

Series: Messianic Fulfillment

THE YEAR OF THE BIBLE

Sermon #2: Jesus Is Our Warrior King

Matthew 4:1-11

Dr. Matt Cassidy --- September 6, 2020

Well, good morning, Grace! Hold on, I'll be right back. [Grabs cell phone and sets up to record himself.] Bear with me on this—I'll explain later. My social media team has moved its headquarters to Los Angeles and they wanted me—wait, I've got to switch this around. Hold on, I'll be right there. This is what happens when you delegate to young people. Okay, I'm supposed to videotape this announcement. Next week, September 13, we're regathering at Grace Covenant Church. How about that? Look for that on my social media page.

Let me tell you what that looks like. I am so excited about this. I'm wearing a suit next week! I'm going to get a haircut if I can stay out of trouble getting a haircut.

And I just want to say, first of all, thank you so much for those of you who have been really patient with us. We have rebuilt a couple of rooms in here and kind of tore up the lobby to do that. Our Cornerstone building had a lot of serious work done for the children's building. And during our time off we were able to get all this construction stuff done. Even the parking lot was finished while you guys were gone. Boom!

We cannot wait to get back meeting again. And here's what it looks like. It's open to everyone, but here's the thing. Masks are going to be required for everybody that comes in here. It's going to have limited seating so we'll need to do registration. I think registration is going to fire up later on today. Just go to the main website and then you sign up and let us know how many people are coming.

There is no childcare. It will be like a family church and any member of the family can come if they can wear a mask for an hour and ten minutes. And that means—maybe you have a four-year-old that can do that or a husband that can't—yeah. So, that's the requirement for that. But next week we're regathering at Grace Covenant Church. Good times—they're coming!

I want to let you know that we're responding as a church to Hurricane Laura that hit the Gulf Coast. We sent a team down there to Lake Charles and they're working with Samaritan's Purse trying to rebuild stuff. It's hard to send a big team because there's no place to stay. We're looking at sending a bag of money to a really great church down there that's going to help provide fuel to the various people that are running generators, because electricity is not available and won't be for some time.



I also want to let you know, Grace Covenant Church, you guys are awesome. We got all our 1,200 thank-you letters together. And inside in each one of those letters is free meal from a local restaurant to the people at St. David's that are working the COVID ward. There are about 1,200 medical professionals that work there. All 1,200 are getting a meal paid for by you guys at Grace Covenant Church. Yeah, give yourselves a hand.

Ray Anderson was the one making the calls for the restaurants—these are all Austin, keeping it weird—and every one of the guys' reactions was, *Oh, this is so good. We get to help you help us help them.* You know, everybody won. It was a great day of phone calls for him.

Let me pray and then we'll get started in our learning time today. It's a very tense lesson here.

Lord, we lift up our time to You. We are grateful for You and the way You have shown Yourself to be worthy of our praise. You proved that You are worthy of our praise. Lord, I'd ask that Your Spirit would speak to us and help us become aware of the devil and his schemes against us so that he might try to destroy us and devour us and make us useless, make us sidelined. I'd ask that You'd open our eyes to that. Let's see how the Savior does that and see how we can do it in our own lives. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Well, today we look at a passage in Matthew chapter 4. And you could cut through this tension. The story is picking up from the previous weeks. We have the Jewish king that has been sent by the Father's love to come and set us free from the debt and the shame and the power of sin. He has sent His Son. And in the earlier chapters we looked at, the other stories we knew, the genealogy of Jesus Christ proved that He was heir to that throne. He is that King.

And then two weeks ago, we learned the second part of that story. It was Jesus Christ's baptism, and by that, I mean His coronation where the Father crowns Him and the Spirit empowers Him and the Old Testament prophet John the Baptist declares that He is that King.

But now the question is—Matthew chapter 4—is He worthy? Can He do it? What kind of king is he? Like King Richard the Lionhearted, or his little brother, Prince John, that has never lifted a sword?



Jesus must prove that He is not a pampered king; that He is not indulgent; that He doesn't have aristocratic exemptions. That famous phrase "the knight in shining armor is a man who has never had his metal/mettle truly tested." Jesus, if He's going to be a savior—that title has to be earned. You don't get the title of Savior. You earn that title. And today we're going to look at that in Matthew chapter 4, the temptations of Jesus Christ. And as we'll look at those temptations, we need to be thinking that this is really the third part in a four-part temptation.

Temptation Revisited: Four Parts

Temptation part one—it's like a sequel, a series—was Adam in the Garden of Eden, in Paradise, having an intimate interdependent relationship with Yahweh God. And he was tempted and he fell. And when he fell, we all fell.

Temptation part two—Israel, God's chosen people. *You belong to me.* And the Lord led him out into the wilderness. And in the wilderness the people of Israel are tempted. *Is God good? Can He provide? Will He protect? Will you believe in His promises and His previous actions?* It was a stare down and Israel blinked.

This is temptation part three: Jesus, the second Adam, the new Israel. He has to show that He will be different. And the devil's plan here is to repeat that apostasy and alter salvation history, the plan of God. That's what's at stake here.

It's a four-part temptation. Part four? You, me. We're tempted by the devil. *So, since you are a son of God, since you are a daughter of Yahweh, why is it going so poorly for you? Just curse God and die.* And all heaven watches.

Abrupt Beginning to the Story

Matthew 4:1-2

Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. ² And after fasting forty days and forty nights, He was hungry.

Now it starts abruptly. Watch this, Matthew chapter 4, verses 1 and 2: "Then Jesus was up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. And after fasting forty days and forty night, He was hungry."

Does the Spirit do that to us today? To you and me? Does the Spirit lead us into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil? God's Spirit—we're being obedient and He brings us to this place of starvation so that we might be put on trial. Does He do that? Yes, He does.

And why does He do that? There are a lot of reasons, but one of them, the main reason, is this: so that we can show angels and demons and all the created world that we believe that God is good and God is in control.

It says "Then"—"Then He took Him into the wilderness ...". And the context of that is what we've already seen. He's already been proven to be the heir in His genealogy. He's already been crowned in His coronation. And here's the question. Can He? Will He set us free?

You might have heard something like that before. It's a common tension here, like in *The Lord of the Rings*. Aragon was led by Gandalf through the gates of Mordor to defeat Sauron. Sure. Can he? Will he?

Luke Skywalker was led by the Force to the fully operational Death Star to face the evil emperor. Yeah, but can he? Will he?

Neo—he's the one. He was led by, I don't know, the Oracle or something into the Matrix to beat that guy with the sunglasses. Yeah, you get the idea.

The idea is this. The tension in these dramas is *Yeah—but can he? And will he? Will he prove himself to be that way?*

There's a tension in this story. The angels feel it. Maybe every time they read this story they think, *Oh, He must be a better Adam. He must be different kind of Israel.* That's what's taking place here.

Satan Is Real

And because Satan is real. And some people—I know, it's pretty easy to think it's not really sophisticated or it's naïve to believe in the devil. But here are some things that you might consider. One, Jesus believes in the devil. Peter and Paul believe in Satan. The name "Satan" is used over 250 times in the New Testament. That's about one time per chapter.

And if it's not just biblical revelation that would convince you, it's this. I think it's somewhat naïve to not believe in the devil, and not very sophisticated. And here's why. When you look at the depth and the breadth of evil and human experience, and even today, you have to acknowledge that you can't get there by just Darwinian survival methods. It is augmented and held up by and empowered by a supernatural, external force that desires to destroy all things good.

The devil does this. You look around us and look at the deep divisions and the chaos that's going on—the divisions between families and divisions in churches and divisions in government. That doesn't just happen.

And here's what the devil does. This is his playbook. He's going to use deception and deceit and sometimes even confusion to divide. Our battle is not alone, just flesh and blood. It's against principalities and powers. It's spiritual warfare going on out here.

And so, watch this ... watch this when we look at this passage. Because this is what's going to happen. Satan is going to use deceit and deception and confusion to divide the Father from the Son. That's his goal.

So, with that introduction, here we go. It's time.

Jesus Is Tempted: First Time

Matthew 4:3-4

“Since you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread.”⁴ But He answered, “It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.’”

Temptation number one, verses 3 and 4: “ ‘Since you are the Son of God’”—“since”—some translations say “if”, but it means “since.” “ ‘Since you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread.’ But Jesus answers, ‘It is written, “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.”’”

Temptation #1: Choosing a Good Thing over God’s Will for You

First let’s look at how this is a temptation and does it apply to us. How is this a temptation? First of all, Jesus has an intimate, vibrant, interdependent relationship with the Father. And He is out to do the Father’s will. And this temptation is to say, after forty days in the wilderness without food... *The Father’s will is for You to not use Your attributes of being a divine part of the Trinity.* His will is not to use those for His own good. And the temptation is *Why not? Go against the Father’s will and get that loaf of bread.*

The temptation is this, to choose a good thing over God’s will for you. It’s a good thing. The Father’s will for Jesus is to be completely human while He’s completely divine, but not use His divine attributes for His own advantage; to completely find Himself in the suffering and the misery of other men. He can use divine attributes with the power of the Holy Spirit to feed 5,000 or 3,000, or to walk on water to prove a point—yes, absolutely. *But for Your benefit and Your comfort, it’s denied.*

Bread—it’s a good thing. Especially after forty days of not eating anything. But it would violate God’s will for Jesus. And so, Jesus’ temptation here is to break from God’s will for something that’s good.

And that's how it works in our lives. We can feel this temptation as well. It's not quite like His—it is, but it's not. First, there's an assumption: that we have a vibrant, interconnected, lively, interdependent relationship with God and we know His will. It's the reasons we practice the disciplines of the faith. It's why we pray and read our Bibles and have intentional, purposeful relationships. It's why we participate in the ordinances. It's why we gather regularly, so that we might know the will of God and then have the courage to stay within the will of God. Because when we're in that will of God, it's not always pleasant. And if we're not careful we would choose something that's good, that makes it comfortable, but it's out of the will of God.

And knowing the will of God and sticking to it is..... , what this temptation is. And we're supposed to be living lives pursuing a knowledge of God and intimacy with God so that we can be submissive to that will. Guys, friends, we're supposed to have stories, God stories, in things that are significant in our lives. He won't leave us here alone for those sorts of things. If we should marry, who we should marry, what our vocation might be, where we should work, what city we should live in, I'd say even what house we choose, even what hobby we might be entertained with. Those sorts of choices are God-led; there's supposed to be a God story with that. And in that God story we gain confidence because it's only a matter of time before the Spirit in our obedience leads us to a place of wilderness where we go days and sometimes weeks without any kind of nurturing and we have to stay in that will. You go thirty-six days and your stomach isn't growling any more, without food; it is in a full-blown roar. And the devil rings your doorbell and he says, *Hey, I'm here from Grub Hub and here's some fajitas*. What do you want? To stay in your misery and be in God's will? Or to leave God's will and have some of this stuff? *I'm done*. To know that will of God, and then to stay in the will of God ... at day thirty-eight you could be led by your passions of loneliness or fear in your hope or pursuit of something that's good, like comfort. You could be a person that's driven toward safety. And sometimes those good things are not in God's will for you.

And so, yeah, we can be tempted by this enticement that Jesus involved Himself in. We have that too. And the temptation is—here's the thing. I would rather be miserable in God's will than be comfortable out of His will. And I have that confidence in His will because I have an intimate relationship with Him. And fatigue makes cowards out of all of us. Forty days in the wilderness without food—be aware of the fortieth day. *Aren't you a child of the King? So, why are you so hungry?*

It can be something as simple as a promotion. You take that promotion because it's the next thing to do, it makes more money, it gives you a better status. But is it in the will of God? Is that where you have the most influence, in that next level? Or don't not take the promotion because you're afraid of going up or whatever it might be. Whether you take a promotion or not, it could be this temptation of being out of the will of God. The question is, *Where is God's will for your life and how do you get there?* You have to know God. You have to know His will.

Another way we can apply this in our lives is how we use power or authority in our lives. Look at this way: because we're in the image of God and God is sovereign, we're kind of sovereign. It's called being a co-regent. We're kind of in charge. We share responsibility. And so, what we have sometimes is places of authority, sometimes a position of power, or sometimes just wealth. And we can use that to give a good thing to someone else—not just to us, but to someone else. Because they're in a wilderness. And we think, *Oh, I'm going to help them. I'm going to—you've heard the phrase—"just throw money at it."* See, we can become like little sovereigns if we have even a small amount of wealth or a position. And God has led a person that you love, maybe a family member, a child, in their obedience even, into that wilderness, into their famine. And at day forty-one they are going to receive a reward from God. They will be cared for by His angels. They will learn in that experience of the desert. And we come in and we throw money at it because we feel pity for them, and we sacrifice that wisdom and that honor at the altar of comfort or safety, or maybe just a hug back. And so, we have to be very careful that we don't do what Jesus is being tempted to do in our own life—rescue ourselves from the wilderness—but also other people's lives, that we don't step in and rescue them from the wilderness maybe God himself in His sovereignty has brought them to.

Here at Grace we have a very generous mercy ministry. But we don't just give it out to anybody that asks. That ministry makes their decisions based on their prayer life and the way we feel like God is working in our church, but also how God is working in that family or that person. We want to make sure we don't violate that as a church, but also in our own lives.

How do you know? How do you know God's will? You have to know Him. Look what Jesus says. "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God." In other words, I think His thoughts, I feel His feelings. Everything I'm living for is from the Word of God. And because of that, I'm in this harmonic relationship with the will of God, being guided by His Spirit, and I know even a good thing might not be a God thing for me

and His will for my life. Ask, seek, knock. If you know the will of God, you can do that. The temptation here is choosing a good thing—a good thing—over God’s will for your life.

Jesus is in that desert and He says to the devil, *My personal comfort is not the most important thing in my life. Being in the will of God and being submitted to Him is.*

Jesus Is Tempted: Second Time

Matthew 4:5-6

Then the devil took Him to the holy city and set Him on the pinnacle of the temple ⁶ and said to Him, “If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down, for it is written, ‘He will command His angels concerning You,’ and ‘On their hands they will bear You up, lest You strike Your foot against a stone.’”

Next ... okay. Temptation number two. Here it is. Verses 5 and 6: “Then the devil took Him to the holy city and set Him on the pinnacle of the temple and said to Him: ‘If you are the Son of God’—since you are the Son of God—either way—“throw yourself down, for it is written, “He will command His angels concerning You,” and “On their hands they will bear You up, lest You strike Your foot against a stone.””

Forty days without food in the hot wilderness of the desert of the Middle East and we have the devil showing up, quoting the Bible. That’s just perfect, isn’t it? Misquoting the Bible. That happens a lot. Note: the devil uses deceit and deception and even confusion to separate you from the Word of God, the knowledge of God. And he’ll even use the Bible to do that. Can he do that? Yes, he does. He misapplies the Bible so that you will be confused or so you’ll have doubts about things that you’re supposed to have certainty about. He’s going to put a question mark where God put an exclamation point. That’s what he does. He confuses us sometimes.

Matthew 4:7

Jesus said to him, “Again it is written, ‘You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.’”

Look how Jesus responds in verse 7: “Jesus said to him, ‘Again, it is written, “You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.”” “To the test”—what does that mean? The devil is saying, *Look, since you’re the Son of God, isn’t this what the Bible says? That God loves You and He’s going to protect You, so much so that You could—I don’t know—You won’t even stub Your toe Your whole life. You’re going to live a protected life. And that’s how He shows His goodness. Since You’re the Son of God ...*

Temptation #2: To Interpret God through Your Circumstances Rather Than His Word

Here’s temptation number two: that you interpret God through your circumstances rather than His Word; that you define the nature of God by life’s ups and downs instead of His declared promises. God has proven certain things and has declared certain things. And Jesus is saying, “You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.” He’s saying to Satan, *Look, God has already proven Himself in His actions and in His words. There’s no test here.*

It’s easy to fall into this temptation because we’re very fickle as mammals. We miss 120 meals and we could believe about anything. We’re looking for verses to get us out of this state of starvation. And we’re supposed to, in those times of emotional volatility, because fatigue can make cowards out of all of us ... Jesus is saying, *Look, this is the thing. You have to hold onto and anchor yourself to things that have already been proven to be true.*

And listen, one of the things that’s true in the Bible—here’s one. Jesus calls us to suffering. Jesus calls us to follow Him and carry our own cross while we’re doing that. He didn’t mince words about this. So, when we’re suffering hardships, whether they’re financial or physical or emotional, when we’re feeling like we’ve been betrayed by friends or family, when

we feel like we're all alone and being disrespected, we need to say, *Okay. That's fine.* But these things are true about God. He's proven them or He's promised those.

And frankly, we live in a pretty good time, comparatively speaking. I don't know if you ever pictured yourself in the Old Testament where you don't have all the answers, all the spoilers aren't out yet. There were a lot of promises and, you know, some actual actions. But now on the other side of the resurrection, we really cannot doubt the goodness of God. There's no place for wondering if He's loving. He's a good, good father.

John Owen said that the greatest insult to God, after the cross and resurrection, is to doubt His love.

Romans 8:31-32

What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? ³² He who did not spare His own Son, but gave Him up for us all—how will He not also, along with Him, graciously give us all things?

Here's the way Paul said it. I like the way he said it best. I memorized these two verses and it changed my life. If you believe these to be true, it will change yours as well. He says, "What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?" What's the proof? "He who did not spare His own Son, but gave Him up for all of us—how will He not also"—now that Jesus is at His side—"along with Him, graciously give us all things?" Huh. Is God good? Well, I don't know. He gave His only Son to be tortured, and then He rose again. Is God in control? It sure looks that way. He didn't just promise it. He proved it. The jury's back. They didn't even deliberate. God is good and God is sovereign. We don't have to put that to the test. That's what Jesus is saying. Boom!

Jesus Is Tempted: Third Time

Matthew 4:8-10

Again, the devil took Him to a very high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory.⁹ And he said to Him, “All these I will give you, if You will fall down and worship me.”¹⁰ Then Jesus said to him, “Be gone, Satan! For it is written, ‘You shall worship the Lord your God and Him only shall you serve.’”

Temptation number 3. That’s how we’re to live our lives. Verse 8 through 10: “Again, the devil took Him to a very high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. And then he said to Him, ‘All these I will give to You, if You just fall down and worship me.’ And then Jesus said to him, ‘Be gone, Satan! For it is written, “You shall worship the Lord your God and Him only shall you serve.””

There’s a good Bible memory verse. “Be gone, Satan!” You’ve got to hand it to the devil, at this point he’s getting frustrated and he says, *Look, let’s cut to the chase. Just worship me. That’s what we’re all here for. That’s why we’re having this meeting. You worship me. If You just not worship God, You worship me.* You’re going to serve the devil or you’re going to serve the Lord, but you’re going to serve somebody. Those are your choices. He just says, *Let’s go.*

And here’s what his temptation is. He’s saying, Look, all these kingdoms and their glory I can give to You if just worship me. He saying, *Look, you can get all of that; You can have the crown without the cross. You can have all that God plans on giving You, but You don’t have that cup of sorrow. You don’t have to go through all of that shame and the mocking. You don’t have to wear the crown of thorns. You don’t have to carry the cross and be crucified. All that God promises You—the kingdoms and the glory—none of the pain.*

Temptation #3: To Pursue a God Thing in the Wrong Way

Here it is in summary: to pursue a God thing in the wrong way. This is extremely tempting because it’s a God thing. God promised Jesus this kingdom in glory. This is a very

subtle difference from the first one. I had to look at this for a long time to realize that. In the first one, it's vaguer in general that you're choosing a good thing over God's will for your life. A good thing can be vague and the will for your life can be vague. In God's will for your life, you could have four different jobs to choose from, or two different cities to live in that would both be in God's will. This is very specific. This is a God promise to you, but you're going to get it in an unethical way. This is, it seems like, a temptation that was born in America. The ends justify the means. *Look, I'm just going to get what God wants me to have anyway. I'm just getting it faster. There it is. This is how it starts. Frustration. It's that wilderness thing all over again. It's that sunburn, growling stomach, dehydration, this is taking too long, other people are getting ahead, how come I'm not getting what I should get? Uh-oh—should get?*

There it is. *If I just had these things, God promised me, then I would have joy.* There it is. When you do that kind of math you think the shortest distance between two points is a straight line, and it's not. That's not how God works. Sometimes He takes people the long way home because He's got to teach them something. And I don't know—you don't have to know. You just have to follow. If you think joy comes from shortcuts, you're going to fall to this temptation. If you're into efficiency, you are prey to this. Because here's where you find joy. You'll find joy lying in bed at night, staring at the ceiling, with tears running down and just soaking your pillow. And you'd rather have that, being in the will of God and surrendered to His morals, than have the blessings that You've been promised at another day. Joy comes where you're taking a long shower because you're starting to negotiate on whether there's a faster way to get something that would be good and God-given, because you've been in the wilderness too long. And it's just making a coward out of you. And then you choose: *I would rather have fellowship with God than my dreams.* And then you realize—this is temptation three—*I would rather have fellowship with God than God's dreams for me. I'll wait. I would rather have fellowship with God than God's dreams for me.*

Summary

Here's how it works. The devil uses deceit and deception and confusion to divide all things good; certainly to divide homes and churches and nations. But he's trying to split you up from the Father who loves you. He's going to confuse you and deceive you and make you wonder, *Is God good? Is He even in charge?*

Spurgeon said, “The bird that cannot be shot can be easily trapped.” And what he means by that is if he can’t get you one way, he’ll get you another.

Here’s the devil. He’s coming up and saying, *I want to buy your influence for the Lord Jesus Christ. What’s it cost? I’m willing to pay. God has given you good works in Jesus Christ to perform around you that He arranged before time even started. And if you follow His will and you have an intimate relationship with Him, He’s going to guide you in those good works in Jesus Christ. And I want to pay for those. I want you off the field. I want you off the bench. I want you in the stands. What does it cost?*

For Judas he paid thirty pieces of silver. For Esau? A bowl of soup. David? One night of passion. So, what about you? Some kind of dream that you might have for your life? Maybe even God’s dream for your life? Would you trade that for your fellowship with God? That’s what this temptation’s all about.

Jesus Is Ministered To

But then comes day forty-one. Here’s what happens when you survive those temptations.

Matthew 4:11

Then the devil left Him, and behold, angels came and were ministering to Him.

“Then the devil left Him, and behold, angels came and were ministering to Him.” Oh, yeah. After you deal with the temptations, after you say, *Leave me Satan, I’m going to do God’s will no matter what it costs*, then you have this victory and then you have these rewards. You gain that wisdom and God’s own angels come to comfort you.

Application #1: Jesus Christ Earned His Righteousness

Here's a couple of applications. One: this is what it's all about anyway. The first one is this. Jesus earned His righteousness. He earned it. It wasn't given to Him. He earned it. He proved it. He did it right here. He stood where Adam fell. He stared where Israel blinked. And He proves—here's the part that answers *What's it to me?*—He proved that He was worthy. We inherited the sin from Adam—I don't like the sound of that—okay, but we inherit Jesus' righteousness. If we can inherit Adam's sin, then we can inherit someone else's righteousness, but that righteousness has to be earned. Jesus earns that. What Adam couldn't do in a garden of perfection, Jesus proved Himself in the wilderness and said, *Yeah, I'm adequate.* And that's where we get our assurance of our identity. Because we know that this wasn't some pampered king. This wasn't some aristocrat that says, *Oh, let them eat cake.* He's different.

Application #2: Jesus Is a Sympathetic Savior

And that leads us to the second point that we learn from this, that Jesus is a sympathetic Savior. He didn't have aristocratic exemptions. Everything we suffer, He has suffered in some context in His life.

Hebrews 4:15

For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet He did not sin.

Look what it says in Hebrews about our great King. It says, “We do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet He did not sin.”

And so, what does that tell you and me? It means talk to Him. Like when you're in the desert, talk to Him. Fatigue makes cowards out of all of us. Some of can't make it to dinner without a lunch break, you know, never mind forty days. Talk to Him in those times of temptation and say, *Do you know what it's like to go through this?*

He'll say, *Yeah, I kind of do. I really do. And I'm going to tell you this—listen to Jesus' voice, He speaks to our spirit—you're going to love day forty-one. You've just got to get there. You've got to pass this test. You'll get the rewards for that. You'll receive wisdom in the experience itself. My angels will come to comfort you. Let's go—another day. Skip another meal.*

Gang, what if we were a church filled with day forty-one people. What would that look like?

One of the stories I love about Dietrich Bonhoeffer that is often missed is that Dietrich Bonhoeffer, a famous theologian during the Second World War, was German. He was very patriotic and he saw that the Nazis had changed the entire country and had divided the country. And he actually helped with a plan to assassinate Adolf Hitler. And his friends said, "You need to get out of the country. You're a wanted man." And he did. And he went to New York. And he had a place set up for him there. He was even a professor at one of the universities in New York City.

And in his safety, he realized that he was comfortable and cared for, but he was out of God's will for his life. And he told his friends who arranged his escape from Germany that he had to go back. And they pleaded with him, but he said, "No, I'd rather be in God's will and be martyred than to be here comfortable." And he got what he asked for.

He went back to Germany. He was soon found out. He was held in a prison camp. And two weeks before the Germans were conquered in that particular death camp—and he would have been married after that—he was engaged during the whole thing. He could've just gotten married, lived a happy life out of God's will. And instead, two weeks before that prison camp was set free, he was taken out in the courtyard, stripped of his clothes so he might be humiliated, and before he was hung he was granted one last request. He wanted to kneel and to pray for his captors.

If you read his diary you'll see it wasn't an easy thing. He struggled with doubt. He struggled with fear. Struggling is part of the wilderness. There's no sin there. What he did is he made it to day forty-one. And we're still talking about him.

Fatigue can make cowards out of any one of us. So what? It doesn't mean anything's different in heaven. God is good and He's in charge. He is powerful. Let us—you, me—let us as a church, let us be a church filled with day forty-ones so that we might be rewarded and gain wisdom in the experience and be comforted by the angels of God. Join me. Here we are, day one.

[Prayer]

Lord, this is our great adventure. This feels a lot like wilderness. And so, Lord, I'd ask that Your Spirit would remind us of Your goodness and Your power, that You're in control, that it would vanquish our fears, that we wouldn't be so appealing to safety or comfort or certainty that we would take our eyes off You. There are some men and women here, Lord, that don't have an intimate relationship with You. They think they're going to get it by just hoping for it. Lord, I'd ask that You would help us learn how to read Your Bible and hear Your voice, pray to You and hear Your voice; have purposeful relationships and hear Your voice in those.

Lord, I'd ask that You give us an intimacy and tenderness that we might know Your will, so that when things are dark and ugly in Your will, that we would set our minds toward honoring You; that angels and demons would watch as we say that we will worship and serve only Yahweh our God; that we would show ourselves to be loving and faithful sons and daughters of this great King. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

That's a wonderful story, isn't it? He proved Himself. Could He? Would He? Yes. He could and He would.

Next week come on back. Let's worship again together. We are going to re-engage next week. Can't wait—seven days! Get dressed up, go get your hair cut! See you then.