



Growth Group Questions
April 7, 2024
“Knowing God’s Word”

Context:

This week we are beginning a new sermon series called “Changing the Narrative.” There are a lot of narratives being told in our society and sometimes we listen to or believe the wrong narrative. God’s narrative tells us that he longs to be in our lives. We are reminded that God is for us and loves us. Jesus changed the narrative forever and because of him we can live in freedom and hope.

When Jesus is baptized it is an announcement to the world that he is moving out with the calling that God has placed on his life. He goes down into the waters of repentance and baptism, not because he needs to, but because he wants to identify with humanity. His baptism is an important marker that helps us see baptism not just as something that signifies repentance, but also puts us on the path of living righteously.

God is pleased by what has happened and speaks his word of affirmation from heaven. However, Jesus immediately is taken from this wonderful moment of joy and led into the wilderness where he will be tempted and tested by the devil. The wilderness is often seen as a place of testing. Israel wandered in the desert for 40 years before they got to the Promised Land. Elijah fasted 40 days in the wilderness before hearing from God.

Jesus is tired and exhausted, and the devil shows up. “Devil” literally has to do with splitting up. What the devil wants to do is break up the relationship of Jesus and God just like the devil seeks to split up followers of Jesus and God. Jesus is tested three different times with three very different sort of promises. Every time he quotes Scripture as he refutes the devil.

Matthew 4 shows us the importance of knowing God’s word. In the temptations, Jesus’ first ministry is to be our prophet, showing us God’s will and word when we go through our trials. Jesus is victorious because he uses God’s word as the source of his strength. At the end of his testing, angels arrive to care for him. What Jesus had refused to do (call down angels and turn rocks to bread) is actually now given to him. We are reminded that when we seek the kingdom of God there is provision.



Scripture:

Matthew 3:13-17

¹³ Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by John. ¹⁴ But John tried to deter him, saying, “I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?” ¹⁵ Jesus replied, “Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness.” Then John consented. ¹⁶ As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. ¹⁷ And a voice from heaven said, “This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.”

Romans 6:3-4

³ Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? ⁴ We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.

Deuteronomy 8:1-2

8 Be careful to follow every command I am giving you today, so that you may live and increase and may enter and possess the land the LORD promised on oath to your ancestors. ² 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.

Matthew 4

4 Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted^[a] by the devil. ² After fasting forty days and forty 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 shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.’^[b]”

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.’^[c]”

⁷ Jesus answered him, “It is also written: ‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test.’^[d]”

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.’^[e]”

¹¹ Then the devil left him, and angels came and attended him.



Questions:

1. Pastor Paul said that to truly understand the narrative of God, we must immerse ourselves in God's Word. What does that mean to you?
2. Why do you think Jesus chose to be baptized? What can we learn from his baptism?
3. In Matthew 4:1-10, Satan tempts Jesus three times in the wilderness. What do you see as the underlying theme of all three temptations?
4. When Jesus responded to each of Satan's temptations, he did so by quoting Scripture. Why do you think he chose this type of response? What can we learn from this?
5. What other lessons can we learn from Matthew 4:1-11?
6. Pastor Paul told us that at the end of every wilderness experience is always a blessing of God. What does that statement say to you?
7. If someone were to ask you why you read the Bible, how would you respond?
8. Does merely reading the Bible prepare you for the wilderness experiences that you may experience in your life? Why or why not?
9. Pastor Paul said it is important for each of us to be "in the Word." What does that mean? What are you doing to stay "in the Word"?

