knowing that we are going to be taxed. We're going to be challenged.

We're going to be tested. And that's a good thing to do. You can wait standing there in

your bungee harness for somebody to push you off, or you can mentally prepare yourself and jump.

Of course, if you're bungeeing, you're in a world I can't relate to. I had all I could do to survive the 30-foot tower jump at Navy where you cross your legs, cross your arms, cross your fingers, and step off the platform, and 30 feet doesn't sound like a lot until you're standing at the top of it looking down at a hard, flat piece of cold water and hoping you don't do the wishbone when you hit. But it is better to take the initiative, prepare ourselves, and take the step into testing as the Lord Jesus does here, than to sort of fall into it and have to react and try to come up with our solutions at the last minute.

So with that in mind, I want to look at this inception of the testing. We're going to back up just one step right quick. You've got your markers in Mark, Luke, and John.

Here in Matthew, Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. He's led up, he's down at the river level, and he's going up into the wilderness. And here it says to be tested.

And it says he fasted 40 days and 40 nights, and afterward he was hungry. So far, so good. Turn over to the Gospel of Mark, my \$3 bill, and look at verse 12 and 13 of chapter 1. In verses 9 through 11, you have John baptizing Jesus, a voice comes from heaven, you're my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.

Verse 12, immediately, euthus, one of Mark's favorite words, immediately, the Spirit drove him into the wilderness. What did Matthew say? He was led up. Mark says the Spirit drove him into the wilderness, and he was there in the wilderness 40 days.

Tempted by Satan. So what do we learn from Mark about the duration of this test? In Matthew, it sounds like he was without food for 40 days, and when he was at his weakest, Satan came and challenged him with three tests. What does Mark say? He is being tempted 40 days, and was with the wild beasts.

And this tells you that there was no support group. There was, this wasn't a time for fellowship. There's a time when iron sharpens iron, and bear one another's burdens.

But the wild beasts are not going to bear your burden. This wasn't a pet, there wasn't any companionship whatsoever. The environment was not only lacking in provision of food, but it was lacking in protection, and it was lacking in fellowship.

There is nowhere to turn for comfort. Inhospitable. I know that you, like me, have felt this way sometimes.

It just seems that everywhere you turn, there's not warmth or light. It's dark and cold. There's no one to turn to.

There's no one who can really help. There's nothing anybody can say. There's nothing anybody can do.

You are in it, and it is just hostile soup, and you are the dumpling right in the middle. Everything is hostile, and you really only have one place to look, and that is up. And many times to look up, we have to look inward.

We have to find that comfort that comes from the presence of the Holy Spirit, and we find that comfort that comes from reviewing the promises and the principles and the doctrines and the examples and illustrations from God's Word. It's what we carry with us. It's an internal source of power and light and warmth and comfort.

So that's what Jesus is doing when you look at Mark. Flip over now to Luke. Luke 4, this is my Andrew Jackson \$10,000 bill, and in chapter 4 of Luke, verse 1, Jesus being filled with the Holy Spirit.

Now we have confirmation of what we saw implied, suggested, and symbolized in Matthew with the descent of the Spirit. This is a special enablement, a special endowment of the Spirit to accomplish God's special purpose that is unique to the Lord Jesus. Jesus being filled with the Holy Spirit doesn't mean that He was never filled before, but He is filled for a purpose.

This is a special filling. Jesus being filled with the Holy Spirit returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, being tempted for 40 days by the devil. So not only is He tested all 40 days, but He is tested by the devil all 40 days.

And in those days He ate nothing, and afterward, when they had ended, He was hungry. What does this tell us? There was a lot of testing that we don't know about. How do we know about these tests? Who are the witnesses? Who set down this account by watching it firsthand? No one.

How does anybody know about this period of testing, how long it lasted, what was said, what the challenge was, what the reply was? How does anybody know any of that? Jesus told His disciples later. This is firsthand from the Lord Jesus, recorded by second- and even third-hand witnesses. In the case of Mark, Mark heard it from Peter, who heard it from Jesus.

John heard it from Jesus. Matthew, no doubt, heard it from Jesus. Luke heard it from witnesses who heard it from Jesus.

Luke was not a disciple, you may remember. So Mark and Luke are giving third-hand accounts. We get second-hand accounts from Matthew and John, our outside brackets.

So this might explain something like the difference in sequence. We talked last time about the first test, which is turn these stones to bread. John does not give any hint of

the temptation whatsoever.

It's not in the Gospel of John. We're going to be looking there for something else here in a moment. In the remaining three Gospels, what they call the Synoptic Gospels, sun means with and optic means look, like the optometrist and the optician.

So synoptic means they're all three looking from a similar point of view. There is overlap, and in some cases it looks like there is reference. Maybe Matthew and Luke both referred to Mark, which many consider to be the earliest Gospel.

So the synoptics, Matthew, Mark, and Luke, Mark, remember, just gave the summary. He just gives two verses. Immediately the Spirit drove him into the wilderness.

He was there in the wilderness 40 days, tempted by Satan, with the wild beasts, and the angels ministered to him. And that's it. So for the detail, we've got now Matthew and Luke.

Well, turn over to Luke, since we looked at Matthew last time, being tempted 40 days by the devil, verse 2 of chapter 4. In those days he ate nothing. Afterward, when they had ended, he was hungry. And the devil said to him, If you are the Son of God, we saw the nature of that if.

It's not quite got the force of sense, but assuming, for the sake of argument, you are the Son of God. First-class condition. On the assumption that you're the Son of God, command this stone to become bread.

You notice a difference between Matthew 4 and Luke 4 for that first test? Verse 3 of Matthew 4, the tempter came to him and he said, If you are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread. Stone or stones? Singular or plural? Is there a contradiction in our Bible? Could he have said them both? The answer is yes. Why? This is a summary of temptation that lasted 40 days, right? Do you think, was it just a one quick question? Turn this stone to bread or turn these stones to bread.

Could this have gone on over a period of minutes? Hours? It's probably on the last day, because Luke says, After these days, he was tested for 40 days by the devil, and in those days he ate nothing, and afterward, when they had ended, he was hungry. So this is on the last day, the 40th day, and the devil comes to him. You get the idea that this was a conversation.

The devil comes to him and says, Well, you know, you've got this power. You've got the special ministry of the Holy Spirit. There are things that you can do.

See this rock here? You could turn this stone to bread. If you're hungry, you could turn all of these stones to bread. We have a summary statement here of a longer conversation.

This is innumerable. I can show you countless places in Scripture where we obviously have a summary. The Sermon on the Mount that's coming up here soon in Matthew is a summary of teaching.

You can read the Sermon on the Mount in about 14 minutes. Jesus didn't assemble the whole crowd, give a 14-minute sermon, and leave. He preached all day long.

It's a summary. Same thing for much of the teaching sections in Scripture. Which one is correct? Both.

They're both right. Satan said both things. He pointed to one rock and said, Turn this to bread.

Somewhere before or after that, he pointed to a group of stones and said, Look, these are nice flat rocks. They'll look just like pita bread when you convert them to food. He said both.

It is a careful reminder to us that by observing, we get some stereo vision here. It tells us that you don't just have to wait for Satan to pop the question or your old sin nature to pop the question or some temptation to confront and just say, Nope, not going to do that. I remember Dana Carvey or one of those guys imitating President George H.W. Bush.

Nope, not going to do it. It's not that simple, is it? When temptation comes, it's not just a matter of, Oh, no. No, not going to do that.

Have you ever had sort of a weakness? There's a cupcake there or something, and you look at it and you say, No, I don't want to eat that. But then the idea starts preying on your mind, and pretty soon you think, Well, you know, one cupcake more or less. It's not going to show up on the scale.

You initially resist, but you fold later. Maybe this hasn't happened to you. It only happens in the abstract.

But I'm pretty sure most of us have initially successfully put off doing something we didn't want to do or that we shouldn't do, but we wear down over time. One stone, not going to do it. Many stones, well, that would be a meal.

It wears us down. So the Lord Jesus is depicted for us in these multiple Gospels as enduring over time. He not only refused to succumb to the temptation at the outset, but for the duration, and not just a short duration.

He has been resisting these temptations for 40 days. Forty days. And we saw this last time, that there is a clear invitation to compare Israel, God's first called-out chosen representative on this earth, and the Lord Jesus.

So Israel, like the Lord Jesus, was led into the wilderness. Since you've already got three bookmarks here, turn backward in your Bible to Deuteronomy 8. And Deuteronomy 6-8, you can pretty much get everything done for our lessons this morning in these chapters. But if you look at Deuteronomy 8, every commandment which I command you today, you must be careful to observe, that you may live and multiply and go in and possess the land of which the Lord swore to your fathers.

So here is the emphasis on the Word. Every commandment which I command you, remember our acrostic Psalms on Thursday night, Psalm 111, right at the center, God has done His marvelous works to be remembered. And the upright, in Psalm 112, who remembers and lives in the light of those things, will have light in the darkness.

That was our seventh letter, the last half of the third verse of each Psalm. It's critical, it's central, it's the big point. God put two whole Psalms in the hymn book for Israel, making that point to be remembered.

Every commandment which I command you today, you must be careful to observe. You've got to remember them and live in their light, so that you can live and multiply and have possession, have inheritance. Look at verse 2, and you shall remember that the Lord your God led you all the way these 40 years in the wilderness.

The Lord your God led you all the way these 40 years in the wilderness to humble you and to test you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not. God not only gives us His Spirit to sustain us in testing, but the Holy Spirit will many times lead us into a wilderness where testing is going to happen, to show what is in our hearts. Look at verse 3, so He humbled you, allowed you to what? Allowed you to hunger, purposely did not provide.

When God promises provision, I've never seen the righteous go hungry or His seed begging bread, but it says here He allowed you to go hungry. Why? Fed you with manna which you did not know, nor did your fathers know. You didn't see it coming.

You didn't expect it. You weren't sure it was going to work. You had no experience thinking that it was going to show up every day or that it wouldn't peter out after a few weeks or a few months or the first few years.

It was unique sustenance. In order that He might make you know what? Man shall not live by bread alone, but man lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the Lord. The only way He could make them know the importance of what God says is to put them in the wilderness and test them with a lack of food, forcing them to look to God, demonstrating for those who had faith that they would look to God and would wait on His provision.

How well did Israel do in that test? Well, not well. I know you've got your fingers in

multiple pages here, but if you go to, you can write it down maybe, Isaiah 63 and verse 10, we have a review here of what happened. Isaiah 63, verse 7, I will mention the lovingkindnesses of the Lord and the praises of the Lord according to all that the Lord has bestowed on us and the great goodness toward the house of Israel which He has bestowed on them according to His mercies, according to the multitude of His lovingkindnesses, His kessednesses.

For He said, Surely they are My people, children who will not lie. So He became their Savior. In all their afflictions He was afflicted, and the angel of His presence delivered them.

In His love and in His pity He redeemed them, and He bore them and carried them all the days of old. And they responded with love, obedience, faith. They were hundredfold fields.

They became a beacon and a light to the Gentiles, and through them all the nations of the earth were blessed. Is that the next verse? What does verse 10 say? After all of these things that God did, they rebelled and grieved, who? His Holy Spirit. So He turned Himself against them as an enemy, and He fought against them.

So their time in the wilderness, their 40 period of testing, resulted in rebellion and grieving of the Holy Spirit. The angel of the presence there is put for, and was a symbol of, the presence and power of God's Spirit. The pillar of cloud and the pillar of fire were there as marks of God's presence.

All they had to do was look. But anything can become a commonplace. I often look around at technology that we have, and we just take it for granted.

If you showed an electric mixer to Ben Franklin, he would fall down in a faint. If you showed a television to George Washington, he would fall down in a faint. If you showed your cell phone to Alexander Graham Bell, he would pass out in a coma from astonishment.

We don't give a second glance. If the shepherds of old had looked up in the sky and seen a Boeing jet leaving its contrails in the sky, they would have been down, groveling, looking for which God they needed to appease. We don't give it a second thought.

It's easy to take remarkable things for granted when we become habituated to them. We have God's divine presence, and we have God's inerrant, infallible truth. But if we become habituated to it, and as accustomed to the extraordinary gift that we have as we are to our phones and our technologies, we're going to be susceptible to the same thing Israel was.

You would think, how could you possibly get used to the pillar of cloud and the pillar of fire? Well, of course you can. Just like you're, you know, how is it that you can talk to

somebody thousands of miles away in real time? You can't see them. They're not near.

And you hear their voice, and they hear yours. You can flip a couple of switches, tap a couple of times on your phone, and you can see them and talk to them. And it's a commonplace.

It's miraculous. Even in the days of the moon landing, I remember when they used to have Sander Van Ocker or David Brinkley or somebody off in the middle of Europe somewhere reporting on a thing, and, you know, Peter Jennings or somebody would ask him a question, and there was like a six-second delay because it had to go all the way up to a satellite and all the way down to the side, and he had to hear it and then respond, and it was all the way up and all the way back. And there were these long delays, and it was easy for one to step on another.

The only people who still have that experience are people like us whose phone goes over the satellite now. Our 918 number for the piano business is on satellite internet, and we have to be really careful to say what we have to say and then be quiet because there's a couple of seconds delay. Even talking to somebody that's... I can call my mother.

She's 750 feet away, but the conversation is bouncing off a satellite in space and coming back down, and you've got to allow. You've got to wait and not step on somebody. You can also get this effect if you inadvertently leave your cell phone on Wi-Fi connection and your cell phone conversation is going over Wi-Fi instead of your cell tower.

If you ever wondered why sometimes it seems like you and the other person are stepping on each other based on the settings in your phone, if your conversations are going over Wi-Fi to save your cell minutes, you'll get that weird delay. But it's easy to take the extraordinary and the miraculous for granted. The Lord Jesus spent 40 days in the desert just as Israel spent 40 years in the desert, and one of the things he succeeded in doing was not taking the Word of God for granted and not taking the presence and power of the Holy Spirit for granted.

He was aware of it, and he made use of it. He turned to it and recognized that this is the sustaining power for passing tests. That's what we need to do as well.

The Spirit drove him into the wilderness, led him into the wilderness, both. If you've ever had a time with your dog or a horse or anything else on a rope or a leash, and we had a horse around here, and to lead her away from the barn was driving and pulling and cajoling. Coming back to the barn, no problem.

You've got to get out of the way or the horse is going to trample you. If you've ever had your dog on a leash trying to walk it somewhere, there are times when you've got to force it to go, and there's other times when it is pulling you along almost as fast as you can walk. Did the Holy Spirit both lead and drive the Lord Jesus into the desert? Can you

imagine that there was a portion of the Lord Jesus' humanity at the beginning of His ministry that felt the same as at the end of His ministry in the garden when He said, Lord, if it be Thy will, let this cup pass from Me.

Nevertheless, not My will, but Thine. It's okay to be sobered in the face of challenge. It's okay to be reluctant to enter into what you know is going to be severe testing.

And there are times when the Holy Spirit has to do a little bit of driving, and we're doing things that our flesh doesn't want to enter into, but the Holy Spirit drives, and we respond to that driving, and we go where we need to go. Sometimes we can be led, and it's an opportunity, and we're excited about it. We look forward to it.

Both kinds of leading took place here. A stone and these stones were offered to the Lord Jesus, and He was encouraged to turn them to bread because this was a duration test. It went over time.

And you've got hunger talking on one side. You've got nature talking on one side. You've got personal need and legitimate need.

This is the fascinating thing to me. How many ways could you easily rationalize this? Well, the Lord obviously gave me the Holy Spirit for a reason, and it's legitimate. There's no law that says you can't eat bread.

Why not do this? What's the problem? Well, it isn't what you do, it's why you do it, right? If the Holy Spirit had driven the Lord Jesus to turn stones to bread, what would He have done? If He can turn water to wine, He can turn rock to bread, right? One was prompted by God's Holy Spirit. The other is prompted by God's mortal enemy. So, it's why a thing is done.

What kind of precedent would be set if Jesus said, well, I can find reasons of my own for doing this, but it is at the devil's suggestion. What's the first time we see the devil making a suggestion in Scripture? Fruit looks pretty good, doesn't it? Make you wise. You'd be like God, you're no good and evil.

Hath God not said? So, it takes concentration. It takes careful checking of our motives and the thoughts and intents of our heart. It's not just the thing.

Many things are innocuous and not prohibited in Scripture. All things are lawful. Not all things are edifying.

All things are lawful, but I will not be controlled by any. Right? Well, food for thought. We have the Holy Spirit and we have the Word of God.

They are far more miraculous than any technology you want to look around and see. But woe unto us if we take them for granted and fail to value them and treasure them and

guard them. Remember in Psalm 119, those first eight verses, one of the verbs there is to guard, to treasure, to observe God's precepts, God's judgments, God's law, God's statutes.

To treasure them, to look them over and treat them as something to be preserved and to be protected and to be valued. That is the key to successful meeting of challenges in this life. You don't have to spend so much time parsing the challenge as you do valuing the power by which it is met.

Because God, the Holy Spirit and the Word of God will enable us to perceive and to clear the fog and to peel away the veneers of deceit and misrepresentation and see what is really at stake. How do you know what is really going on? It's the Word and the Spirit, not logic, not counsel. It's the Word and the Spirit.

Value those, we pass the test. Let's pause here and take our break. When we come back, we'll look at these remaining two challenges for the Lord Jesus in the wilderness.