



Overview

Last week we studied the temptation of Christ in the wilderness. From the very beginning, temptation has revealed the weakness of man and his need for Bible literacy. As Eve misquoted God's Word about the tree, she and Adam proceeded to give in to the very first temptation they faced. All throughout the scriptures, we have seen so many people fall to temptation. Whether it be from Abraham's temptation to lie, King Saul's temptation to become the high priest, or even David's temptation of lust that then resulted in murder, the temptation to sin appears to be almost irresistible for human beings. But there is one man who did resist all temptations and never sinned! Jesus Christ resisted every temptation Satan threw at Him and He did by turning His thoughts back to the Father! How? He used scripture He had learned and remembered. Yes, learned! He was fully human and had to work and study just like the rest of us.

When Jesus faced temptation, we can see that He had the same kinds of thoughts stray into His mind as we do. You might think that because He was the Son of God, His mind was incapable of thinking such thoughts. I also thought that when I was a teenager and even argued with my Sunday School teacher, Bob Williams! I lost that argument! The scriptures plainly say, ***"For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin" (Heb. 4:15)***. Every temptation begins as a thought in our minds. It is inevitable that stray thoughts will come into the minds of human beings. Those thoughts are then either discarded and replaced or they are continued and grow until they blossom into sin. That is why Bible study is one of the most important things any believer should be doing. But sadly, it is one of the most ignored things in the Church today. Do you want to sin less? Study God's Word!

Jesus addressed the issue of where sin begins... J.B. Phillips translated it like this in his translation of the New Testament: ***"Don't you see that whatever goes into the mouth passes into the stomach and then out of the body altogether? But the things that come out of a man's mouth come from his heart and mind, and it is they that really make a man unclean. For it is from a man's mind that evil thoughts arise—murder, adultery, lust, theft, perjury and blasphemy. These are the things which make a man unclean, not eating without washing his hands properly" (Matt. 15:17-20 Phillips)***. Therefore, to be tempted, Jesus must have had those same kinds of thoughts, Yet, somehow He did not continue in those thoughts and allow them to become sins. He remained sinless. It seems to me that by refusing to allow Himself to continue to think about things that would become sinful thoughts and then sinful actions, He must have somehow replaced those thoughts with other, better thoughts!

Ah ha! That's it! That's what He did in the wilderness when Satan tempted Him! He replaced the thoughts that Satan had planted in His mind with thoughts from the Word of God! The scriptures say, ***And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect (Rom. 12:2)***. Again I would like to use J.B. Phillips translation: ***Don't let the world around you squeeze you into its own mould, but let God re-mould your minds from within, so that you may prove in practice that the plan of God for you is good, meets all his demands and moves towards the goal of true maturity***. That makes sense! Jesus was constantly renewing His mind with the Word of God! Every time Satan tempted Him, He changed the course of what could have become sinful thoughts and actions back to the Word of God. Jesus didn't face Satan and just shrug His shoulders as

if it were easy to resist! He was tempted in the wilderness. That means that as a man, He wanted what Satan was offering! Otherwise, it would not be a temptation. He was tempted just as we are. He had those tempting thoughts just as we do. But He had learned and memorized the Word of God and through that, He was able to replace those thoughts with the thoughts that God gives us in His Word. Now, **Deut. 11:18-19** makes even more sense! ***“You shall therefore impress these words of mine on your heart and on your soul; and you shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontals on your forehead. You shall teach them to your sons, talking of them when you sit in your house and when you walk along the road and when you lie down and when you rise up.”***

Lesson Outline

After His time of being tempted in the wilderness, Jesus returns to Galilee and begins to call His first disciples (John 1:35-50). Andrew, Simon (Peter), Phillip, and Nathanael (called Bartholomew in the other gospels). The very next day, there was a wedding a little less than five miles from Nazareth in a village called Cana. We studied that in the last midweek lesson and it is worth a read! But then Jesus goes to Jerusalem and when He gets to the Temple, He has finally had enough! He casts out the merchants and money changers who have set up a marketplace in the Court of the Gentiles (the Outer Court of the Temple). In doing this, He has stirred up the proverbial hornet's nest so He heads back to Gallilee. But on His way, He has a need to go through Samaria... Something, in those days, no “respectable Jew” would do. This past week's Bible readings are so rich and filled with so many wonderful activities of our Lord that it would be very easy to spend weeks, if not months, studying these passages. But we can't do that right now, so we will try to pull a few pearls from the passages in **John 2-4**. Specifically, the casting out of the money changers and the encounter of the woman at the well will give us some great insight into who Jesus really is!

1. Jesus Drove out the Money Changers - John 2:13-22

John 2:13 - *The Passover of the Jews was near, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.*

This is not the first Passover Jesus celebrated. All Jewish males were required to appear before the Lord at the place where the Lord chooses (see **Deut. 16:16**) and Jesus kept this command. In fact, He probably had been to around thirty of them. We can't be sure if He missed one or two as an infant child in Egypt. Infant males would not have been required to attend because the women (their mothers) would not have been allowed to attend these events. And also, remember that they were in Egypt at the command of the Lord and they were not to come back until the Lord told them to do so. But Luke tells us (probably information he received from Mary) that His family attended them every year. ***Now His parents went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover (Luke 2:41).***

Just after Jesus began His public ministry, he attended Passover in Jerusalem and as He entered the Temple area, He saw the market that had been set up. This market was akin to what we call a flea market today. It was set up in the Court of the Gentiles which is the outermost and largest courtyard where Gentiles were allowed by God to enter the Temple complex and worship. But the Jews had turned it into a flea market! That means the Gentiles had no place to worship. This was obviously a reflection of how the Jewish leaders felt about Gentiles. They considered them to be no better than dogs. **John 2:14-15a - *And He found in the temple those who were selling oxen and sheep and doves, and the money changers seated at their tables. And He made a scourge of cords, and drove them all out of the temple...*** Jesus makes the statement that will eventually be one of the major reasons the religious leaders want Him dead - **John 2:16b - *“...stop making My Father's house a place of business.”*** Greek - Emporion is translated business. We get the word Emporium from that word. Jesus said, My Father's house! The power and the money the religious leaders controlled in the Temple were being threatened by one who was now claiming to be the Son of God. His claim implied that Jesus was somehow responsible for His Father's house (the Temple). The Sadducees ran the Temple Complex. They rented spaces to these merchants and money changers probably for a fee and a cut of the profits. Jews from all over the known world would come to Jerusalem and before they could

give their tithes or buy sacrificial animals, they had to trade their money in for Temple currency. They were often cheated in the exchange rates. Jesus is calling all of them out for this and more! They were charged too high of a price for goods and animals. They were charged too much for rent on rooms and food. They were cheated as they tried to worship the Lord!

And what made it worse was that they had taken away the chance for Gentiles to worship in favor of a flea market! In His statement is the inference that the priests had failed in doing as the Father had instructed because they were a bunch of crooks. Many people can identify with that today. Whether true or false, many feel the same thing is true about some of our leaders in Washington. You can imagine that the Jewish leaders did not take kindly to what Jesus said. The plan to get rid of Jesus probably began in earnest on this day and three years later they would accomplish what they set out to do...

Jesus clearing the Temple of the sin that was so well established is directly connected to the Feast of Unleavened Bread which occurred the day after Passover. The removal of all yeast from each family's home was commanded by God before this feast began. God often used yeast and its ability to spread through a whole loaf of dough to teach Israel about sin and how it can spread throughout an individual's life and throughout the nation. Jesus cleansed His father's house to make this point and He will do it again three years later just before they crucify Him... We will study it more in-depth then.

Maybe this study will cause us to think a little more about what Jesus did at the beginning and the end of His ministry when He cleaned house! We can remember the zeal He had for His Father's house and have a zeal for our Father's house today! Our Father's house today is in our hearts! We need to have the zeal to keep ourselves clean before the Lord by removing the sin that spreads throughout our lives if we allow it to remain. We are the Temple (house) of God (**1 Cor. 3:16**)!

2. Jesus Needed to go to the Well in Samaria

The obvious point to study next would be the encounter between Jesus and Nicodemus, but I believe the Lord wants us to address the woman at the well instead. After Jesus had spent a week or so in Jerusalem and the Passover had finished, He went into the wilderness somewhere along the Jordan River, and there His disciples were baptizing people. **John 4:1-3 - *Therefore when the Lord knew that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples than John (although Jesus Himself was not baptizing, but His disciples were), He left Judea and went away again into Galilee.*** Because Jesus and His disciples stepped into the same role of baptizing people where John had once baptized, John the Baptist's disciples grow concerned and they ask John about this matter. John tells them that he is not the Christ and says, **John 3:30 - *He must increase, but I must decrease.*** After this, Jesus left Judea and headed north to Galilee. But, He does not take the usual route around Samaria that most Jews would take. Instead, He goes straight through it! And He even says that He must go that way. He was being led by the Father to go and meet this woman who would show up at a well in the middle of the day (see **John 5:19**).

In those days, most Jewish people considered Samaria as a place to be avoided. That was because of their bigotry toward the Samaritans. Many people in Samaria had Jewish blood in them, but it had been mixed with Assyrian, Babylonian, and especially Greek bloodlines. After Alexander the Great had died some 350 years or so earlier, the Greek Empire was split into four smaller kingdoms. Samaria was the center of one of those Greek-led kingdoms. Samaria was a place that had already seen the mixing of Jewish blood with other conquering people, but when the Greeks moved in, there were even more mixed marriages between the Jews and Greeks. This led to more Jews becoming what will later be called Hellenistic Jews (see the connection in **Acts 6**). (The process of being influenced by Greek culture is called Hellenization.) So the rest of those who were living in Judea looked at them as if they were less than human and were not worth even speaking to. Some would have considered themselves defiled before God just for interacting with them at all. So it was probably a surprising thing when Jesus told His disciples that He must go or had to go through Samaria.

John 4:5-6 - So He came to a city of Samaria called Sychar, near the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph; and Jacob's well was there. So Jesus, being wearied from His journey, was sitting thus by the well. It was about the sixth hour. If we pay attention to what is written, we have a lot of information. This city called Sychar is a historic place for the Jewish people. Abraham, Issac and Jacob, and Joseph (and probably all twelve sons) had all lived around there and Jacob actually dug the well that was there around 2,000 years earlier. But the greatest event that happened there was when the Son of God walked up to that well and rested, probably sitting in the shade under a small canopy near the well. It is noon time, it is hot, Jesus has no way to draw water up from the well, and Jesus' disciples had gone into town to try to buy some food and supplies for the rest of their journey (v. 8).

As Jesus sits there, a woman approaches... **John 4:7 - There came a woman of Samaria to draw water. Jesus said to her, "Give Me a drink."** Jesus does something unexpected - He speaks to her! I often speak to people I don't know. Sometimes you can tell they are surprised that someone spoke to them. That's exactly the people we need to be speaking to! Jesus set this example for us! It is a surprise to the woman because she can see that He is a Jew probably by the way He dresses or perhaps by His speech. What Jesus did by speaking to her was to break Rabbinical law. Under Rabbinical law, a man was not to speak to any woman on the street. That is a man-made (by Jewish Rabbis) law that was not given by God. It was a law made by men who looked down upon others and especially women. Jesus did not look down on anyone, man or woman. He initiates the conversation by asking her for help. She responds with two reasons why she is surprised that He is speaking to her! **John 4:9 - "How is it that You, being a Jew, ask me for a drink since I am a Samaritan woman?"** One, that He is a Jew and Jews don't speak to Samaritans, and two, Jewish men sure don't speak to women they do not know. Especially Samaritan women! But Jesus continues with His mission... He turns the conversation to spiritual things, **John 4:10 - Jesus answered and said to her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, 'Give Me a drink,' you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water."** She became interested in what He was talking about. She probably knew that the Mikveh (baptism) was conducted with "living water" which meant fresh water from a place containing life and not water from a well. That is a connection many commentators miss. But we understand that from our Week 78 Midweek lesson about the wedding at Cana. But Jesus was not talking about water for a baptismal pool! He was talking about a well of Living Water that would spring up in her heart! **John 4:12 - "You are not greater than our father Jacob, are You, who gave us the well, and drank of it himself and his sons and his cattle?"** She has begun to pick up on what Jesus is saying about living water and a well. That is a contradiction to the traditional way of thinking. Living water for the Mikveh (baptismal pools) used for ritual cleansing came from a river or lake where life could be supported. Not from a well. But Jesus is about to tell her that "Living Water" could come from a well! What Jesus is about to tell her is going to pique her curiosity.

She doesn't quite understand, so she asks about the connection to her Jewish heritage and Jacob. She said, **"our father Jacob"**. He gave US this well! We drink the same water as Jacob! She is trying to take the conversation in the direction that she wants to go and somehow justify herself. But Jesus does not take the bait. **John 4:13-14 - Jesus answered and said to her, "Everyone who drinks of this water will thirst again; but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him shall never thirst; but the water that I will give him will become in him a well of water springing up to eternal life."** Do you see the contrast between the living water of the Mikveh (baptismal) and the Well that springs up "Living Water"? Jesus said that He would take the well water (a place where fish and other marine animals could not live because they would starve to death) and turn it into a well with life inside! And it would spring up and pour out on everyone around it! **John 4:15 - The woman said to Him, "Sir, give me this water, so I will not be thirsty nor come all the way here to draw."** She is intrigued and she wonders if He is saying that she would not have to come to this well anymore to draw water. She is there in the hottest part of the day - obviously to avoid the other women of the town who probably treat her badly because of her past.

And Jesus wants her to explore her past! A person needs to explore their past in order to see their true needs for the future. She needs to see that she is a sinner in need of forgiveness and salvation. He wants her to understand that she cannot count on being a descendant of Jacob to gain eternal life. So He asked her about her problems... **John 4:16-17a - He said to her, "Go, call your husband and come here." The woman answered and said, "I have no husband."** Jesus is causing her to admit she is a sinner and she has to face her past. **John 4:17b-18 - Jesus said to her, "You have correctly said, 'I have no husband'; for you have had five husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your husband; this you have said truly."** She then realizes that there is something more to this man who is speaking with her. This man who has caused her to examine her life... This man that is offering answers to life's biggest questions... Her questions tell us that God, worship, Heaven, and eternal life had all been on her mind. She asked Him questions that she had probably wondered about or even worried about often. **John 4:20 - "Our fathers worshiped in this mountain, and you people say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship."** I may be wrong about this, but I think what she really wanted to know here is "Does God really love me?" "Will God accept me?" Those are questions on the mind of many lost people today. Jesus is going to assure her that her worship will be accepted by God, but that it must come from the heart, not from a specific building or a place. **John 4:23 - But an hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers.** In other words, she doesn't need to worry about seeking God out because He is seeking her out!

Jesus tells her that it is not about worshiping in Samaria or Jerusalem! It is not about a well or who she is descended from! It is about the Messiah! The One who can give her a Well overflowing with Living Water! The Son of God! And now the most pressing problem in her thoughts comes out. When is the Messiah going to come? **John 4: 25 - The woman said to Him, "I know that Messiah is coming (He who is called Christ); when that One comes, He will declare all things to us."** She is worried about eternal life and she wants answers. She is worried that the Messiah could come at any moment and she might not be ready! She has tried multiple lifestyles with multiple men and nothing has given her the answer she seeks. Nothing has filled the void in her heart. None of those men have given her any peace. And it is now that Jesus calms her fears and introduces Himself - **John 4:26 - Jesus said to her, "I who speak to you am He."** She has met the Savior! All her fears melt away! All her shame is gone! Her life is filled with peace and she can't keep it to herself.

As a result of this encounter with Jesus, the woman runs into town and begins telling everyone she can about Him and many of them believe over the next couple of days. **John 4:39 - From that city many of the Samaritans believed in Him because of the word of the woman who testified, "He told me all the things that I have done."**

Application and the Gospel: Finding Jesus on Every Page

There is a common connection here in these two accounts. Jesus came to seek and to save that which was lost! He didn't come to save only the Jews. He didn't come to save only those who worship in Jerusalem or in a certain way or style! He came to save all who come to Him, confessing the Name of Jesus as Savior and Risen Lord! People would have to make a choice just three years later to believe whether or not God the Father had risen Jesus from the dead. Thousands are going to believe after Pentecost including some Hellenistic Jews, some of which are probably from Samaria! Makes you wonder if the woman at the well will be there the day Peter preaches and thousands are saved.

Some thought they could get into Heaven because they are from the right bloodline. Some thought they could get to Heaven if they had enough money and prestige. Some thought they could get to Heaven because they drank water from a certain well... But Jesus showed all of them and us that God loves people! Jew or Gentile - man or woman, God loves people! And He also showed them and us that God hates bigotry and the cheating of those people.

Many of the people of Sychar, believed in the Lord. Do you know why they believed? They tell us why - **John 4:42 - ...and they were saying to the woman, "It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves and know that this One is indeed the Savior of the world."** They began to believe because of her testimony and they continued to believe and grow in Christ because of His Word! We don't know what Jesus taught or said during those two days, but we can be sure that He used the scriptures and taught them about the hope that is found in Him! The One who gave them Wells of Living Water in the hearts. No more thirsty questions like the woman at the well was asking. They said they **"...know that this One is indeed the Savior of the world."** The irony is that many of the people who were looking down their noses at these Samaritans did not believe in Jesus and these Samaritans who were rejected by the religious establishment were saved and received eternal life.

How will people believe in Christ? First, they must listen. They will listen when they see you doing what is right! They listen when they see you living like Christ. Next, they must believe! They will believe when they hear the Word of God as you share it with them! The Good News of Jesus Christ is worth talking about as is what Jesus has done for you. **Rom. 10:12-15 - For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, abounding in riches for all who call on Him; for "Whoever will call on the name of the Lord will be saved." How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? How will they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how will they hear without a preacher? How will they preach unless they are sent? Just as it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news of good things!"** Preacher does not mean your pastor. It means - You! It is our hope that you have learned a little more about who Jesus is in this study and that you understand that He is sending you to a lost and dying world to proclaim the Good News! Now, go and be like Him!