



Date: Sunday, October 24, 2021

Preacher: Rev. Dr. Howard John Wesley

Sermon Title: **Yield Not to Temptation, Part 3: You Can Have It All!**

Scripture: Matthew 4:8-11 (NIV)

Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor.

“All this I will give you,” he said, “if you will bow down and worship me.”

Jesus said to him, “Away from me, Satan! For it is written: ‘Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.’”

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

Sermon Summary:

Jesus refuses the third and final temptation that the devil places before him. In Matthew 4:8-11, we hear the devil entice Jesus by saying, “*you can have all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor, if you just bow down and worship me.*” In other words, the evil one says to Jesus, you can have it all! The enemy offers Jesus power (authority), prominence (notoriety), and prosperity (wealth).

Jesus rejects it all, Pastor suggests, for three reasons. First, satan offers Jesus the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. But the enemy cannot make good on his offer because the kingdoms do not belong to him. They belong to God. Second, the devil tempts Jesus to bow down and worship something other than God. But Jesus knows to compromise his singular worship of God is worth neither the cost, nor the consequences. Finally, Jesus understands that what satan offers is less than he already has. The devil offers Jesus authority on earth, but Jesus knows and appreciates that he already has authority in heaven and on earth. In fact, in the last verse of this portion of scripture, Jesus uses his authority to command the devil to go away and the devil has to obey.

Like Jesus, those who love and follow God have God on their side. We can have it all, as long as our all is God. And, as Pastor Wesley says, if we have God, that is all that we need.

Key Points:

1. The enemy tempts Jesus by presenting him with three of the world's most sought after offerings: power, prominence and prosperity. The devil tempts us in the same manner. He shows us power, prominence and prosperity in the lives of others and hopes we will compromise our place in God and go after these things, by any means necessary.
2. Easily attained success is not sustainable. Real success is not achieved using shortcuts. Real success requires talent and struggle, grace and failure, humility and pride, mercy and endurance. Without these experiences, we cannot develop godly character and achieve lasting success.
3. While the enemy offers temporary power, prominence and prosperity; God offers eternal authority in heaven and on earth. Faithfulness to God will always bring us more.
4. Pastor notes that power, prominence and prosperity are not inherently evil or sinful. However, when we give in to the temptation to garner these things too quickly or in ways that are not of God, three things can happen:
 - We compromise our calling. Often, we believe our actions will not be exposed and we can get away with doing things that are wrong, because no one is watching. But we must remember, *someone is always watching!* God is always watching.
 - We sacrifice our place in God. Because satan tempts us by convincing us no one is watching, he is able to catch us in, and hold over our heads, our sin. Therefore, he robs us of our ability to be a witness for the Lord.
 - We abandon our commitment to holiness. Satan tempts us to compromise our witness by participating in sin. But sin always has hidden costs, and he never tells us the full cost the sin will exact against our souls, our families, and our lives.

As we are tempted by satan to pursue power, prominence and prosperity, Pastor reminds us that far more precious than any of these things is to be at peace with God. Being obedient to God allows us to lie down at night and hear God whisper, "Well done." Whenever we feel tempted, each of us has to answer the question, "do the ends justify the means?"

Getting to Know You Questions:

1. Pastor suggests that everyone watching the broadcast is blessed. We are too blessed to be desperate for what Satan offers. What are three ways you have experienced being blessed this past week?
2. Pastor's closing prayer is that we might be thankful for God's word. Is there a scripture for which you are particularly thankful that you are willing to share?
3. How have you received, shown, or shared God's word **today**?
4. For which of the blessings Pastor Wesley lists (hearing, vision, electricity, etc.) do you feel most thankful?

Into the Bible Questions:

1. In recent sermons, Pastor has noted he has received a fresh understanding of God's word during his time of study. When we experience bible passages that are familiar to us, such as Psalm 23, the Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6:9-13), and John 3:16, new insight may arise. The biblical text is thousands of years old. How is it that God's word continues to offer new wisdom to God's people?
2. The Gospels of Matthew (4:1-11) and Luke (4:1-13) list the same three temptations of Jesus, but in a different order. Some people view this as an example of a discrepancy in the text, thereby causing disbelief. Since the Gospels do not tell the exact same story about Jesus, in identical order, do these differences invite you to compare, contrast, and/or investigate scripture more thoroughly or differently?

Life Application Questions:

1. "You can have it all!" What do you think this statement communicates to people who do not have faith in God? What does this statement communicate to those who do have faith? Is there a difference? What does this statement mean to you?
2. Power, prominence and prosperity; these are what the devil offers Jesus. But Jesus turns them all down. If it had been you standing on that mountain, which of these three would have been most tempting for you, and why? If not these, then what would have tempted you?
3. If power, prominence and prosperity are not inherently evil, ungodly or unrighteous; in what ways can the people of God use them for the glory of God? Is there an example in your life when you used one of these three things for the good of the Kingdom?
4. What in life helps us prepare for the rigors of achieving godly success? How is our witness a story living through struggle to achieve success in God's kingdom?

Can I Push It? Questions:

1. If you knew you could do anything and not get caught, what would you do? Now, would you do that same thing if God was standing next to you? Why or why not?
2. In this world power, prominence and prosperity are often more sought after and prized than character, wisdom and faith. Why do you think this is so? What goals were you taught to seek as a young(er) person? Did those goals align with God's character?
3. Pastor offers that the enemy wants to steal the witness of the people of God. Has the enemy ever tried to steal or silence your witness? If so, how? How did you respond? Did your faith grow?

Activity:

1. Both The Temptations and Beyoncé are legendary icons of American music. Which of their songs embody the lure of power, prominence, or prosperity to you and why? Create a playlist from artists that empower you to resist
2. This week reflect on the areas where you are most vulnerable to temptation. Construct a prayer offering this list of vulnerabilities to God. How can you practice trusting God to meet you where you are?

Spirit Work:

1. The chorus of the hymn, *Yield Not to Temptation* begins with 'Ask the savior to help you'. What things are easy for you to ask for help from God and what things are hard? How do you want Jesus to help you this week?
2. In the sermon, we learn how Jesus shows vulnerability, and how God rewards him after choosing godliness over temptation. Do you trust God enough to be vulnerable and confess your sources of temptation to Jesus?

Additional Questions for Married Couples:

1. Partners in a committed relationship have a role in helping to strengthen and support one another. Are you willing to trust your partner with an intimate understanding of what tempts you? Are you willing to allow them to help you be accountable to God as you seek to overcome temptation? Why or why not?
2. We learn in this sermon that there are things we desire that will take time and hard work to achieve. Are you and your partner aware of what you want to achieve in your personal and professional lives and in your walk with God? How might you work together toward your common, individual, and spiritual goals?

Additional Questions for Young Adults:

1. Pastor alluded to a generation coming that wants to achieve prominence quickly, perhaps because of social media. Do you think this is an accurate statement

about your generation? Why or why not? What do you want to share with Pastor about your generation?

2. What did 'having it all' look like in your teens versus your twenties? Where did God fit into your 'all' then? Where does God fit into your 'all' now?
3. Pastor mentioned that power, prominence, and prosperity are not inherently evil. What has been your experience of these topics? How do you avoid making an idol out of them?

Additional Questions for Parents:

1. Our children live in a more targeted and aggressive consumer driven world than earlier generations. Children's television shows can be one long commercial, shopping is available on the same device that supports virtual schooling, and every fast-food burger order comes bearing "a gift". How do you help children resist the temptations of consumerism, when it is all around them?
2. Are there people in your child's life who model good boundaries regarding temptation? What makes them good at setting boundaries around temptation? Have you told them that they are role models for your children? If not, how do you think they might respond?
3. What does a parent who 'has it all' look like? How is this reflective of God's nature, and desire for godly parenting?

Additional Questions for Women:

1. Pastor said that satan's temptations are not worth the cost or the consequence. Have you ever been in a place where the compromise satan asked of you was seductive, but the cost was high? How did you determine your course of action? What did you learn?
2. In the church, women's relationship to power, prominence, and prosperity has shifted. Can you identify any ways that women's influence in the church has evolved? Has your perspective on this topic changed as your walk with God matured? Have these shifts, both your own and the community around you affected you in ways that you can identify?
3. For many women, the idea of 'having it all' is a concept that has meant raising a family while having a flourishing career. As a woman, what is your notion of 'having it all'? Where did this idea come from? Did this sermon shift or reinforce your understanding?
4. Has God shown you that 'having it all' can shift through seasons of your life and faith walk?

Additional Questions for Men:

Early in the sermon, Pastor said the third temptation of power, prominence, and prosperity is the one that might have gotten him. Later, Pastor said, there are some questions we must answer as we seek to understand how likely we are to be tempted. Which of the following questions, if any, resonate with you?

1. How much are you willing to compromise to be wealthy?
2. How much are you willing to sacrifice with God in order to have earthly power?
3. How much are you willing to abandon a commitment to holiness to be well known?
4. Are there other things that tempt you?
5. Is the idea of 'having it all' for men different from the definition of 'having it all' for women? Explain your answer
6. Has God shown you 'having it all' can shift through seasons of your life and faith walk? Explain your answer
7. As a man seeking to know more about God, how do you fight temptation?

Sermonic Biblical References

1. References to the Temptations of Jesus.
 - a. Matthew 4:1-11
 - b. Luke 4:1-13
 - c. Mark 1:12-13
 - d. Hebrews 4:15
 - e. 2 Corinthians 5:21
2. References reminding us that all of creation belong to God.
 - a. Genesis 1
 - b. Psalm 24
 - c. Psalm 50
 - d. Job 12
 - e. I Corinthians 4
3. The Prodigal Son wanted his reward without paying his dues.
 - a. Luke 15:11-32
4. The Jesus in Matthew 4 turns down power earthly and in Matthew 28 takes up Heavenly power.
 - a. Matthew 28:18
5. Faithfulness with God always pays off
 - a. Galatians 6:9
 - b. I Corinthians 15

- 6 God is always watching
 - a. Psalm 121

Further Study, Terms and Resources

1. Gospel Parallels: Not unlike the parallels in the temptation story reported in Matthew and Luke, there are other parallels in the gospels. This reference shows, in table form, where various stories are reported in the four gospels.
<http://www.bible-researcher.com/parallels.html#sect3>