

SA Today's June 8th, two days ago. June 6th was the anniversary of D Day. June 6th, 1944. 81 years ago, D Day was a big invasion. I'm kind of a D Day nerd a little bit.

So let me just remind you what happened on D Day. So let me read this. Early hours of June 6, 1944, in the English Channel between England and the beaches of Normandy, France. Over 11,000 ships, 13,000 aircraft, 150,000 troops converged on the beaches. The mission could be summed up in one liberation.

Nazi war machine was ruthless in their murderous and destructive occupation not only of France, but of most of Europe. Millions were enslaved, millions were dying. Someone needed to do something. Someone needed to set them free. As they approached the beaches of Normandy, they were quite surprised that they encountered no resistance at all.

Not one enemy soldier, not one enemy machine gun, not one enemy anti aircraft gun, no opposition at all. So they had a beach party complete with beach bonfires, hot dogs, coca cola and s' mores. What a grand time was had by all. Then they proceeded on with their mission of freedom and liberation. Oh, wait, that's not right.

That's not what happened. Right. Incidentally, s' mores were around in 1940. I researched that because I want to be historically accurate in my deceptive term a lot. You know, 1927, the Girl Scouts invented the idea of s' mores.

Anyway, side note, here's what really happened, right? Actually, what history tells is the Allies met fierce resistance. Opposition was brutal. Thousands were killed, maimed and traumatized. The German war machine would not give an inch of land without bloodshed.

Nazi regime was intent on their continued rule of oppression, enslavement and death for the over 280 million people in Europe under their control. 200,000 Allied casualties during the D Day invasion. 50,000 killed. Almost a year later, on May 8, 1945, was victory in Europe Day. V E Day celebrations erupted around the world.

Millions were now set free. So my point on that is, of course, every kind of military operation, there's opposition. Put this slide, I think I have this slide up there that has. Read this statement with me out loud. Every movement toward freedom and life will always be opposed.

Any kind of. If you're a war person or all a military, anytime there's a movement to free people held in the Depression, there will be opposition. There's no beach parties on Normandy. Every movement toward freedom and life will always be opposed. This is also true in your spiritual life.

Every moment, every movement you make toward freedom and life in Jesus will be opposed. If you have the spirit of Jesus in you, you exist on the beaches of Normandy. I'm not trying to be scary or anything like that, but that's the reality, right? So we're doing a series first on mountains and lakes, which could be subtitled, you know, Jesus and the mountains and lakes. They're all stories about Jesus this summer.

And as much as we could, that's somewhat chronological in terms of situation of Jesus, whether he's on a mountain, he's in the Lake of Galilee, or, you know, and kind of following the life of Jesus through the terrain, so to speak, of Israel. So today we're talking about the passage we're looking at today is the passage where Jesus is tempted by Satan. You may know the passage, you may not know the passage, but it's Matthew, chapter four. And let me just give you some context here. All right?

So Jesus had just been baptized, Kind of the inauguration of. And hear the voice from heaven. It's my beloved son whom I'm well pleased. Literally, what we're told next in the text is the spirit then led Jesus into the desert to be tempted by the evil one. And there's a reason I'm making the point that baptism, that the new beginning was right, followed quickly by the opposition and temptation.

And so the scripture tells US There were three temptations. We're focusing on one today. But there were three temptations. Jesus was fasting for 40 days. And so one of the temptations, Satan says to Jesus, see those stones over there?

Turn them into bread. You're starving, hungry. You can do that. Jesus says, no. Scripture says man doesn't live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.

Second temptation, Satan brings him up on the temple, said, hey, jump off the temple. Because the Bible says Satan is quoting the Bible to Jesus. The Bible says your angels will rescue you. Satan knows how to deceptively twist scripture in a way that's not accorded with the spirit of Jesus. And Jesus says, no.

The scriptures also say, you must not test the Lord your God. So Jesus responds from the opposition and temptation of the scripture. Third temptation takes place on a mountain. We're going to read it together, and not all the time, but if you some church traditions, whenever they read a gospel, the people stand. So let's stand.

It's kind of a way to honor Jesus and focus on Jesus. And this is the third temptation that takes place on the mountain. All right, here we go. Read it out loud with me next. The devil took him to the peak of a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdom of the world and their glory.

I will give it all to you, he said, if you will kneel down and worship me. Get out of here, Satan. Let's do that line again. Get out of here, Satan. One more time.

Get out of here, Satan. Jesus told him, for the scriptures say, you must worship the Lord your God and serve only him. All right, go ahead and have a seat.

So this passage, one of the things I think is a real important tool whenever you study the Bible, even just, I mean, not just as a teacher, but anybody when you study the Bible, is curiosity. Ask questions like, wonder about this. I wonder about this. Like, here's one of the things. Here's one of the curious questions I thought of this week.

How did. So this shows up in Matthew and Mark and Luke. How did they know about this? Whoever, how did it get into the Bible? Well, the assumption, because nobody else was with Jesus.

The assumption is he must have told somebody, Matthew, Mark, Luke, somebody else that wrote it down. And they. But then why, why did Jesus tell somebody about this incredible 40 day fast and all the powerful temptation, the evil one? Was it because, well, someday you're gonna write a book of the Bible. You might need some extra space to fill in some stories?

Of course not. Or was it like, hey, I want people to know how powerful I am? Write that down, make sure they know about me? I don't think so. I think what he was telling, he probably told somebody and maybe he repeated it more than once to people.

He said, this is how you fight opposition. This is how you fight the evil one. Jesus wasn't doing that just to make a show. He was showing us, this is how you fight the temptation from the evil one. The second curious question I ask from this is, could Jesus really have given into temptation or was he pretending for our sake?

I mean, he was fully man, fully God, could he have given in when Satan said, fall down and worship me? Because Jesus could think, wow, I could skip suffering in the cross if I go this route. But of course, Jesus, he didn't give in. But could he have? Because if he.

If he was just pretending, I can't relate to that guy. If he was pretending, he doesn't understand the temptations. I feel he doesn't understand how my emotions and body kind of respond to temptation. But yet scripture tells us in Hebrews chapter four, for we have a high priest who was. We do not have a high priest who was unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one, he's talking about Jesus.

One, he who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without

sin. So these temptations of Jesus were real in his human body. He felt the temptation. He knew the temptation. He knows any temptation you feel.

He knows what it feels like in your head and in your body and in your emotions. He knows that if he doesn't, this is all make believe and why we why bother, right? So he told them because he wanted to let them know. This is how you fight opposition and temptation. And I know what temptation feels like.

So I'm just saying that because if those two aren't true, then we have. It doesn't make any sense to us. So then there's three things I wanna say to you about what I think Jesus wants us to learn from this in terms of this whole passage of scripture. First one is this expectation, temptation. Expect it.

Expect opposition. On the beaches of Normandy. No beach parties right in here. So read that statement with me one more time. Every movement toward freedom in life will always be opposed.

Anytime you decide to move closer to Jesus. Maybe it's in your spiritual habits, maybe it's in giving more to the church or missions or whatever. Or maybe it's. Maybe you have a secret dark sin and you just feel like, I need rescued and you decide, I'm gonna take a step toward friend, I'm gonna tell somebody or I'm gonna give more or I'm gonna. Maybe it's a forgiveness issue.

I'm gonna forgive this person. But you decide I'm gonna forgive them. Every time you begin on a new journey with Jesus, Satan is most active. All right. Every movement toward freedom.

Life is always imposed. Examples. Garden of Gethsemane. Adam and Eve are created to give a dominion over the world. Who shows up?

Satan lies to them. God's not really good at withholding on you. You can eat that fruit. All right. Israelites are enslaved in Egypt.

God has decided to set them free. Freedom and life. Moses is going to be his chosen one to lead them. When Moses is born, what happens? Pharaoh decides to kill any Hebrew boys two years and under trying to go.

Satan is right after it. Satan is trying to kill freedom and life at its inception. All right. Nehemiah. Book of Nehemiah.

Nehemiah goes back to Jerusalem, built the walls that had been ravaged by the Babylonians. He goes back there to life. You know, freedom and life starts the building very quickly. Bang. Satan incites three people to strongly oppose him.

Strongly oppose him and lead Nehemiah. Probably the temptation of maybe this isn't Worth it. And then, of course, you know, Jesus is sent to set us free. He's born in a manger. The beginning of this new freedom in life movement.

Boom. What happens? Herod kills all the babies. Satan is really active at that moment.

Beginning of Jesus ministry. This is what we're just reading. He starts his ministry. He gets baptized. Boom.

Satan tempts him. Day of Pentecost, Holy Spirit comes. The mission is going to be expanded in great ways. Boom. Apostles are in prison, some of them are flogged.

Persecution starts out. Stephen's stoned to death. So any beginning of any movement toward freedom and life in Jesus, the theme is clear in the Bible, but it's also clear in your life and my life. The moment I decide, okay, I'm gonna. I'm gonna really get into a habit of reading the Bible.

Cause I'm gonna hear God more. You will have reason in the next few days not to do that. It's not really worth it. Nothing's gonna change. The moment you decide, I've gotta talk to somebody about this dark habit I have.

I desperately want freedom from this. The moment you decide you're gonna take a step toward freedom in life, pretty much guaranteed you're gonna have something thrown at you. Some kind of new temptation thrown at you. Cause Satan knows if he can stop it at birth, he can stop it. There was one time, I can't remember exactly all the details, but my wife and I decided to increase our giving to church or missionaries or something.

And a couple days later, literally, the water cooler broke in our house. Water heater. We don't have a water cooler. Water heater broke now. Okay, Matt, are you saying that Satan destroyed the water heater?

No, what I am saying is Satan knew how to take that event and then spin in my mind, you can't really afford to give more to the church. He knows how to take those events. And so, boom, right away. So anything you decide, any movement toward freedom in life is going to be opposed. The goal of Satan, scripture tells us, is to steal, kill and destroy.

So if the scripture tells us his goal is to steal, kill and destroy, it's probably quite likely that he wants to steal, kill and destroy in your life. So you take a step toward maybe a greater health in your marriage, financially being generous with God, you know, the money God's given you, or breaking a habit. Take the. Go there, get that.

But expect a little bit of Normandy going on.

Expect it, because when it happens, it won't derail you. Paul even says to the Corinthians we have to be aware of his. Satan's schemes. His schemes. His objective is to keep you in oppression.

Satan, he wants to keep you in oppression. He wants to keep you in kind of normal, vanilla kind of Christianity where I'm not gonna. You know, that's not that big of a sin, or God doesn't really need my money, or. I know I mistreat my wife a little bit, but I'm. I can't.

I don't. I'm just. I'm. I think I'm good. I got my heaven ticket.

I'm good. But if you want more than that, if you want freedom in life, expect temptation. Second point from this passage, talk back to the devil.

I talked back to my mom once when I was a kid, probably more than once. You know what happened? The dove, soap in my mouth. Anybody else get soap in their mouth when they were a kid? All right, remember the Christmas.

What's that movie? It was the soap. Right. So talking back is not a good thing. I wish nobody ever talked back to Bobby Knight.

Right? Nobody. You don't talk. But in this case, talk back to the devil. So Jesus does get out of here.

One of my favorite authors is a man named A.W. Tozer. He was a pastor, 40s, 50s and 60s in Chicago area, Akron, Ohio, Canada. And he wrote a book called I Talk back to the Devil. And now you might think, oh, that sounds a little bizarre, weird.

But this is what he wrote. I stand for believing in God and defying the devil. Our God loves that kind of courage among his people. And then he said this. I really like this.

He said, show me an individual or a congregation who is committed to spiritual progress. In other words, committed to freedom in life, moving forward, and I will show you where there is strong, immediate defiance by the devil. Show me someone who says, I'm gonna move forward, and I will show you immediate defiance. So how do we talk back to the devil? What did Jesus say?

He said, get out of here. The first temptation. He's like, no, the scripture says second temptation. Scripture also says third temptation. Get out of here.

The same thing Jesus said to Peter when Peter was saying something that was tempting Jesus to leave his mission. He said, get behind me,

Satan. And he was saying it to Peter, but it was, satan, get out of here. Get behind me.

So are we supposed to do that?

Yeah. So, examples. So I.

My wife and I are in a good place financially, but there's times where I get anxious about future. I'm not ready to retire. But I think about that and this and that and this and that. And there's times where I get this anxiety, irrational anxiety about the future.

Irrational. All right, that's a cue right there, Right? And I started to do this sometimes in bed, in the middle of the night, when I wake up thinking about it, and I don't say it loud enough to wake up my wife, but I'll whisper, no when I'm thinking, when I'm hearing this lie. And I'm saying that because Satan does talk to us. It's not you, it's not God talking about anxiety.

And I say, no, Lord is my shepherd. I have all that I need. I'm saying that to me, but I think I'm saying it. I know I'm saying it to another being that's trying to destroy me, trying to get me stuck in this cycle of anxiety about money. So I just whisper out loud, no, I have everything I need.

Lord is my shepherd. I have all that I need. So I'm refuting a lie, right? Another example. So I've been in Bloomington for 35 years.

My first 10 years, I was pastor for college students at another church here in town. So if you're a pastor of a college student, you spend a lot of time on campus. Invariably, if you're on campus in August, September, or May, spend a lot of time walking around students, invariably in August, September and May, you see female students who have minimal amounts of clothing on, right? So if I'm walking on campus, I can't avoid those months. So that happens.

And that happened, right? So I would. I got to the habit where I would walk. I remember one time I was walking into a building, and a female college student walked by with hardly anything on, kind of thing. And I said out loud, I didn't scream it.

In the foyer of the building, I whispered out loud for me to say, that's a lie. Because the lie I was hearing was, if you were a real man, that's the kind of woman you would get. I was like, no, that's a lie. I would whisper that out to myself. That's a lie.

Scripture says I can rejoice in the wife of my youth.

So sometimes you talk back to the devil about those kind of things, right? Who's lying? Or you can think, oh, I'm just a wretched person

having all these wretched thoughts, and it must be me. But if you have the spirit of Jesus in you, it's not the spirit of Jesus talking, and it's not your new heart. It's Satan telling you, that's the kind of woman you want.

You should worry about money. You should never forgive that person.

Not out loud, so people think you're nuts. I say it out loud in my car. If I'm by myself. I say it out loud if I'm home by myself and I feel a temptation about money or things like that. No, I know what scripture says.

Lord is my shepherd. I have all that I need. No scripture tells me I can rejoice in the wife of my youth. No, scripture tells me to forgive and I'll find freedom that way.

Jesus talked out loud again. Don't do it on the sidewalks walking downtown or somebody's gonna think you're crazy. Not loud. Don't be screaming it. But I think there's a reason that Jesus told us this story, because maybe there's a way that's really helpful.

Talk back. Talk back to Satan. Now you might think, too, okay, this sounds a little weird. Okay, you can believe that Satan doesn't do that. And you can have a great time with your marshmallow s' more party on Normandy beaches.

But you will never be free. You will never experience the freedom and the joy and the exhilaration of what it means to follow Jesus in full freedom of your soul. You never will. So you can believe that, or you can realize, you know what I do believe? That Satan's talking to me, and I'm gonna fight back.

I'm gonna talk back. Last thing is this. So I said, expect temptation. Expect opposition for moving toward freedom of life. Talk back to the devil.

Third thing is this, and it's kind of an obvious thing. Like you could say this about any sermon. Follow Jesus. That's my point. Follow Jesus.

Let me just tell you why I'm saying it that way. So right here in Matthew, before this temptation, remember, he got baptized. Boom. The initiation of something new. I mean, actually, that's probably something.

If any of you have gotten baptized recently or are thinking about it, realize that post baptism, you might have some intense opposition. You will not. Might just. You will. So he's baptized right away.

The next chapter, he goes into this temptation scene where he's



tempted by the Satan in the desert and one of them on the mountaintop.

Beginning of ministry. Temptation, opposition, victory. Scripture says, greater is he that is in us than is in the world. And then what happens next? The very next passages in all the gospels, talk about this story.

Talk about. Then Jesus started his ministry. And in Luke, chapter four, he started it this way. So he was baptized. He wins the temptation.

He knows he has the power to fight the evil one. And he knows he's given it to us. And then in Luke chapter four, immediately we go to Jesus in the synagogue. So the Jewish boys and men would go to synagogue three or four days a week on a regular basis. There's a pattern.

Somebody would read scripture from the Old Testament. So we don't know if this day, if it was Jesus turn to read as a 33 year old young man, or he'd just cut in line or whatever. But scripture tells us baptism fighting temptation. Now he's in the synagogue the very next day it seems. And scripture said that he grabbed the scroll of the prophet Isaiah.

Isaiah was written maybe 600 years before Jesus, but there was a passage in Isaiah that every Jewish man, woman, boy and girl knew was talking about the mission of the Messiah. And so Jesus read that passage. He said he found the place in the scroll where this passage was. And this is what he said. The spirit of the Lord is on me.

So imagine this Jesus being in front of other. In that case it was just men and boys. Spirit of the Lord is on me because he's anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners, recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed and to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor. That literally would mean to proclaim that God has a really good favor toward you.

He loves you. And then it said, Jesus finished that passage. I would love to have been there. I wanna see it in heaven someday. Rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant.

And then he said to the people today, in your hearing, this prophecy has been fulfilled. He's basically saying, this is me. I'm the one who's gonna be setting you free, releasing you from oppression, giving you recovery of sight from your spiritual blindness. That's me. So they were all, and the scripture said every eye was fixed on him, like, wow.

And they knew that's what the Messiah supposed to be. Now the story got kind of messy after that, but he was. This is the mission of

Jesus. According to Jesus, the spirit of the Lord is on me and I'm gonna set you free. I'm here to set you free, not from Rome, but from the things in your own heart.

And that was his mission. His mission was restoration. I used to think with this passage, you know, the spirit of the Lord is on me to release people from oppression as recovery of sight for the blind. I thought it was kind of for those kind of people who really are broken and really need church. And I've realized years ago, but even more so now, it's for us.

Jesus is talking about his mission. His mission is you and it's me. He wants us to be fully free in the depths of our souls. Free from oppressive habits, free from blindness, free from all the ways that we've been broken and we need to be healed. That's what he did.

And his progress of baptism to this, to that is no coincidence. So I say follow Jesus because he wants to set you free. But I'm also going to say this in the slide. I think I had follow Jesus, join his mission. He then says, that's our mission now.

His mission is to set people free. That's our mission now. To be a part of the freedom of our friends and our neighbors and our co workers and maybe even people we don't like. But Jesus knows he wants to use you to help set them free from oppression, spiritual oppression, spiritual blindness, all the spiritual brokenness, all the things that keep us from being fully alive, awake and free.

So you want to be that. You'll probably have to go. Not probably. You will go through this. You'll go through.

Satan's going to be like, no, no, no, no. Don't get serious about this Jesus thing. Just be a really good person. Occasionally tell people you're a Christian. But don't get serious about really following Jesus and letting him form himself in.

You don't do that. Satan doesn't want you to. Jesus says if you do that, you will be free and you will be a part of setting others free.

So why did Jesus tell us all this thing about the temptation? He wants us to do it that way. But more than that, he wants this freedom for you.

When I was preparing for this, I was thinking about times in my life where clearly I felt the freedom that Jesus wanted from me. I told this before, when I was in my 20s, before I was married, I had a pornography addiction. Told you before, I cheated in seminary on an exam. But I remember the moments.

I remember the moments when freedom happened. And it was like, this is

what I was made for. So I don't know what your issue is. I don't know if you have temptations that you feel like you're giving into. Maybe it's a dark temptation.

They're all dark. Maybe it's pornography. Maybe it's you can't forgive. Maybe it's chemical stuff or maybe it's you just. I don't really care to get too serious about this, Jesus.

You're missing out on the Greatness of the fullness of joy in your life. You're missing out on that. You'll never get there if you don't go this way. Jesus wants that for you. Why would you not follow him?

I mean, who else is like Jesus? There's. If you go to the union, by alumni hall on the main level, there's some etching in stone where it has all these names of great people. Socrates, Aristotle, Abraham Lincoln. You know who else is that on there?

Jesus. I'm shocked that nobody scratched that out yet. So even in the that world, there's an acknowledgment that there's great Jesus was part of the great men of the world. But none of those men gave themselves on a cross to die.

None of those men were resurrected from the dead. Jesus, there's one and only. He's way above everybody else. It's great. They acknowledge he's a great person, but he's so far different.

There's no one like him. So why not follow him? If you're not a follower of Jesus, why not? There's no one like that. He will set you free.

Set you free. So here's what we do at the end of the service. If you remember during the series on Revelation, we had you bring in your own communion and kind of going back with it, but just for that series we're doing. But we have the communion cups with the juice and the bread on the bottom. If you're new here, it's all one packet thing.

So I'm quite sure that's not how it was the Last Supper. But we've kind of advanced, I guess, maybe, I don't know. But Jesus said, when you eat this bread and drink this cup, he said, remember me? I'm going to ask you to remember one thing. Remember how he fought the temptation of Satan for your freedom.

Remember he did that for you. He, of course, he died on the cross and rose from the dead for you. But remember, he fought temptation for you. You, anyone, you always will win. So as you will when we sing here in a second one while you can come and take the communion.

This for today and how we're doing it. Normally you just take it on your own. You can take the bread and drink the juice here, you take it back to your seat. It's up to you how you do it. But when you put it

in your body, let that be a kind of visceral way to remember what Jesus has done for you on the cross, but also on the mountain, right?

And then also you can. Also, I'm gonna encourage people to do this either before or after. There'll be few on the side, maybe in the back, that have orange lanyards that will pray for you.

I'm quite sure there's people in here that may just need to go to somebody and say, I just need prayer, as I'm battling temptation. You don't need to name it if you don't want to, but maybe that's the first step for you toward freedom in life, is asking someone else to pray for you. There's no shame. It's not like we're going to mark who you are. I mean, we all probably could go for those kind of things, but there's actually quite a bit of honor in taking that step towards freedom in life.

So encourage you to go have people pray for you. And so let me pray now. So, Jesus, we. We enthrone you, Jesus. You're the king.

Absolutely. Absolutely no one like you. And just as we kind of watch the. The movie reel of how you dealt with Satan on the mountain, we're captivated by you. You're not just a great teacher and activist.

You're an incredible warrior who fought the evil one for us. And we love you, Jesus. We want to be like you, and we will follow you. We ask this all in your name, Jesus. Amen.