**Calvary Fellowship 3.27.2022 Matthew 4:1-25 “A Tempting Offer”**

* **Anyone have a food that is such a temptation that they can’t say no to it?**
* This is a food that is your Kryptonite & U give in every time
* I have several - that’s why my life consists of protein & salad
* Honestly, for some people it’s ice cream - I couldn’t care less about ice cream
* I could go a year w/o eating ice cream & not even realize
* But the thing that I can’t have in my house are are Double Stuf Oreos
* Now personally, I think double Stuff should be smallest size, Mega stuff should be the medium size, & the Most Stuff should the Mega stuff & the current regular sized Oreo’s should be retired b/c we’ve found a better way to live
* Well, I can’t have them in my house b/c I don’t know how to say no - I figured out that Oreos were a problem close to 20 years ago
* The reason we don’t keep Oreo’s at home is b/c of an incident that happened a years ago ago - I spoke at this church & they bought me 2 bags of Double stuff
* Well, Carey used to do this thing w/ Oreo’s where she’d put them in a storage bin w/ slices of bread - the bread would get hard & Oreo’s would get soft
* They were like Cakesters before Cakesters were a thing - even though they’re gone now b/c we live in a dystopian society where nothing beautiful can live
* Well, she did that w/ my 2 bags w/ the warning that I needed to pace myself
* She started noticing that the container was getting emptied at an alarming rate
* So she said to me, “Bob, slow down w/ the Oreo’s.” - I said, “Carey, relax. It wasn’t even me. People have been over & everyone is eating them.”
* About an hour later I’m in the kitchen smuggling as many Oreo’s as I can w/o being caught and... well, have U ever felt like someone was watching U?
* That’s how I felt, so I turned around & Carey was standing there w/ this look like, “I married U? I had so many other options & I chose U.” I was guilty
* **Here’s thing about temptation that most people don’t realize - it’s not a sin to be tempted - the Bible tells us that Jesus was tempted**
* The sin is giving in to the temptation - but it’s only who have resisted temptation know the power of temptation
* *C.S. Lewis in his book, Mere Christianity wrote, “Only those who try to resist temptation know how strong it is. You find out the strength of a wind by trying to walk against, not by lying down. We never find out the strength of the evil impulse inside us until we try to fight it...”*
* **But when started a new year 90 days ago, this topic was on our minds**
* B/c we’ve all given in to temptation & that’s what we want to change in 2022
* B/c we all recognize that the life we want is on the other side of mastering the things that has mastered us over the last year or 2 or longer
* Every goal that U have for your life has victory over temptation built into it
* U want to change the way U spend money - then U have to resist the temptation called “the mall” & maybe delete the Amazon app from your phone
* U want to lose weight, then U have to say goodbye to your love affair w/ carbs
* U want to really grow spiritually, then U have to resist the temptation to get distracted & make things that don’t matter as much as higher priorities
* B/c achieving your goals & overcoming temptation require the same skill
* Saying no to what U want now for what U really want most
* **So here’s the question - why would Matthew talk about Jesus being tempted before He talked about anything else?**
* Remember, Matthew’s goal is to prove that Jesus was the Messiah
* And everything he writes is cluing us into the fact that Jesus is Israel’s Messiah & that includes not being led astray by temptations that would have derailed Him - Matthew is showing us that Jesus can be trusted b/c He didn’t give in
* Matthew is also showing us the humanity of Jesus & that while He was tempted, He was victorious over the temptation & we can have victory as well
* “Therefore, in all things He had to be made like His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted.” (Hebrews 2:17-18)
* **So we started a brand new series of teaching at Calvary called “The Story” as we work our way through the Gospel of Matthew**
* We’re calling it The Story, b/c I firmly believe if U learn His story, it will change yours - And everyone wants to live a better story - we want today to be better than yesterday - we want a better future for ourselves & those we love
* And Matthew is going to show us how that’s possible through Jesus’ life
* **Matthew’s goal in his gospel is to prove to a Jewish audience that Jesus is the Messiah & that means giving special emphasis to fulfilled prophecy**
* Also to the miracles of Jesus, & especially the words of Jesus like the Sermon on the mount & his private discourse in Matt. 24-25
* And this chapter is no different - We’re going to see Jesus begin His ministry & His disciples begin their ministry as He calls them
* **Now, before we get started, let’s talk about the tempter for a minute**
* The devil came to tempt Jesus - now, is it reasonable in 2022, as modern people in a scientific world believe in a real devil? Well, I believe so
* **I believe in a real Devil for several reasons - 1st, b/c Jesus did & I tend to just go along w/ what whatever Jesus says**
* But secondly, there are things that happen in the world that go beyond bad choices & if there’s no devil, then hitler just made a bad choice
* Then human trafficking is just about people who don’t value women
* **Listen, watch the news & everyone is talking about the possibility of WWIII**
* And is that b/c Vladimir Putin just woke up & made a choice?
* Now listen, I don’t think the invasion of Ukraine has anything to do w/ Bible prophecy directly, but it does indirectly
* There’s a prophecy in Ezekiel 38-39 about Russia invading Israel
* And people have said for years that it would never happen & this invasion of Ukraine is showing Russia that the West won’t do anything
* In fact, Ezekiel 38 says that those the West will simply talk about why Russia is doing this - to take plunder
* But make no mistake - if U don’t believe there’s a devil, then Putin is just making a choice - my friends, that’s naive
* If we believe that there’s a God who is personal & loves us - if it really so far fetched to believe there’s another being who isn’t out for our good?
* **Satan was once an angel of God - except he became filled w/ pride & the result was him being kicked out of heaven**
* The evil is not God’s equal - He is a created being & at the appointed time, God is going to give him what he’s got coming to him
* But we tend to either overestimate who the Devil is or underestimate him
* Those who are biblically wise, properly estimate who he is & what he can do…

**———(v. 1-4)———**

**#1 - I am Tempted when I Doubt God’s Love**

* **U need to understand, the temptation isn’t about bread - even though some of us might need to lay off the bread for a little while**
* The temptation wasn’t eating when you’re hungry - the temptation was about Jesus showing off His power
* When Jesus became a Man, He set aside the independent use of His power
* That means, He would wait on His Father to lead & direct Him to do a miracle or heal someone
* But now there’s no food & Satan is saying, “You’ve been trusting God here & there’s no food. So why don’t U just take matters into your own hands.”
* Here’s the thing U have to understand about temptation - Jesus was tempted
* This wasn’t just Satan posing questions - This was enticing Him in some way
* If U wave a box of Raisinettes in front of me & say, “I know U want these. OOOOHHHH. Aren’t they delicious?” - I’d say, “No. Raisinettes are gross.”
* It’s not temptation to me - Put a pound of Reese’s Pieces in front of me & that’s another story. Leave me w/ those unattended & you’ll be left w/ an empty bag
* These temptations were temptations to Jesus - imagine U have all the power in the universe, but you’ve decided not to use it
* Plus, U haven’t eaten in 40 days & w/ the snap of a finger a freshly baked loaf of honey wheat bread from Cheesecake Factory will appear - that’s tempting
* This temptation is all about realizing that God hasn’t forgotten U
* That’s why Jesus’ response is so powerful - He quotes Deuteronomy 8
* This is a powerful passage b/c it’s where Moses reminds the people of Israel who were about to go into the Promised Land that God hadn’t forgotten them
* “Remember how the Lord your God led you all the way in the wilderness these forty years, to humble and test you in order to know what was in your heart, whether or not you would keep his commands. He humbled you, causing you to hunger and then feeding you with manna, which neither you nor your ancestors had known, to teach you that man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord.” (Deuteronomy 8:2-3)
* God allowed them to experience the need of hunger so He could meet the need w/ something they had never seen before
* Manna is a Hebrew word that means “What is it?” - it’s was this white substance that would show up on the ground every morning while the Children not Israel were traveling from Egypt to the Promised Land
* And they’d collect it & cook w/ it every day - And they’d make manna bread, manna soup, manna salad, manicotti
* **That’s why Moses says that the whole point of this exercise was to teach them that U don’t live on bread alone - but on the words of God**
* You survive on bread, but your life thrives when U realize that God has a plan for your life even in the simplest things, like the bread that U eat
* That’s why Jesus quotes the verse & Satan knows that He isn’t going to win using this angle
* And when you’re tempted to go on that date w/ him or her even though they aren’t a Christian, but it’s been a long time since someone asked U out
* And you’re thinking, “He’s cute, but he’s not a Christian. However, he can always become a Christian. But if he isn’t cute, there’s no hope for him.”
* **Listen, the Children of Israel had to recognize the need before God met it**
* Maybe the key is to recognize the desire that’s in U to be w/ someone is a good desire - but the way we go about seeing that need met is the key
* That’s the difference between God bringing the right person at the right time & us making something happen that will ultimately fail us & cause us misery

**———(v. 5-7)———**

**#2 - I am Tempted when I Overstep God’s Provision**

* **So why is this such a tough temptation? A couple of reasons actually**
* 1st, Satan quotes the Bible to Jesus - it’s a quote of Psalm 91, which is a Messianic Psalm - that is, a Psalm about the coming Messiah
* So Satan is saying, “Jump. Since you’re the Messiah, the angels will catch U & you’ll actually fulfill that verse & that’s always a good thing, right?”
* Actually, no - This Psalm is about trusting God & staying under the wing of God’s protection - not doing something stupid & asking God to rescue U
* Here’s the challenge - whenever we proverbially jump - we spend more than we know we can pay, we put ourselves in a bad situation in relationships, or we do something wrong & pray we don’t have to experience the consequences
* Whenever we do that & pray, “Well, I’m trusting God to help me” - U don’t realize this, but you’re putting yourself in the position of God & making God your servant - and that’s not the way this relationships works
* That’s what Satan is trying to get Jesus to do - to overstep in God’s provision so it doesn’t seem like enough & we’re forcing God to do more
* This is the difference between faith & presumption - faith is us stepping out b/c God is leading us - presumption is us jumping & saying to God, “U better catch me or you’re going to look bad.”
* But here’s what I’ve learned - God doesn’t have a problem looking bad in your eyes when we presume on Him to do something He isn’t into
* “He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, ‘He is my refuge and my fortress; My God, in Him I will trust.’” (Psalm 91:1-2)
* This entire Psalm begins w/ trusting God & everything that follows is a result of trusting God not presuming on His power to bail us out
* That’s why Jesus’ response is so powerful - He quotes Deutoronomy 6
* “You shall not tempt the Lord your God as you tempted Him in Massah.” (Deuteronomy 6:16)
* Now, this has a deeper meaning b/c of what Moses is referring to & it’s the exact reason why Jesus quotes it - b/c it’s a moment in Israel’s history when they fell for the trick that Satan is tempting Jesus to do
* The people were thirsty & they were complaining to Moses & God did the miraculous & made water come out of a rock - but the people ha this pattern of complaining that never left & it hindered their future b/c they never dealt w/ it
* **Moses is telling the people, “Don’t let this thing from your past become part of your future.”**
* B/c here’s what wise people do - we see the patterns of temptations in our lives
* **This is why I buy 1 place of cake at Publix & not an entire cake - b/c I’m not responsible enough to handle an entire cake**
* B/c I will eat 1 slice, then when everyone else goes to sleep, I will get up & I won’t cut myself another piece - I know that’s wrong
* Instead, I’ll take a fork & just take a few bites - then I have to eat a little more to even out the line so it doesn’t look like someone cut the cake w/ a hacksaw
* Then I’ll take a few bites from the other side of the slice & before long I’ve eaten 1/2 the cake - so I buy 1 slice of cake & that’s it b/c anything else is temptation
* So maybe it’s time to make a decision - the decision to see the errors of your past - not to beat yourself up, but to see the pattern
* Look for the people, the decisions, & the situations in your life that are causing U to fall into the temptation that U regret so much
* And I want U to make some wise choices that will put U on a new path
* U can’t plan for every temptation, but if you’re struggling w/ food U don’t have to sleep w/ a Publix cake under your pillow

**———(v. 8-11)———**

**#3 - I am Tempted when I Question God’s Plan**

* **I use to own a 1988 Chevy Cavalier - it was a good car, but later in life it started having problems**
* Like how the car wouldn’t start unless I laid hands on the car & prayed
* It didn’t matter if I was in a hurry, if I just jumped into the car & turned the key
* Nothing happened - If I got out & prayed, it started
* It was later infested with cockroaches, but that’s another story
* One day Carey & I are driving in the car & she opened my glove box
* She was looking for something & she pulls out the title to my car
* She says, “What’s this?” I said, “Carey that’s the title to this car. This car may not start w/o prayer. Yes, it’s roach infested but it’s ours.”
* She says, “Not for long.” “Why?” She says, “B/c if someone takes this title, the car belongs to them. Whoever has the title owns the car.”
* U ever had 1 of those moments where U think, ‘I should have known that?’
* **I want U to follow what I’m about to teach b/c what Satan says to Jesus doesn’t make sense unless U understand the theological underpinnings**
* When God created Man & woman, He gave them charge of the earth
* He told them to tend & care for it - the title deed so to speak, was theirs
* But as Gen. tells us, mankind gave up that title deed, gave up stewardship of the earth to Satan all over a piece of fruit - talk about a lemon deal
* When Adam sinned, he handed the title deed over & the world U & I live in is under the control of the Devil - U might think, ‘That can’t be right?’
* “We know that we are children of God, and that the whole world is under the control of the evil one.” (1 John 5:19)
* That’s b/c the world we live in is being ruled by the Devil - that’s why there’s pain, death, disease & suffering - it’s his world to control - for now
* **But Jesus shows up & Satan is very aware of what Jesus’ goal is**
* He wants to redeem the earth - that is, He wants to take back the title deed
* How? B/c in Israel, when land was sold or lost a family member, in Hebrew a “Goel”, the Kinsman Redeemer could buy back the land
* But there was a price to be paid - for Jesus, the price is the cross - it’s death
* Why? To pay the price of redemption & redeem the world back to Himself
* But Satan is giving Him another way out - he says, “If U want the world, I’ll give it to U. It’s mine to give to whoever I want.”
* **Jesus rejects the offer b/c this temptation is so subtle - it’s doing the right thing in the wrong way**
* That’s why Jesus quotes the Jewish law in Deuteronomy 6 where Moses is telling the people that they are going into the land of promise & are going to inherit all kinds of things that they didn’t work for
* When U read the Deut. passage in context U realize Moses is telling the people that not obeying God is like following another God or bowing down to some idol
* Jesus is saying, “Redeeming the world is what I’ve been sent here to do, but I’ve got to do it my Father’s way.”
* This is the challenge all of us face & the temptation that doesn’t go away b/c we’re offered this temptation on a daily basis
* **The issue here is, is it ok for the ends to justify the means?**
* The problem is, God’s work in your life doesn’t happen at the end - the end is the reward - it’s the “during” part that shapes U into the person who can handle the blessing that comes at the end
* That’s why just picking someone to marry b/c well, God says it’s not good for man to be alone - and that’s the goal for me, to not be alone
* But that isn’t the goal, is it? B/c there’s something worse than being single & alone - that’s being married & alone b/c U took a shortcut that U thought led to the same place, but it didn’t
* It’s why couples give up on their marriage - b/c they just want peace & they don’t want to fight anymore - I mean doesn’t God want us to have peace?
* Peace is a good thing - but not at the expense of giving up
* Maybe the fact that there’s battles means you’re in the Promised Land
* God didn’t just give them peace & their inheritance - they had to fight for it
* Why? So they would know what it cost - maybe that’s why U have to fight for your marriage - b/c once U fight for peace & get it, U know how precious it is
* That’s why Jesus says no to the temptation - b/c there’s a better story coming
* “Then I saw in the right hand of him who sat on the throne a scroll with writing on both sides and sealed with seven seals. And I saw a mighty angel proclaiming in a loud voice, ‘Who is worthy to break the seals and open the scroll?’ But no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth could open the scroll or even look inside it. I wept and wept because no one was found who was worthy to open the scroll or look inside. Then one of the elders said to me, ‘Do not weep! See, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has triumphed. He is able to open the scroll and its seven seals.’” (Revelation 5:1-5)
* And there’s a better story for U, when U trust that God’s plan done God’s way will bring a harvest of blessing in your life that’s beyond what U could imagine…

**———(v. 12-22)———**

**#4 - I am Tempted when I Neglect God’s Call**

* **So there’s a message that we learn about these boys & we miss it b/c we are 2 millennia & 1/ a world away - and the message is, they had failed**
* Let’s back up & explain - **Whichever rabbi U thought was most accurate was 1 U followed**
* You’d tell Rabbi U wanted to be his “Talmid” = His learner/disciple
* So he’d ask U crazy questions about Bible to see how well U knew it
* Like, “What are the references to Torah in Zech.? But Backwards!”
* And if U were the best of the best…He took you on as his disciple
* B/c the rabbi was looking to duplicate himself & spread his interpretation of the law - which was called his “yoke”
* That’s why when a rabbi named Jesus showed up & said that His burden was easy & His yoke was light, people followed
* **A rabbi’s talmids followed the rabbi wherever he went - why?**
* B/c they believed that his way was the best possible way to live
* So they wanted to do everything just like their rabbi
* You’d eat what your rabbi ate, you’d go wherever your rabbi went
* There are even stories of talmids following their rabbis into restrooms b/c rabbis had prayers for everything – there were even restroom prayers that thanked God that all the parts were working
* That’s why Jesus’ Talmids asked Him to teach them to pray – remember why? B/c John the Baptist taught his Talmids how to pray
* **But not every talmid or student made the cut – Some would get sent home b/c the rabbi was only looking for the best of the best**
* The rabbi would tell them to take up the family trade
* So at the age of 15 or 16 a young man would go home & get into the family business if he wasn’t the best of the best
* B/c the desire of every rabbi was to perpetuate his yoke – so every time he took on a disciple, he was asking the question, “Can this person be like me?”
* If the rabbi believed that he could, the rabbi would say 2 words to the potential talmid: “Follow me.” - That’s why this story is so powerful
* Jesus is showing up & sees this boys working in their father’s business - what does that mean? It means they already failed - they already got sent home
* But then Jesus shows up & says the 2 words every Jewish boy wanted to hear
* “Follow Me” - It was Jesus saying, “I believe U can be like me”
* Listen, there’s only 1 other case in Jewish history where a rabbi picked His own disciples - that’s rabbi’s name was Hillel - the student always picked the rabbi
* “You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain…” (John 15:16)
* When I 1st became a Christian, these verses never really made sense to me b/c I didn’t know the background to the story
* I imagined there was a verse of Mr. Zebedee yelling that didn’t make it into the Bible of him saying, “You pesky kids…Get back to work & stop playing around!”
* That’s so far from the truth – He went home that night & Mrs. Z said, “Where are the boys?” He’d smile & say, “They aren’t coming home.”
* She’d say, “Why?” “B/c the rabbi from Galilee named Jesus came to see them today & said, “Follow me. Honey, the Rabbi thinks our boys have what it takes.
* **We talk a lot about believing in God & trusting God & that’s important & needed - but here’s another truth: God believes in you**
* He believes w/ His help & in His power, U can be who He created U to be
* **Maybe you’re here & U haven’t been the best husband -** God believes in U & you can be as you follow Him
* **Maybe your marriage is falling apart & you don’t believe it can work anymore -** God believes in you, so it can work
* **Maybe there’s an addiction U haven’t been able to let go of, a habit that’s been beating U for years & U don’t think U can be free**
* I’m here to tell you that God believes in you, so you can be free
* But that begins w/ answering the call of Jesus to “follow Him”
* That’s not just following Him in becoming a Christian - it means following Him in all of your ways - it’s walking w/ Him & becoming like Him
* **Jesus’ desire is for U to follow Him b/c He believes life can be different for U & He sees who U can be in His power**
* Maybe U grow up in church but U walked away
* Maybe U aren’t a Christian at all & you’re here b/c you’re hoping U could find God here - well, He’s here & He’s been waiting for U
* Today is your opportunity to take the 1st step in following Him B/c if God believes in you, then the least we can do is answer His call to follow Him...