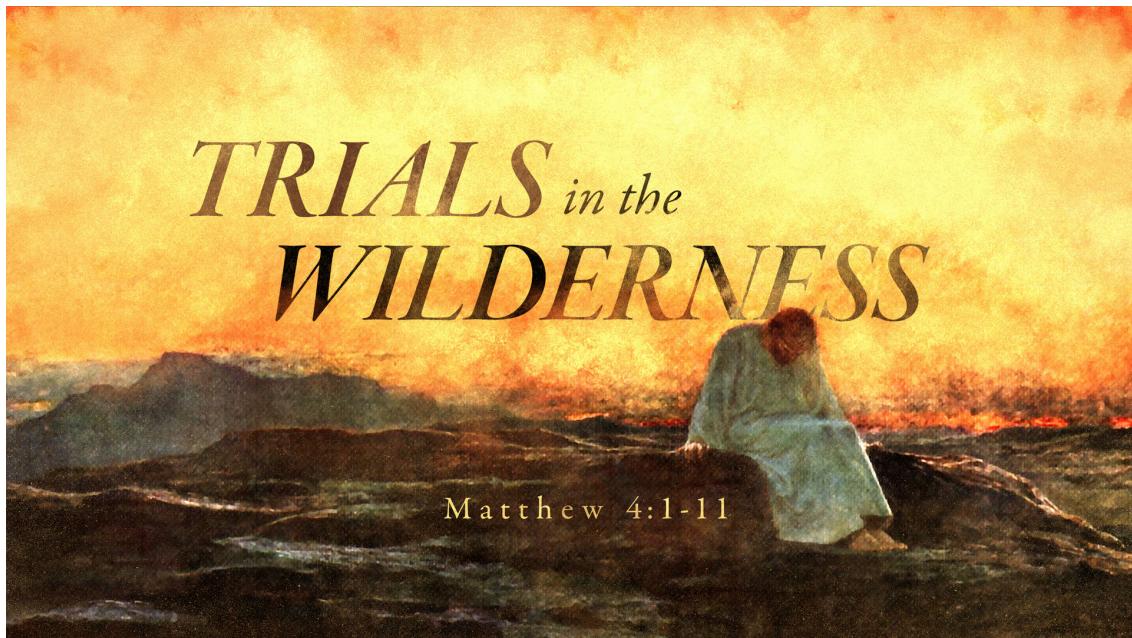


WEEK OF FEBRUARY 1, 2026

**5-Day Devotional
based on Sunday's message:**



TRIALS IN THE WILDERNESS
Matthew 4:1-11

Provided by



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Matthew 4:1-11

Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted there by the devil. For forty days and forty nights he fasted and became very hungry. During that time the devil came and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become loaves of bread.” But Jesus told him, “No! The Scriptures say, ‘People do not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.’” Then the devil took him to the holy city, Jerusalem, to the highest point of the Temple, and said, “If you are the Son of God, jump off! For the Scriptures say, ‘He will order his angels to protect you. And they will hold you up with their hands so you won’t even hurt your foot on a stone.’” Jesus responded, “The Scriptures also say, ‘You must not test the Lord your God.’” Next the devil took him to the peak of a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. “I will give it all to you,” he said, “if you will kneel down and worship me.” “Get out of here, Satan,” Jesus told him. “For the Scriptures say, ‘You must worship the Lord your God and serve only him.’” Then the devil went away, and angels came and took care of Jesus.

Day 1: The Wilderness Was Not a Detour

Devotional

Have you ever felt like difficult seasons in your life were just unfortunate detours from God's plan? After Jesus' baptism, where the Father declared Him beloved, the Holy Spirit immediately led Him into the wilderness for 40 days of testing. This wasn't an accident or interruption, but was essential preparation. Just as Israel wandered 40 years in the wilderness due to unfaithfulness, Jesus entered for 40 days to demonstrate perfect faithfulness. The wilderness wasn't punishment, but was the proving ground where Jesus would succeed where Israel had failed. In our own wilderness seasons, times of testing, uncertainty, or struggles, God isn't absent. He's preparing us, strengthening our faith, and proving His faithfulness through us. Your current challenges aren't detours from God's plan for your life. They're part of His redemptive work in you. Just as Jesus emerged from the wilderness in the power of the Spirit, ready for ministry, your faithful endurance through difficult times is preparing you for what God has ahead. The same Spirit that led Jesus into the wilderness and sustained Him there is with you today. Trust that God is working even in the wilderness seasons. He's not just getting you through them, but transforming you in them.

Bible Verse

'Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted there by the devil.'
- Matthew 4:1

Reflection Question

How might God be using your current challenges or 'wilderness seasons' to prepare you for His purposes rather than simply being obstacles to overcome?

Quote

The wilderness wasn't a detour in Jesus mission. It wasn't a detour in his ministry. It was part of God's redemptive plan.

Prayer

Father, help me trust that You are working even in my wilderness seasons. Give me faith to see that what feels like a detour is actually part of Your redemptive plan for my life. Strengthen me to remain faithful during times of testing. Amen

Day 2: Consuming vs. Trusting

Devotional

When you're hungry, either physically, emotionally, or spiritually, what's your first instinct? After 40 days of fasting, Jesus faced His first temptation which was turn stones into bread. Satan wasn't just targeting physical hunger, but he was challenging Jesus to meet a legitimate need through illegitimate means. This temptation strikes at the heart of our consumer culture. We're constantly tempted to soothe discomfort quickly, to take matters into our own hands rather than trust God's timing and provision. Whether it's reaching for food when we're stressed, shopping when we're sad, or seeking instant solutions to complex problems, we often choose consuming over trusting. Jesus refused to bypass His relationship with the Father to satisfy earthly hunger. He chose dependence over independence, trust over control. His response, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God', reveals where true satisfaction comes from. When you face legitimate needs or desires, pause before you consume. Ask yourself, am I trying to meet this need in a way that honors God and deepens my dependence on Him? Or am I taking shortcuts that bypass relationship with my Father? True satisfaction comes not from what we consume, but from trusting the One who provides.

Bible Verse

'During that time the devil came and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become loaves of bread." But Jesus told him, "No! The Scriptures say, 'People do not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"'- Matthew 4:3-4

Reflection Question

In what areas of your life are you tempted to 'consume' rather than trust God, whether through food, shopping, entertainment, or other quick fixes for deeper needs?

Quote

We are tempted to soothe our discomfort quickly, to consume instead of trust to medicate pain rather than bring it to the Father.

Prayer

Lord, when I'm tempted to meet my needs through consuming rather than trusting, remind me that You are my true source of satisfaction. Help me choose dependence on You over taking matters into my own hands. Amen.

Day 3: Resting in God-Given Identity

Devotional

Have you ever felt pressure to prove yourself, to demonstrate your worth through performance or comparison? Satan's second temptation targeted Jesus' identity. 'If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down.' The enemy was challenging Jesus to prove who He was through a spectacular display. This temptation reveals our deep struggle with approval and validation. We compare ourselves to others, chase performance metrics, or seek spiritual shortcuts to prove our worth. However, comparison kills the Holy Spirit's work in us faster than almost anything else. When we're constantly measuring ourselves against others, we miss the unique work God wants to do through us. Jesus' identity was already secure. He was the Father's beloved Son, declared at His baptism. He didn't need to prove it. He needed to rest in it. His identity was received from God, not demanded or earned through performance. Your identity isn't found in how you measure up to others or what you can accomplish. It's found in who you are. You are God's beloved child, chosen and cherished. This identity is given, not earned. When you rest in this truth, you're free from the exhausting cycle of proving yourself. You can live from approval rather than for approval.

Bible Verse

'Then the devil took him to the holy city, Jerusalem, to the highest point of the Temple, and said, "If you are the Son of God, jump off! For the Scriptures say, 'He will order his angels to protect you. And they will hold you up with their hands so you won't even hurt your foot on a stone.'" Jesus responded, "The Scriptures also say, 'You must not test the Lord your God.'" - Matthew 4:5-7

Reflection Question

Where in your life are you trying to prove your worth or identity through performance, comparison, or seeking approval from others rather than resting in your God-given identity?

Quote

Jesus identity was already locked in as Yahweh's one and only Son, the second person of the trinitarian God, the Christ, the Messiah. That was his identity. And that identity was received from God the Father. It was not demanded by Jesus.

Prayer

Father, help me rest in the identity You've given me as Your beloved child. Free me from the need to prove myself through performance or comparison. Let me live from Your approval, not for it. Amen.

Day 4: Authority Through Submission

Devotional

What would you be willing to compromise to get what you want? Satan's final temptation offered Jesus all the kingdoms of the world in exchange for worship. This wasn't just about power, but about getting authority without going through God's appointed path of suffering and sacrifice. We face this same temptation daily. We want influence without surrender, results without formation, authority without submission. We're tempted to take shortcuts to success, to compromise our values for advancement, or to grasp for power rather than serve faithfully where God has placed us. Jesus refused a crown without the cross. He understood that true authority comes through submission to the Father's will, even when that path leads through suffering. His greatest moment of power came through His greatest act of surrender on the cross. God's kingdom operates on different principles than the world's. Relationship comes before responsibility. Identity comes before authority. Obedience comes before power is bestowed. When we try to reverse this order, we end up with hollow achievements that don't satisfy. Trust God's timing and methods. The authority and influence He gives through faithful submission will be far greater and more lasting than anything we could grasp for ourselves.

Bible Verse

'Next the devil took him to the peak of a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. "I will give it all to you," he said, "if you will kneel down and worship me." "Get out of here, Satan," Jesus told him. "For the Scriptures say, 'You must worship the Lord your God and serve only him.'" - Matthew 4:8-10

Reflection Question

In what areas of your life are you tempted to seek authority, influence, or results through shortcuts rather than faithful submission to God's process and timing?

Quote

We want influence without surrender. We want results without formation. We want authority without submission.

Prayer

Lord, help me resist the temptation to grasp for authority or influence through compromise. Teach me to trust Your timing and methods, knowing that what You give through faithful submission will be far better than what I could achieve on my own. Amen.

Day 5: Victory Through Weakness

Devotional

When you're at your weakest, do you feel like you're most vulnerable to temptation? Jesus faced His greatest testing not from a position of strength and comfort, but when He was physically weak, emotionally depleted, and vulnerable after 40 days of fasting. Here's the beautiful truth, Jesus didn't resist temptation by flexing His divine power. He resisted as a faithful Son, dependent on His heavenly Father, submitted to the Holy Spirit, and anchored in God's Word. He faced temptation the same way we do, through relationship, dependence, and Scripture. This means His victory becomes restorative for us. Because He assumed our humanity and entered our weakness, His obedience makes faithfulness possible for those united to Him. What He lived faithfully, He makes available to us. The same Holy Spirit who empowered Jesus' resistance dwells in you today. Your weakness isn't disqualifying, it's the very place where God's strength is perfected. When you feel depleted, vulnerable, or overwhelmed, remember that Jesus understands. He's been there. The same power that sustained Him in the wilderness is available to you right now. You don't have to be strong enough on your own. You just need to be dependent enough to access the strength that's already yours in Christ. And Scripture reminds us that dependence on the Father is never ignored. After Jesus resisted the enemy, not by overpowering him but by trusting the Father, "the devil went away, and angels came and took care of Jesus." God did not abandon Jesus in His weakness. He met Him there. The provision came after obedience, after endurance, and after faithful dependence. This moment reveals something deeply true about God's character. When we remain faithful in weakness, God supplies what we lack in His perfect timing. Care follows obedience. Strength follows surrender. What God provided for His Son in the wilderness shows what He delights to provide for His children as they trust Him today. And Scripture reminds us that dependence on the Father is never ignored. After Jesus resisted the enemy, not by overpowering him but by trusting the Father, "the devil went away, and angels came and took care of Jesus." God did not abandon Jesus in His weakness. He met Him there. The provision came after obedience, after endurance, and after faithful dependence. This moment reveals something deeply true about God's character. When we remain faithful in weakness, God supplies what we lack in His perfect timing. Care follows obedience. Strength follows surrender. What God provided for His Son in the wilderness shows what He delights to provide for His children as they trust Him today.

Bible Verse

'Then the devil went away, and angels came and took care of Jesus.' - Matthew 4:11

Reflection Question

How does knowing that Jesus faced His greatest temptations from a place of physical and emotional weakness change how you view your own struggles and God's power available to you?

Day 5: Victory Through Weakness (continued)

Quote

Because He, Jesus, assumes our humanity and steps into it. Because he enters into our weakness, because he resists temptation as a real human being, both fully divine and fully human, living in dependence of the Father, which is available to each of us, His obedience becomes restorative for us.

Prayer

Father, thank You that Jesus understands my weakness and that His victory becomes mine. Help me depend on Your strength rather than my own, knowing that Your power is perfected in my weakness. Fill me with the same Holy Spirit that sustained Jesus. Amen.