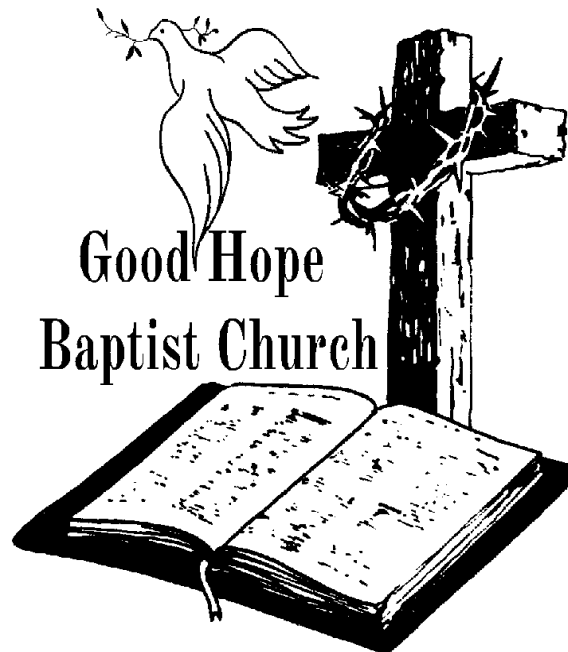


# "Then"

## To Be In The Kingdom, Walk With The King (Part 2)

Matthew 4:1



Good Hope  
Baptist Church

Living Together In The Love Of God

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**FOCAL Read Together** Matthew 4:1 Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil.

Every year we have the "Holiday Season", where we celebrate Thanksgiving and Christmas. Many all across America celebrate these days, but few understand why they are celebrating them. On "Thanksgiving" we are supposed to set aside a time to "give thanks" to our God, the One Who has richly blessed us. He has given us life. He sustains our life. He gives meaning to our life. On "Christmas" we are supposed to thank God for the greatest Gift ever given. We thank God because:

**Isaiah 9:6 For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulder: and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.**

Many of you are busy shopping for the best Christmas gift for those you love. Christmas is a time where we look outside of ourselves and try to think of others. I love that about the "holy day". Oh dear Lord, how wonderful life would be if we would understand that life is not about what we receive, but what we give of ourselves to others.

The best gifts are not the spotted ties and the sparkling trinkets we buy that have "Made in China" stamped on them. The best gift is to understand that life itself is a Gift from God, and that for life to have value it must be *given back to God and to others.*

That's what Jesus Christ did. His life is, was, and will always be complete. He is sinless:

**1 John 3:5 (New English Translation)... you know that Jesus was revealed to take away sins, and in him there is no sin.**

Yet He gave of Himself to **take away our sins**. He is the Author of Eternal Life. He wrote the Book of Life with His own Blood, and offered that Book to anyone Who would trust in Him:

**Hebrews 5:9 {Jesus Christ} became the Author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him;**

Our Lord Jesus chose to lower Himself so He could raise us. He Who is perfect **came into this world to save sinners (1 Timothy 1:15)**. Jesus Christ came to give us LIFE. He said:

**John 10: 9-10 I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture. 10 The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.**

I have heard of thieves who break into houses around the holiday season and steal gifts out from under the Christmas Trees. What evil men these people must be! To break into a place where a family enjoys security and peace and love and to steal their presents, to rob them of

the happiness they should have. For little children to wake up on Christmas morning and, running downstairs to see their gifts, finding only torn bits of wrapping paper and ribbon, a destroyed tree, and an open door where the thief has been. What monster does things like this?

Why, the devil does.

You see, life is about the choices you make. If you make good choices, then you'll have a good life. If you make bad choices - and you have the free will to make bad choices - then the quality of your life goes down. The Devil (who, by the way, is not a figment of the imagination) will do everything he can to trick you out of your life.

### **1. As A Child Of God I Will Walk With God According To His Word**

Last week we saw that our Lord Jesus Christ - Eternal God in human flesh - made the choice to come from Heaven to this earth.

Jesus left the splendor of Heaven and was born of a Virgin to ultimately:

- a. Give Us Life (If We Give Him Our Lives), and
- b. To Teach Us How To Live (If We Will Follow Him)

God does not want you to live defeated, miserable, useless lives. He wants us to live **abundant lives, joyous lives, and productive lives. Jesus Christ wants us to**

be saved, and also to find pasture with Him. This is why He said:

**John 10: 9-10 I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture. 10 The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.**

Life is all about choice. Now I want you to notice our focal text:

**FOCAL Matthew 4:1 Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the Devil.**

Having been born of a Virgin in a manger,  
Having grown up as an obedient Child in Nazareth,  
Having submitted Himself - though God - to humans,  
Having been baptized in the Jordan by John

The Holy Spirit of God now **leads Jesus**. Where is Jesus led? To a palace? To a spa? To a vacation resort? No, but **to the wilderness**. Why is He going there? Is it to rest? To relax? To "get away from it all?" No! It is to be **tempted of the Devil**.

Why in the name of all that is holy would God the Spirit lead God the Son to a place where He would be tempted by that fallen angel Lucifer?

**First, I believe it is because Jesus wanted to show us first of all what life is all about.**

Your life is not blessed by what you receive, but in what you give. Your life is only blessed as you walk WITH God according to His Word.

**CONTEXT Matthew 4:3 And when the tempter came to him,...**

**Word Study** Here we see one of the names for Satan in the Scripture. He is called "**Lucifer**", which means "**Son of the Morning**", a reference to his brightness and beauty. He is called "**Satan**", which means "**Accuser of the Brethren**", a reference to what he does before the Throne of God and through his agents in the Church. He **accuses the brethren, the Children of God**. But we also see this word, "**Tempter**", the Greek PEIRADZO (**πειραζω pronounced pi-rad'-zo**). This nickname the Scripture gives the Devil is actually the Present Active Participle of a verb, and it means "**to keep on Tempting**". Satan is the one who "**keeps on tempting**". He calls us. He woos us. He offers us options that are against God and for rebellion and anarchy. The evil one *who keeps on tempting* says to Jesus:

**CONTEXT Matthew 4:3 .... If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread.**

**"Prove Yourself to me, Jesus. Show me what You are made of. If You are indeed the "Son of God" then make these stones into bread."** The Bible tells us that Jesus

**CONTEXT** Matthew 4:2 ... had fasted forty days and forty nights, He was afterward an hungred.

Now on the outside this doesn't sound like a great challenge. Jesus Christ IS the Son of God. He DOES have the power to change stones into bread.

Jesus will later in His ministry heal the sick, raise Lazarus from the grave, give sight to the blind, remove disease from the lepers, make a feast to feed thousands with five fish and two loaves of bread. Surely He can feed Himself by turning stones into bread! And He's been good! He had been fasting for forty days and forty nights.

Jesus has motive. Jesus has ability. Jesus has need. What is wrong with this simple test? *God is not in it.* The Lord Jesus was born in a manger *because God sent Him.* He was raised in Nazareth *because God sent Him.* He was baptized of John *because God decreed it.* He is in the wilderness ending a fast because *God told Him to do so.* Anytime you step away from God in the choices you make in life you open yourselves up to be the puppet of the prince of darkness!

The Devil wants you to make life *all about you.* That's what he was doing with Jesus. **"Jesus, YOU are the Son of God. That's what You've told me. Prove it!"** The Devil loves to challenge us, to get us to do things in our own way without God. You see, Satan always will try to get you to trade God's Best for your life for Man's Second Best. The Devil never starts out by offering us a BIG SIN. He always offers a COMPROMISE. Just cut

God out of the equation, and everything will be just fine.

It Is Satan's best tactic to try and get you to trade God's Best for Man's Second Best. Satan always offers a reasonable and safe compromise - that is, until he hooks you!

Think about the illustrations of Satan's tactics found throughout the Scripture.

**Biblical Illustration 1** Abraham and Lot stand at a juncture. Which way should they go? Abraham ends up in the Promised Land of Canaan because *he followed God.* Lot, on the other hand, ended up in Sodom and Gomorrah *because he followed himself.* At the end of the day Abraham had blessing and the Promised Land. Lot ended up in a cave, wifeless, with two incestuous daughters. (read Genesis 13:10)

**Biblical Illustration 2** God allowed Saul to be the first King of Israel. **The first rule of leadership is that you must learn to follow before you can ever lead.** Saul was a bad follower. The Lord sent him to fight the Amalekites, and promised him victory *as long as he utterly destroyed the things of those people.* Saul compromised, and allowed his people to keep some of the spoils of war. The Lord said:

**1 Samuel 15:22-23 ... Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. 23 For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee**

**from being king.**

**Biblical Illustration 3** And who can forget the terrible tragedy that King David - a man after God's own heart - inflicted upon himself by going after Bathsheba. How did David find himself in this predicament? The Bible says:

**2 Samuel 11:1** And it came to pass, after the year was expired, at the time when kings go forth to battle, that David sent Joab, and his servants with him, and all Israel; and they destroyed the children of Ammon, and besieged Rabbah. But David tarried still at Jerusalem.

David sinned with Bathsheba - but he didn't start out that way. You see, Beloved, **at a time when Kings go forth to do battle King David DID NOT go forth to do battle.** You might say, "Well, what's wrong with that? Is it a sin to not "go forth to battle?" Doesn't David deserve a rest from his labors? Everyone deserves a vacation - what's wrong with David taking a vacation? Beloved, hear me. The Devil will whisper to you:

- Sodom looks so pretty and green. No, God didn't say go that way - but surely you deserve this. Go ahead - it's fine!

- The men have done so well in battle. God won't miss it if I modify His Word a little bit. After all, these people have families! God will understand.

- I've worked hard this year, and I've got battle-burnout. I

know the Kings go forth to battle at this time every year. I think I'll rest on this rooftop. Who IS that over there taking a bath, by the way?

The Devil has destroyed many by telling them "It really doesn't matter if you go ahead and do this". But before you compromise with the Devil or the World, ask yourself - "What has GOD told me to do?" To walk in the Kingdom of God, I must walk with the King!

Our Lord Jesus showed us how to answer this first compromise and suggestion of Satan. He **quoted Deuteronomy 8:3** and said:

**CONTEXT** Matthew 4:4 {Jesus} answered and said, **It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.**

The best life is not found in filling the belly, but in feeding the soul. His Word is life, abundant life, joyous life, eternal life! It is God's Word that matters!

The Apostle said:

**Philippians 2:14-16** Do all things without murmurings and disputings: **15** That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; **16** Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain.

That which makes God's Church shine is how it reflects the Word of God. **Murmuring and disputing leads to wandering and death in the desert of life. But holding forth the Word of Life - this makes God's Church shine as a lighthouse in the midst of this dark world!**

## **2. As A Child Of God I Am To Trust, Not Tempt God**

**CONTEXT** Matthew 4:5-6 Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple, 6 And saith unto him, **If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.**

Satan's next challenge to Jesus was to test God. He said, in effect, **"If You are the Son of God, cast yourself down from this high place. God has promised in His Word that He will bear You up. Let's see if that is true!"**

Jesus responded, quoting Deuteronomy 6:16:

**CONTEXT** Matthew 4:7 It is written again, **Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.**

**WORD STUDY** The word translated "tempt" is the Greek (**εκπειραζω** pronounced ek-pi-rad'-zo), which means "to prove or put to the test". God is never to be

tried - He is to be trusted. His Word is sure!

So many times God's people die in sight of the Promised Land because they are too busy *judging God and His promises* rather than just by doing what He says. His Word is sure!

The Apostle Peter said it beautifully:

**2 Peter 1:19** We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts:

When we debate God rather than living in His Word we waste time, and lose blessing. **We have a sure Word of Prophecy. Dr. Adrian Rogers** said in his book **"Standing for Light and Truth":**

**"If Jesus Christ died for you on the Cross and has saved you, do you think He saved you to abandon you? Do you think God has invested so much in you to let you go? That doesn't make sense."** (page 44)

**Romans 8:31-39** What shall we then say to these things? **If God be for us, who can be against us? 32 He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? 33 Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. 34 Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. 35**

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? 36 As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. 37 Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. 38 For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, 39 Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Be persuaded, dear One, that God did the most for you at the Cross. Having brought you into His family by faith in Christ, you need now to trust Him regardless as to where you find yourself.

Whether on the Pinnacle of the Temple with Satan as your evil guide, or in a desert before a bitter pond called Marah - God is trustworthy. God is with His people!

**Biblical Illustration 4** Israel had come through the Red Sea, saved with a mighty hand by Almighty God. They headed out into the wilderness, and *for three days* found no water. Then they came to a place called **Marah**. But there was a problem at Marah, for the water was bitter, and could not be drank.

**Exodus 15:23-25** ... when they came to Marah, they could not drink of the waters of Marah, for they were bitter: therefore the name of it was called Marah. 24

And the people murmured against Moses, saying, What shall we drink? 25 And he cried unto the LORD; and the LORD shewed him a tree, which when he had cast into the waters, the waters were made sweet: there he made for them a statute and an ordinance, and there he proved them,

There are two types of Christians - those who *murmur* and test God - and those who believe God and pray. Oh Christian - aren't you tired of seeing others blessed, while you stand on the outside looking in? Choose to trust and obey God.

Those who will test God need not think they shall ever be blessed by God. God tests us to grow us, but God needs no growth. He is God - He is complete. We are not to test Him, nor to murmur against Him.

Moses trusted God, prayed to God, and there - in plain sight - was the answer. There was a tree that God told Moses to cast into the waters - and then the waters were made sweet. If Israel had trusted and prayed rather than murmur and fuss they would have been blessed. On top of all that there was an Oasis just beyond Marah which Israel would have found, if they had only trusted Him.

God loves us, and wants to bless us. We must trust Him, and send Satan on his way!

**3. As A Child Of God I Will Worship God Only  
And Him Only Will I Serve**

**CONTEXT** Matthew 4:8-9 Again, the devil taketh

him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; 9 And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.

**CONTEXT** Matthew 4:10 Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.

The Devil tested Jesus twice, and twice the Lord rebuked him, quoting the Word of God. Now Satan becomes more bold. "All these THINGS I will give You, if You will fall down and worship me". This is where Satan was going all along. He desires your worship. He wants you to follow him.

There are many people who feel that they can sit on the fence in this life. Not so. **To be in the kingdom, you need to walk with the King.** The Devil will do everything he can to entrap you. As I worked on this sermon I heard a song by **Michael Combs**, called "**Not For Sale**". That's what you need to tell the Devil: "I'm not for sale. I belong to God in Christ - I am no longer yours!

**Well, If you're living for Jesus, Friend,  
There will come a day.  
That old Devil's gonna try to get you some way.  
He'll try you, And temp you,  
With his lies straight from hell.  
Just say I belong to Jesus, And Devil I'm not for sale  
Not for sale, Not for sale, No way no sir.**

Someone once said:

**Worship is giving God the best that He has given you. Be careful what you do with the best you have. Whenever you get a blessing from God, give it back to Him as a love gift. Take time to meditate before God and offer the blessing back to Him in a deliberate act of worship. If you hoard a thing for yourself, it will turn into spiritual dry rot, as the manna did when it was hoarded. God will never let you hold a spiritual thing for yourself; it has to be given back to Him that He may make it a blessing to others.**

Life is not in the getting, but in the giving. Just as Jesus Christ came to give worship to God and love to others, we who believe do the same thing. The Kingdom of God is within you. Are you sold out for Jesus, or selling out for Satan?

May God lead you to make the right choices.

Worship the Lord your God, and serve only Him. Know that you are saved by faith in Christ - then serve Him as a Son of God, Blood bought by the Lamb. Read and do His Word daily. Love one another, and resist the Devil. The Devil cannot make you do anything - he is but a Tempter. Reject him, and cleave to the Lord - and you will be blessed.



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**RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED**

Living Together In The Love Of God

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**1. As A Child Of God I Will Walk With God  
According To His Word**

Isaiah 9:6; 1 John 3:5; Hebrews 5:9; John 10: 9-10;  
John 10: 9-10; Matthew 4:1; Matthew 4:3; Matthew  
4:4; Philippians 2:14-16

Your life is not blessed by what you receive, but in what you give. Your life is only blessed as you walk WITH God according to His Word.

**Word Study** "Tempter", the Greek PEIRADZO (πειραζω pronounced pi-rad'-zo) meaning \_\_\_\_\_

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**Biblical Illustration 3** (2 Samuel 11:1) \_\_\_\_\_

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Matthew 4:5-6; Matthew 4:7

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