

“The Kingdom without the Cross”

Matthew 4v1-11

Scripture Ref: 1 Peter 5:8; Rom 8:14; Deut 8:3; Ps 91:11; Deut 6:16; Ps 119:11; Deut 6:13

Andrew Golota fought **Lamon Brewster** for the WBO heavyweight boxing title. Golota, a strong fighter with a powerful punch, had 38 wins, 5 loses, and 31 knockouts. In preparation for the fight, Brewster studied tape of Golota's boxing, looking for an opening. He noticed that the way Golota held his hands left him open for a left hook.

Within seconds after the first round began, Brewster found the opening and threw a left hook. Golota went down to the mat and got up. Brewster threw another left hook and Golota went down again. He stood up and the fight resumed. Brewster threw another left hook to the same opening, and Golota went down for the 3rd time, which counted as a knockout. Lamon Brewster won the fight in the first round because he was the smarter fighter. All he had to do pound on his opponent's weakness.

- 1. Every day, each of us faces temptation in some form or fashion**
 - a. We are tempted to indulge our flesh, tempted to lift ourselves above another, tempted to worship at the altar of the world**

1 John 2:15-17

Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For all that is in the world -- the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life -- is not of the Father but is of the world. 17 And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.

- b. Each time it seems as though it come right at the worst time, at our weakest point, right when we might be most likely to give in.**
 - c. It's almost like our enemy knows right when to hit us...**
- 2. Well its no coincidence -**

1 Peter 5:8 *Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.*

- 3. Today we are going to look at the temptation of Christ, and how we can draw application from it for our own lives.**

Into the Wilderness

4:1 Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. 2 And when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, afterward He was hungry.

4. **“Then” – His baptism... “The Spirit Led”**
 - a. **If you recall the Spirit of God descended to dwell in Christ – and now that Jesus has the Holy Spirit – the Spirit begins to lead Christ.**
 - b. **In the same way the Spirit leads us...**

Rom 8:14 For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.
 - c. **Led by the Spirit – prayer, communing, listening!**
 - d. **“Led” – to lead up – to a higher place – to launch out, like a a ship.**
5. **Where did the Spirit lead Him? To be tempted!**
 - a. **“Tempt” = proving of the heart – even though Jesus is God, Jesus identified in every way with us**
 - b. **This temptation will show what He is made of**
 - c. **Some of you are being tempted with things right now – and how you respond will show you what’s inside – where you stand – where your faith it.**
6. **I find it interesting that this even took place right after a “mountaintop experience!”**
 - a. **And that is often how it happens – the testing comes after the blessing.**

Temptation #1 – “Why doesn’t your Father Feed you?”

3 Now when the tempter came to Him, he said, "If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread."

7. **No doubt Jesus was hungry, you see when a person fasts, at some point hunger will diminish, the body recognizes that no nutrition is coming in, and goes in to “survival mode”, taking resources from fat, then muscle.**
 - a. **But when hunger returns – it means that those “available resources” have been tapped out, the person is beginning to starve to death...**
 - b. **Satan comes to Jesus at His weakest point – not first day, or after a week – but forty days – at his lowest point...**
 - i. **That’s how he operates – he will observe – watch – wait – study the tapes, looking for an opening**
 - ii. **And when he sees one, that is exactly where he will hit.**
 - iii. **What can we do? Be perfect and never have a weakness?**
 - iv. **Nice thought – highly unlikely.**
 - v. **What we can do is be ready – be prepared**

- vi. That is what Christ did...
 - c. Satan comes to Jesus at his weakest moment, and says in effect *"You are God's Son, he has left you out here to die, He is not taking care of you, why not take care of yourself?"*
 - d. *"You've got the power! Use your divine powers to resolve this problem God has left you in!"*
8. Doesn't that sound familiar? How many times has someone said "If there is a God, how could He let this happen? Why has He let this happen to YOU (I.E. the Christian)
- a. Some of us have even fallen for that lie – and wondered "has God left me? He's going to let me starve in the desert!"
 - b. Our circumstances look bleak - we allow fear to set in, our faith waivers...
 - c. We begin to wonder about God – "If you really loved me, you would do something here"
 - d. This is called "walking by sight, not by faith"
9. When you are in the desert, and you are hungry and thirsty, the temptation is great to take matters into your own hands.
- a. I'm saying that if you are hungry you shouldn't eat...
 - b. *(Like the two boys who cut through a corral, and a bull saw them and charged. One of the boys said, "Let's stop and pray." The other boy said, "No, let's run and pray!")*
 - c. What I am saying is – who are you listening to??? God or Satan?
10. Notice Jesus response...

4 But He answered and said, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.'" (Deut 8:3)

11. Jesus answers with scripture and in doing so reveals who He is taking his cues from...
- a. *"Sure I'm hungry, but it's more important to me to trust God than to act independent from Him."*
 - b. Jesus understood – His Father DOES love Him, and His Father isn't going to let Him starve to death in the desert.
 - c. But even if He did – Christ's example to us is *"Father, your will, not mine, be done"*
 - d. Whenever you are tempted – you can stop Satan in his tracks... *"I'm going to obey God, not my flesh!"*

Temptation #2 – Testing God

5 Then the devil took Him up into the holy city, set Him on the pinnacle of the temple, 6 and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down. For

it is written: 'He shall give His angels charge over you,' and, 'In their hands they shall bear you up, Lest you dash your foot against a stone.'"

12. This temptation is even more subtle – Satan is saying: “So, you intend to live by the scriptures... then how about this promise God has made?”

- a. And he takes Jesus up to the top of the pinnacle and tells Him “go ahead, jump, God promises he’ll take care of you!” (Ps 91:11)
- b. Why would Satan suggest that? For one, it would have been quite a spectacular event – everyone would have seen it.
- c. For another it would have “confirmed” the power of God and the Jesus position...
- d. Isn’t that a good thing? It was a promise of God – right? God has to keep His promises, right?

13. Here is Jesus response

7 Jesus said to him, "It is written again, 'You shall not tempt the LORD your God.'" (Deut 6:16)

14. Jesus answers again with scripture, and in doing to He makes several points that are applicable to us today:

Point #1 – Living by the Word – the WHOLE Word

15. A person can prove almost anything with scripture – if you take it out of context.

- a. Many well meaning – and some not-so-well-meaning – people will take a scripture, or part of a scripture, and use it as a “proof text” for a point they are trying to make, or to get someone to do something (just like Satan here)
- b. When we isolate a *text* from its *context* – we turn the text into a *pretext!*

16. Jesus is showing us the importance of applying the “whole counsel of the Word of God” to our lives.

- a. You might think – “that’s hard – why Jesus is God...” But in fact, Jesus came as a man, and he is thirty years old here, what do you think He has been doing all of His life? Walking around looking Godly?
- b. No – He has been about His Father’s business – taking in His Father’s word. We can ALSO do that...
- c. When we have a consistent intake of the Word of God, it becomes part of who we are – it become ingrained in our heart and mind.
- d. It becomes the context from which all of our decisions and actions spring forth – the wisdom of God manifest in our lives:

Ps 119:11 Your word I have hidden in my heart, That I might not sin against You.

Point #2 – We Are Not to Test God

- 17. A closely aligned second application is when we take a text or a promise or a truth from the bible, and attempt to use it to manipulate God into action!**
- a. Satan is trying to convince Jesus to “force God’s hand” to protect Him.
 - b. He is saying... “God has made this promise, He has to keep it, why don’t you claim it and watch God work!”
 - c. ...that sounds really familiar – I have heard that before – and so have you.
- 18. There is an entire movement and theology where you are told “God made these promises to you, and because He is God and cannot lie, you just have to claim that promise and it’s yours!**
- a. There is some truth in this theology – God will keep His promises, He cannot lie, etc...
 - b. But the hidden lie is that we can command God – that *He* is subject to *our* claims of His promises.
- 19. Remember Jesus was “led”?? We are not to boss God around with His own word... we are to be LED by God, for HE is God!**

Temptation #3 – The Kingdom without the Cross

8 Again, the devil took Him up on an exceedingly high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. 9 And he said to Him, "All these things I will give You if You will fall down and worship me."

- 20. So Satan is telling Jesus – “*you are the King – but this cross – isn’t that a bit much?*”**
- a. He is offering Him a shortcut - the Kingdom without the cross.
 - b. But get this – IT WAS THE WRONG KINGDOM!
- 21. The victory of Christ was centered not on land, or wealth, or anything else that wars are fought for...**
- a. The objective of Christ’s victory was the most precious thing ever existed on this planet – the heart and soul of a human being.
- 22. The real question comes down to “Whom will I serve?” There are kingdoms here on this earth – ready for the taking – you just gotta go and get them.**
- a. But is that what I want to do with my life?

Satan's True Desire

23. Think about this - The fact that Satan was willing to trade “all the kingdoms of this world” for Jesus’ worship gives us insight into the heart of Satan: *His true desire is to receive worship as God.*

- a. It is the single most important thing to this fallen angel
- b. It is more important to him than all the kingdoms of the world.

Our Heavenly Perspective

24. SO WHAT? This helps us to gain insight into the value of the heavenly realm... think about it:

- a. If the most awesome creature that God ever created (even if he is fallen), who has seen and experienced the presence of God and the glory of God in the heavenly throne room.
- b. ...does not have his eyes on the wealth, kingdoms, or the recognition of this world.
- c. ...but on his position and recognition in the heavenly realm...
- d. Doesn't that tell us that this world is nice and all – but it is NOTHING compared to the heavenly realm – being in the presence of the Lord
- e. For those who can see it – there is no comparison – (we don't see angels looking to relocate here!)

10 Then Jesus said to him, "Away with you, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the LORD your God, and Him only you shall serve.'" **(Deut 6:13)** 11 Then the devil left Him, and behold, angels came and ministered to Him.

25. Jesus faced Satan as a man – not with divine power. He went head-to-head with the devil...

- a. And he defeated him – with the word and the power of the Holy Spirit!
- b. One pastor declared “he hit him with the word!”
- c. Each and every temptation that Satan threw at Jesus was countered with one thing – the Word of God.

26. That should tell us something – we need to know the word of God!

- a. Because here is the thing – one day you will be at the end of your “40 days”
- b. Maybe the job has been tough, or lost, maybe your friends have pulled away and you are in the desert, maybe your husband or wife is distant and you are lonely
- c. And the hunger pangs are starting to set in...
 - i. “I need some bread man...”
 - ii. “How come God isn't protecting me...”

- iii. **“Why does my unsaved neighbor have all the cool things of this world and I don’t...”**
- d. **And that is right when the temptation will come.**
- e. **What will you do? Who will you listen to?**

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