The Week of July 25, 2021
Who's in Charge?
Conversation Guide

This Week's Take-Aways

- **I place God's priorities above my own:** (Matthew 6:33) I will place God's priorities as described in the Bible ahead of my own.
- **Self-Control:** (Ephesians 4:22-24) My thoughts, emotions and actions are brought under the control through the power of the Spirit as I pursue a holy, God-honoring life.
- **Peace:** (Philippians 4:4-7) I enjoy peace with God as I become more confident in God's grace and experience His presence in my life. I enjoy peace with others as I engage in biblically healthy relationships with them. I seek to deal rightly with those who have wronged or offended me as I pursue peace with them.

Intro Questions

- Share a time you rushed into a situation only to wish you had waited. Thinking back about that situation, what drove you to make that quick decision?
- How much pressure do we feel is self-imposed?
- Many people live by the creed, "If it going to be, it is up to me!" Why is it that we struggle so much with waiting on God's timing?

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Introduction

Two weeks ago, pastor David led us through the end of Matthew 3 and the beginning of Matthew 4, the baptism of Jesus and God the Father identifying Jesus as "His Son in Whom He is well pleased." After Jesus' baptism, Jesus was led into the wilderness and fasted for 40 days before he was confronted by Satan himself and led through a series of three temptations.

Last week Pastor David led us through the first temptation of Christ. We learned that God provides what we need in life and true satisfaction is found only in Jesus Christ. We find the second temptation of Christ in Matthew 4:5-7.

Read Matthew 4:5-7

> *Then the devil took him to the holy city, had him stand on the pinnacle of the temple, and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down. For it is written:*
>
> *He will give his angels orders concerning you,*
> *and they will support you with their hands*
> *so that you will not strike*
> *your foot against a stone."*
>
> *Jesus told him, "It is also written: Do not test the Lord your God."*

- At first glance, this seems to be about not making careless decisions and seeking God to bail you out. What are the deeper issues presented here that Satan is tempting Jesus with?
- How is Satan tempting Jesus to presumptively disrespect God's authority, power and provision?
- How is this a test of Jesus identity as the Son of God?

Scripture vs. Scripture?

Satan quotes a couple of verses verbatim from Psalm 91 to tempt Jesus. Let's examine the whole Psalm:

Read Psalms 91. You may want to have a two readers, one for each section.

> *The one who lives under the protection of the Most High*
> *dwells in the shadow of the Almighty.*
> *I will say concerning the Lord, who is my refuge and my fortress,*
> *my God in whom I trust:*
> *He himself will rescue you from the bird trap,*
> *from the destructive plague.*
> *He will cover you with his feathers;*
> *you will take refuge under his wings.*
> *His faithfulness will be a protective shield.*
> *You will not fear the terror of the night,*
> *the arrow that flies by day,*
> *the plague that stalks in darkness,*
> *or the pestilence that ravages at noon.*
> *Though a thousand fall at your side*
> *and ten thousand at your right hand,*

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the pestilence will not reach you.
You will only see it with your eyes
and witness the punishment of the wicked.

Because you have made the Lord—my refuge,
the Most High—your dwelling place,
no harm will come to you;
no plague will come near your tent.
For he will give his angels orders concerning you,
to protect you in all your ways.
They will support you with their hands
so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.
You will tread on the lion and the cobra;
you will trample the young lion and the serpent.
Because he has his heart set on me,
I will deliver him;
I will protect him because he knows my name.
When he calls out to me, I will answer him;
I will be with him in trouble.
I will rescue him and give him honor.
I will satisfy him with a long life
and show him my salvation.

- What does Psalm 91 tell us about God the Father?
- What is the context in which God will use His angels to support?
- Who is the "I" and what are His promises?
- Who is the "you" and what is their role?
- How is Satan taking this promise out of context in tempting Jesus?

Jesus responds, again quoting Scripture, this time from Deuteronomy.

Read Deuteronomy 6:10-19

Fear the Lord your God, worship him, and take your oaths in his name. Do not follow other gods, the gods of the peoples around you, for the Lord your God, who is among you, is a jealous God. Otherwise, the Lord your God will become angry with you and obliterate you from the face of the earth. Do not test the Lord your God as you tested him at Massah.

Read Exodus 17:1-7

The entire Israelite community left the Wilderness of Sin, moving from one place to the next according to the Lord's command. They camped at Rephidim, but there was no water for the people to drink. So the people complained to Moses, "Give us water to drink."

"Why are you complaining to me?" Moses replied to them. "Why are you testing the Lord?"

But the people thirsted there for water and grumbled against Moses. They said, "Why did you ever bring us up from Egypt to kill us and our children and our livestock with thirst?"

Then Moses cried out to the Lord, "What should I do with these people? In a little while they will stone me!"

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The Lord answered Moses, "Go on ahead of the people and take some of the elders of Israel with you. Take the staff you struck the Nile with in your hand and go. I am going to stand there in front of you on the rock at Horeb; when you hit the rock, water will come out of it and the people will drink." Moses did this in the sight of the elders of Israel. He named the place Massah and Meribah because the Israelites complained, and because they tested the Lord, saying, "Is the Lord among us or not?"

- What was the attitude of the Israelites?
- What mistakes did they make?
- Can you think of a similar time in your life that a similar attitude cause grief in your own life?

Epic Identity Crisis Moments

In another account from the Old Testament, Saul took a short cut as King and assumed the role of God's Prophet, Samuel.

Read 1 Samuel 13:4-14

And all Israel heard the news, "Saul has attacked the Philistine garrison, and Israel is now repulsive to the Philistines." Then the troops were summoned to join Saul at Gilgal.

The Philistines also gathered to fight against Israel: three thousand chariots, six thousand horsemen, and troops as numerous as the sand on the seashore. They went up and camped at Michmash, east of Beth-aven.

The men of Israel saw that they were in trouble because the troops were in a difficult situation. They hid in caves, in thickets, among rocks, and in holes and cisterns. Some Hebrews even crossed the Jordan to the land of Gad and Gilead.

Saul, however, was still at Gilgal, and all his troops were gripped with fear. He waited seven days for the appointed time that Samuel had set, but Samuel didn't come to Gilgal, and the troops were deserting him. So Saul said, "Bring me the burnt offering and the fellowship offerings." Then he offered the burnt offering.

Just as he finished offering the burnt offering, Samuel arrived. So Saul went out to greet him, and Samuel asked, "What have you done?"

Saul answered, "When I saw that the troops were deserting me and you didn't come within the appointed days and the Philistines were gathering at Michmash, I thought, 'The Philistines will now descend on me at Gilgal, and I haven't sought the LORD's favor.' So I forced myself to offer the burnt offering."

Samuel said to Saul, "You have been foolish. You have not kept the command the LORD your God gave you. It was at this time that the LORD would have permanently established your reign over Israel, but now your reign will not endure. The LORD has found a man after his own heart and the LORD has appointed him as ruler over his people, because you have not done what the LORD commanded."

- What was Saul's motivation to not wait on Samuel?
- How did Saul try to excuse his behavior?
- What were the consequences?

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- Why is it important in facing temptation to know who we are and who we are not?

Among Jesus' disciples, Peter seems to be the leader in "jumping the gun" and acting impulsively. In the two accounts below read how he forgets who he is as a disciple and, more importantly, who Jesus is and what He came to do.

Read Matthew 16:21-23

> *From then on Jesus began to point out to his disciples that it was necessary for him to go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders, chief priests, and scribes, be killed, and be raised the third day. Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, "Oh no, Lord! This will never happen to you!"*
>
> *Jesus turned and told Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a hindrance to me because you're not thinking about God's concerns but human concerns."*

- Discuss the differences between the thoughts and motives of Jesus and Peter.
- What are some of the thoughts and beliefs that drive us to the wrong assumptions?

Read John 18:10-11 and Hebrews 4:12

> *Then Simon Peter, who had a sword, drew it, struck the high priest's servant, and cut off his right ear. (The servant's name was Malchus.) At that, Jesus said to Peter, "Put your sword away! Am I not to drink the cup the Father has given me?"*

- Discuss the differences between the thoughts and motives of Jesus and Peter.
- What are some of the thoughts and beliefs that drive us to want to control the situation?

> *For the word of God is living and effective and sharper than any double-edged sword, penetrating as far as the separation of soul and spirit, joints and marrow. It is able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.*

- As with Jesus in His temptation, how does Scripture help us to discern our true thoughts, motives and beliefs?
- Jesus quoted the scripture correctly in response to Satan's out of context quote. How is memorizing and meditating on Scripture is essential in fighting the battle?

Attitude Determines Altitude

Just as in flying an airplane, the attitude of the craft determines whether you are climbing or descending. Paul tells the Philippian believers to adopt the same attitude as Christ. Jesus could have easily put on a show for the crowds in Jerusalem that day by jumping off the temple and landing unharmed, receiving exaltation from them, but He took a different route to exaltation: humble obedience.

Read Philippians 2:5-11

> *Adopt the same attitude as that of Christ Jesus,*
> *who, existing in the form of God,*
> *did not consider equality with God*

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as something to be exploited.
Instead he emptied himself
by assuming the form of a servant,
taking on the likeness of humanity.
And when he had come as a man,
he humbled himself by becoming obedient
to the point of death—
even to death on a cross.
For this reason God highly exalted him
and gave him the name
that is above every name,
so that at the name of Jesus
every knee will bow—
in heaven and on earth
and under the earth—
and every tongue will confess
that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.

- Discuss the magnitude of Christ's humility.
- What was the result of Christ's obedience?
- Jesus did not seek to exalt Himself, God exalted Him. How did this bring glory to God?

Read James 4:10

Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you.

- Discuss the ways to "humble ourselves."
- What will be the result of our obedience?
- We do not seek to exalt ourselves, God exalted us in His time and way. How does this bring glory to God?

Next Steps

Read this statement from Pastor Scott:

"It is about God's people wanting God more than His things or His power. And within that holy wanting, God promises to protect his people with his presence. Satan was tempting Jesus to short-circuit the presence of God with the power of God."

1. Examine your heart to see if you truly seek Jesus to be your Lord (boss, director) of your life and not just your Savior to save you from your bad choices and their consequences.
2. Just like Jesus, each day tell God it is His will, not yours that you seek. Surrender your agenda, plans, dreams and hopes in exchange for His for you. To make it have more long-term impact, write it down and recite it during your prayer time regularly.
3. Have a plan, place and time to daily spend time alone with God in Bible Study and Prayer. Share that with someone else so you can be mutually accountable, as you know Satan will

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try to distract or sidetrack you.

4. Memorize and meditate on appropriate scripture for the temptations and tests that you face. Write those scriptures out and place somewhere you will come across them regularly (bathroom mirror, refrigerator, sun-visor in car, by your computer keyboard, etc.).

- Download the church app and check out the Reading Plan. This will guide you through 21days of scriptures all about our identity in Christ!

Enjoying Conversation Guides? Want to be a part?

Come join the Writer's Team, Wednesday Nights at 7:45pm in Room 4.

Email Pastor Doug Bedgood if you'd like more info, dbedgood@icelebration.org.

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