



OCTOBER 9/10



MATTHEW 4:1-4 NIV

A SERMON BY **REV. DR. HOWARD-JOHN WESLEY**

#YIELDNOT2TEMPTATION | #PHJW | #ASBCSERMONSERIES

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MOVING FROM CROWD TO COMMUNITY

Sunday, October 10, 2021
Preacher: Rev. Dr. Howard-John Wesley
Sermon: "Yield Not to Temptation"
Scripture: Matthew 4:1-4 (NIV)

**CURRICULUM
GUIDE**



Sermon Summary

This week Pastor Wesley begins part one of a new sermon series. Part one and the two parts that follow will broaden our understanding of the temptations Jesus experienced in the wilderness and the temptations that we all will face. We will also broaden our understanding of Matthew Chapter 4 and Luke Chapter 4's depiction of the temptation of Jesus. We will grow in our understanding that the enemy brings temptations against the righteous that are deeper than just surface attacks. This week, and over the next two weeks, we will walk through the three temptations of Jesus and look at how they speak to our own lives and our own development in God.

Key Points

1. Jesus is solidified as our savior and worthy to be our Messiah because Jesus experienced everything we have, and will, endure. The reason he can help us in our humanity is because he was human. What makes us disciples is that we will endure what he experienced. And we are going to experience the same temptations that Jesus did.
2. If you are to walk in the fullness of God's will for your life, if you are to operate in God's ordained purpose for your life, if you would be what God created and shaped for you and desires you to be then you too must learn to overcome these temptations.
3. The enemy relentlessly tests our belief in the Word of God. Never let what you are going through cause you to doubt what God has written and declared over your life. We don't just need bread alone. We need the Word as much as we need food. Reading your Bible will not only make you a better Christian but it will strengthen your spirit and strengthen your soul and give you what you need to stand in times of trial.
4. As a child of God, you never have to prove yourself to the enemy.
5. The voice of Jesus has matchless power and authority. There is power in your voice as a child of God but you have an obligation to use your voice to bless others, not just yourself.
6. Never allow your hunger or the need for things in life to cause you to lie to yourself by telling yourself that something is what, you know, it is not.
7. If you learn to wait on God and if you turn down what you know is not ordained, trust that God always knows what you stand in need of.

Getting To Know You Questions:

In this week's sermon, Pastor Wesley talks about "the fine print" that appears once you give your life to Christ. The fine print means that since Jesus went through what we have been and will go through, you will go through what Christ went through including Calvary, Judas, Pharisees, Peter and temptation moments.

1. What is your salvation story? When you first accepted Christ did you know about the fine print? Do you have a fine print story?

Pastor mentioned that the theology behind the hymn "There's Not a Friend Like the Lowly Jesus" reinforces the belief that what solidifies Jesus as our savior is that Jesus experienced everything we have and will endure. He also explained how the Nicene Creed established the Church's theology about Jesus as fully human and fully divine

2. Do you ever think about the theology behind some of the other hymns you sing or the prayers you pray? For the purpose of this discussion, theology means, how is God revealing God's self in the words that you sing or pray? Share how your favorite prayer or hymn offers a glimpse of God revealing God's self.

3. Before this week's sermon were you aware of why and how Christians arrived at the belief in God incarnate as Jesus? Does this information impact or affect your understanding of who Jesus is? If yes, how so? If not, why not?





Into The Bible Questions:

Pastor shared that he had been misreading Matthew 4:3. He initially thought Satan told Jesus to turn the stones to bread, but after repeated reading Pastor discovered that was not what the passage really said.

1. Are there any Bible stories or passages that you read by rote without looking carefully to determine whether what you think you read, heard, or have been taught is truly what the Bible actually says?
2. What do you think Jesus meant by saying “Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God”? Do you interpret “word ... from the mouth of God” as solely Biblical text? Explain.



Life Application Questions:

1. Looking back, are there moments in your life that stand out as examples of when your voice had power as a child of God? Conversely, were there moments when you felt power was lacking? Compare these various moments in your life to consider the similarities and differences.
2. Jesus used his voice selflessly to help and empower others. Sometimes people claim their actions are for the good of others, when they are actually self-serving. In his anniversary sermon on September 26, Pastor Wesley noted that “we must determine where the line is that separates your individual liberty and your communal responsibility. God values community.” How can we practice being wholly honest and forthcoming about our motivations to achieve Jesus’ example of selflessness and service?



"Can I Push It?"

Pastor initially thought Satan told Jesus *to turn* the stones to bread. But he discovered that Satan really told Jesus to *tell the stones* to become bread. Pastor Wesley gives a number of examples of when speaking is a vehicle for the power of God: Jesus used his voice to calm a storm, when the Roman Centurion asked Jesus to speak healing, when Jesus used his voice to raise Lazarus from the dead, when God told Moses to speak to the rock so that water would come out.

1. How often do you use your voice to take what is damaging and turn it into something nurturing? What miracles have you performed that transformed the world and not just benefited you?
2. Some of the "shame on you" examples Pastor used could be interpreted as only calling out so-called "conservatives". How comfortable are you using your own voice around some of the topics Pastor Wesley mentioned involving voter suppression, reproductive rights, police killings, LGBTQIA civil rights and protection of immigrants and refugees? Are you more comfortable using your voice for some issues but not others? Why or Why not?

Activity:

1. Think back to the days when you would give your crush a mixed-tape by your locker before homeroom started. If you could make a mixed-tape for Jesus to sustain him through his temptations, what songs/hymns would be on it, and why?
2. Pick one or two of your favorite Bible passages, read them closely—silently and out loud—word for word. Examine carefully whether the passage actually says what you habitually thought it said or what you have been told or taught that it said.

Spirit Work:

1. Pastor preached that the voice of the believer has power. This week write down Bible verses and/or affirmations that you can speak over yourself daily to remain centered in who God calls you to be and how God sees you.

Additional Questions for Married Couples:

1. It can be tempting to downplay or completely ignore hard issues in a marriage. How can couples practice calling something what it is, rather than what it is desired to be, with the assurance that God can handle every issue?
2. As a youth, Pastor Wesley wanted to impress his girlfriend with a fancy gift that he could not afford, leading him to purchase an imitation instead. Have there been times when internal or external pressures have caused you to be inauthentic with yourself or your partner to "look the part" or meet society's expectations?
3. Pastor Wesley noted that the voices of believers have power. What does it look like for a couple to use their united voices selflessly to help and empower others?

Additional Questions for Young Adults:

1. The sermon shares that you do not have to prove yourself to anyone. What are some instances where you felt pressured to believe that you had to prove yourself? What was the outcome, and how did it shape your faith?
2. As a young adult, you have the power to use your voice to lift up the needs of others. What are some ways that you can use the power of your voice to advocate for “the least of these”: widow, stranger, and orphans of our times?
3. Pastor Wesley noted that the voices of believers have power. When have you seen the voice of an individual dismissed because of their age, gender, or other identity? What did you do?

Additional Questions for Parents:

1. In the sermon, Pastor Wesley asserted that there is power in the voice of a child of God. How can parents display and teach their children this power to encourage their own relationship with God?
2. As parents, how can you intentionally model how you hear God’s voice in your everyday living?
3. How can you help your children maintain or assert their own voice while also respecting the voices of others?

Additional Questions for Women:

1. When Jesus' temptations occurred, he was asked to call stones something that they were not. How have you been pressured to call something, be it yourself, another person, or a situation, something that it is not? What were the effects, and what did this teach you about God?
2. Pastor Wesley detailed the devastating effects of thinking a knock-off was the genuine item. How have instances of 'knock-offs' showed up for you in your walk with God? Did your faith grow as a result?
3. The sermon highlighted that what you call something has power. Can you think of a time when you felt like a situation or a person named you something other than how you wanted to be named, known or called? What was your response, and how can you practice calling yourself what God calls you?

Additional Questions for Men:

1. As a youth, Pastor Wesley wanted to impress his girlfriend with a fancy gift that he could not afford, leading him to purchase an imitation instead. Have there been times when internal or external pressures have caused you to be inauthentic with yourself or others to "look the part" or meet society's expectations of you as a man?
2. Pastor Wesley noted that the voices of believers have power. When have you seen the voice of an individual dismissed because of their race, age, gender, or other identity?
3. Some men have the power to use their voices to lift up the needs of others in ways that women sometimes do not. What are some ways that you can use the power of your voice to advocate for "the least of these": widow, stranger, and orphans of our times?

Sermon Biblical References

Matthew 4:1-4, 3:16-17

John 1:14

1 Corinthians 1:18

Hebrews 4:15, 2:18

Luke 4

Further Study, Terms and Resources

- *Doctrine of the Incarnation.* God was incarnated in the flesh of Jesus.
- *Pantheon of Greek gods and demigods*, e.g. Hercules and Perseus and Dionysus
- *Docetism.* The Gnostic challenge to Christianity that denies the full human existence of Jesus.
- *The First Church Council in 325 at Nicaea.* Church leaders gathered and produced the Nicene Creed which was a response to and an absolute rejection of Docetism. The Council declared that Docetism was a heresy to the gospel particularly as found in Hebrews 4:15 and 2:18.
- *There's Not A Friend Like The Lowly Jesus* , 1895. Lyrics: Johnson Oatman (1856-1926) and Music: George Crawford Hugg (1848-1907),
- *Temporal Conjunction.* A temporal conjunction ties together something afterwards with something that happens before.