

# Resisting the Devil with the Word

15 February 2006

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Midweek Service

Matthew 4:1-11

Discipleship: Let's review our discipleship questions... (For our purposes you do not need to memorize the references.)

Q. What is the first commandment of God's moral Law?

A. *Thou shalt have no other gods before me (Exodus 20:3).*

Q. What is the second commandment?

A. *Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image (Exodus 20:4).*

Q. What is the third commandment?

A. *Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain (Exodus 20:7).*

Q. What is the fourth commandment?

A. *Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy (Exodus 20:8).*

Q. What is the fifth commandment?

A. *Honor thy father and thy mother (Exodus 20:12).*

And now this week's question...

Q. What is the sixth commandment?

A. *Thou shalt not kill (Exodus 20:13).*

Introduction: Open your Bibles tonight to Matthew chapter 4. I've deviated from my plan to preach about heaven tonight. So let's look now at Matthew's Gospel and chapter 4. We will read verses 1-11 tonight. The title of our study is "Resisting the Devil with the Word."

I had my notes about heaven tonight, and I put them aside, and I felt burdened to preach about this. We are going to find tonight that the Word of God is sufficient.

[Read Matthew 4:1-11]

Tonight the wicked one is alive and well. If Satan had the boldness to attack the Son of God, do you not think that he will also attack you? How do you deal with sin in your life? Do you leave it go and leave yourself open for the tempter? How do you deal with it? Do you excuse it? Have you learned to live with it? Are you comfortable with it? Well, if you are a Christian, none of these things can be true, because if you are a Christian, you hate sin. You *hate* it. And if you do not hate sin, you are not a Christian.

Are we tempted on every side? Yes. How do we deal with that? How do we resist temptation? Have you been tempted? Today? Sometimes we are tempted hourly. The world is as it were a puppet in the hand of the evil one. So many are blind and ignorant, and you walk among them every day, do you not? You are with them, and their influence is constantly upon you and I. Those caught in the snares of the devil, controlled by him—they provide so much of the entertainment that is on the television. They provide so much of the fodder that is talked about at your work.

Though Satan probably does not attack us specifically (he is only one person—he can only be at one place at one time), he has a way of being like a yeast that spreads.

His influence can be seen everywhere. He is a roaring lion, and his roar is heard loud and clear in the market places and on the air waves of this world. He has a way of influencing wicked people—dead and ignorant people (ignorant to God)—so that we as believers might be intimidated and taken off guard. Satan has a way of doing that. And yet Satan *can* and we *must* be resisted. This is done by and through the Word of the Living God.

First Peter 5:8 tells us to “be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.” Satan is like a raging lion. He knows his time is short. He knows that he is a created being, and that he is destined for hell. And so he uses all that is at his disposal in his activity as the adversary of God and God’s people. He knows that he cannot touch even one of God’s elect, because God is saving a people for Himself. Yet Satan loves to roar; he loves to intimidate. And whether Satan is manifested in the world, whether his influences are manifested even in our own flesh by what we’ve taken in with our eyes or our ears from this world, what we must do is *learn how to resist this enemy* or we will be dominated by this enemy. Obviously this is in a temporary fashion because if you are a child of God, Christ has the ultimate victory. But there are times when we are caught off guard when we can feel his evil claws around our neck, and we can hardly breathe the spiritual air of heaven.

The number one way that we oppose the enemies of God, namely, the world, our flesh, and the devil, is to know and love the Word of God. All of the enemies of God are resisted in the same way. They are all resisted through the Word of God. And so as we love God’s Word and not only love God’s Word but submit to God’s Word, the devil flees, and the world and our flesh are resisted. Then the Spirit of God has dominion over us.

James 4: 7-10 says this:

“Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse *your* hands, ye sinners; and purify *your* hearts, ye double minded. Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and *your* joy to heaviness. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.”

Do you see that the way Satan is resisted is by a radical submission to God—by being taken captive not by Satan, but by God’s Word—by submitting to God in His Word, cleansing our hands with it, being afflicted by the truth of it, by mourning and weeping and heaviness and humility. Then and only then can we resist the devil because it is then that the Lord lifts us up. It is then we are protected in the Lord’s hand!

Ephesians 6: 11-18 tells us with more detail how we resist Satan with the Word of God. We read:

“Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. 12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high *places*. 13 Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. 14 Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; 15 And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; 16 Above all, taking the

shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. 17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: 18 Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;

Do you see that in order to be sheltered from Satan; in order to be in this world, but not of it; in order to protect yourself from all of those wicked influences that we constantly come into contact with; we must love God's Word? The only way to resist the devil is to consciously, with your will, by the empowerment of the Holy Spirit, be consumed with God's Word.

So let me ask you, are you consumed with God's Word today? Are you consumed not just with doing your duty in your personal devotions, but are you consumed with taking it up into your heart? Are you consumed with knowing God for who He is and how He has revealed Himself in the Word of God? You will *never* be able to resist the devil; you will never be able to conquer your flesh or to even keep this world from getting inside of you unless you know and love the Word of God. Is it something that you long for, that you crave, that you hunger for, that you have a thirst for? Do you love it "more than your necessary food" as Job said? The Word of God is sufficient.

Stop deceiving yourself and saying, "I'll make it through today. I'll just get through today and survive until tomorrow." You must get out of *survival mode*. That is not God's will; that is disobedience. What you need to do is to *not* just survive by bread alone. God does not want you to simply survive. What you need to do is give yourself to God and His Word no matter what you *feel* like in your flesh, no matter what the doubts in your head say, no matter how the world mocks and laughs, no matter what the television says, the current culture, no matter what the people that you work with, or on the street, or what your neighbors say—none of that matters! You will resist the devil if you love God's Word. And this brings us to our first point.

Our text says, "Man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that procedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4).

- I. God's Word is sufficient for you: Depend on it! God made us for the sole purpose of being utterly dependent on His Word. We will never be fulfilled seeking after this world's wares because this world was never meant to satisfy us. God's Word alone can satisfy you. How many people do you know that live for what this world has to offer? They live to simply survive—just to get through this day. If *you* are living that way, you are living like an unsaved person in the world. *Man shall not live by bread alone.*

When God revealed Himself to us in giving us His Word, it had already been settled before the world's foundation. "For ever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven" (Psalm 119:89). God is infinite and His Word is "exceeding broad" (Psalm 119:96). Indeed if we were to learn about all that Jesus said and did "the world itself could not contain the books that should be written" (John 21:25). But God gave us this Book, and when He fashioned this Book for us, He had His elect in mind. He had you in mind. He had that group of people—every single one of them—in mind. And so the Word of God is sufficient for you wherever you find yourself. God intended His Word for you and ordained your circumstances so that you would find His Word completely sufficient—it's all that you need. You do not need anything else. You don't need to

find out what Oprah says. You don't need to join her book club and read her books. You don't need to look at the latest psychologist or go on any goose chase or that goose chase. This Book is all we need. Do you really believe that? If you really believe this, you will read your Bible with the intent to tattoo it in your soul. You will put it in there whatever it takes. It is totally sufficient for you. Perhaps you say, "Well, God hasn't considered this problem..." You are listening to satanic reasoning—resist him. "But you don't understand what I'm going through!" Do you think that the God who fashioned you is less than omniscient? He not only knows what you are going through, He *planned* and *predestined* it. He fashioned this day, today, exactly as it is. What have you struggled with? Just go through today's events, like a computer, and list every thing that smacked you upside the head. And you just said, "Come on, I wasn't lookin' for that one!" Just list them. God planned that for you so that you would find His Word sufficient. He planned it for you personally. Do you believe that He is sufficient? His Word is all you need.

*Man shall not live by bread alone.* You may have all of your earthly needs met, or perhaps that is what you are striving for. If you are striving to have all of your earthly needs met, and you think, once that happens it will be ok, then you are believing a satanic lie. You are thinking that once this happens or once that happens it's going to be ok. Brethren, can I let you in on something? It's going to be the same, because *man shall not live by bread alone.* If you are looking for happiness, you must understand that earthly sufficiency will not give it to you. You are looking in the wrong place. It's not on earth. You must live by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. What you are looking for is not in this world! It's not in what you can provide for yourself. What you are looking for is in God and in His Word.

God created us to be dependent on Him through His Word. No matter how sophisticated we think we are, we were not created to go it alone. God created us to be utterly and completely dependent on His Word.

*If you are not dependent on His Word, you are dependent on something else.*

You must remove the things of this world and replace them with things from God. If you are not putting off the old man, then you are depending on the old nature! You are living in the world, and there is no in-between. *Man shall not live by bread alone.*

The Word of God gives us guidance, whether we have lived in the first century or the twenty-first century. If there is any difficulty, God can handle it. "Is there any thing too hard for the Lord?" (Genesis 18:14). I mean the Lord can give a couple that is approaching 100—He can give them a child. He can make elderly Sarah with child! "Is there any thing too hard for the Lord?" No, there is not. So we see there is no temptation, there is no struggle so great that God's mighty Word cannot overcome it. There is no loss so deep that God's still small voice cannot bring comfort to it. God is all we need. There is no trial so impossible that God cannot turn it around for your good.

There are things in our lives that we struggle with that we think we've been utterly brought down to our knees, and we think, "There can be no good in this."

All things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to *his* purpose.

Good—there is good in every thread that is the fabric of our lives! And Satan may mean it for evil, but God will use it for your good (Genesis 50:20). God is truly involved in the details. God's Word is sufficient for you, for each trial and struggle, and He is working them all out for your good, but you must rest on the Word in the journey! God's Word is sufficient for each one of us. God formed us, so He knows exactly what we need. You may think, ok I agree, the Word is all I need, but I don't understand it when I do read it. You say, "I believe you, I believe the Word is sufficient, but it's just not working for me. I don't get it. I don't understand what I'm reading." Well, Peter talked about this.

## 2 Peter 3:15-16

And account *that* the longsuffering of our Lord *is* salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; 16 As also in all *his* epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood...

Have you ever read things in the Bible that were "hard to be understood"? You're reading and you just don't get it; you don't understand it. The fact of the matter is, if you don't understand something in the Word of God, read it again. And if you still don't understand it, then it is your responsibility to get some study helps. God has given us study helps in this day and age. If you have a computer, you can download great commentaries right to your desktop. Online Bible allows you to have several free commentary sets in digital format such as the Puritan divines Matthew Henry and Matthew Poole. Many of the great works are now free. But you don't need what other men say necessarily. You can just get a Strong's concordance and a good English dictionary, and God's Word will be sufficient for you.

Some things are hard to be understood, but listen to Psalm 19:7, "The law of the LORD *is* perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD *is* sure, making wise the simple." Have you ever felt simple, like a simpleton? "I don't get it. You get it, and he gets it, and she gets it, why don't I get it?" Well, read the Law of the Lord. Read it; give yourself to it completely. It is a heart thing. Give your heart to the Word of God, and this is the promise: the Law of the Lord will make the simple wise!

The doctrine that we are talking about is called *perspicuity*. God's Word is lucid and clear to all men. It is able to make all men wise unto salvation. That does not mean that any of us understand all of God's Word at any given time. It means the essential knowledge we need for salvation is clear and lucid unto all. A little child can understand it, and a scholar can understand it. God's Word is sufficient. Both the plowboy and the King can understand God's Word.

Acts 4:13 is another verse that deals with this. We read:

Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus.

When you are with Jesus you become wise. The fear of the Lord—the knowledge of Jesus—is the beginning of wisdom, and God does not need to use carnal things. He doesn't even need scholarship. He can take babies and make them wiser than

intellectuals, for it is out of their mouths that come His praises. If a child will trust in Christ, a child will have much more wisdom than a scholar who manipulates God's Word to his own destruction. So we must come to God's Word if we are to be wise. God's Word is sufficient for you—depend on it!

II. Then secondly, God's Word is sufficient: Defend yourself with it! Every problem and temptation you face can be defeated and put into proper perspective with the Word of God! Every enemy that you face, there's no better weapon to use than the Word of God! And we learn about this in the context of Matthew 4.

A. The Weapon of Choice for the Son of God. You see the Word of God is sufficient for every temptation because it was the weapon of choice for the Son of God. Do you understand that? He could have done anything He wanted to do with Satan. And what did He use when He walked on this earth? We see that Satan tempts the Son of God in Matthew chapter 4. And here we have the most extreme situation of temptation. Christ put Himself in the most dire circumstances imaginable to demonstrate the sufficiency of the Word of God. He fasted forty days and forty nights.

We cannot imagine what the Son of God went through in that time of fasting. If you come to me when I am hungry and tired, I'm most prone to sin. Get me to the McDonald's quick! And shame on me. When I am hungry or when I am tired is when I fall into sin. I'm just like the disciples who fell asleep at the hour of trial and temptation for the Lord. At the time when I need to be strong, I'm sleeping spiritually. But here was Christ, He had not eaten and surely He was weak. And surely His sleeping patterns were not normal with this kind of stress on His body. And what did He use?

1. He could have overcome Satan by a host of angels. He had only to say the word, and His father would have sent Him twelve legions of mighty angels against whom the wicked one could not have stood for a single moment. But Christ did not choose angelic force.
2. He could have used His own almighty power that He used to bring the worlds into existence. A moment's burst of omnipotence would have destroyed Satan instantly.
3. Christ might have defeated Satan by unveiling His own glory. One millisecond of Christ's glory and Satan would have fled like a scared puppy. And yet He chose not to use His divine majesty. He stayed within the limits of humanity, and He used the Word of God.
4. Christ could have defended Himself with logic. No man could compare to the Son of God. In the beginning was the *Logos*—He is the Logic—Logic incarnated. He could have defended Himself with the greatest philosophical arguments. Have you ever tried to defeat Satan that way—with reasonings? He turns them upside down—he twists God's truth

into tyranny. Instead of following Satan's imaginations, we need to cast them down! But Christ did not use logic.

Christ said three words each time, "It is written!" That was Christ's choice weapon. It was not logic, though He could have shown in a moment through logic the insanity of sin. Yet Christ had only one method: the Word of God. He had only one argument for Satan: "it is written!" Christ could have chosen anything He wanted to defend Himself. He could have selected any weapon. So why do we choose carnal weapons when we fight against the world, the flesh, and the devil? We must wield the Word of God.

B. The Wielding of the Word of God. Let me ask you a question tonight. Are you learning the Word of God? It is a simple question. Where are you in your spiritual walk? I'm not asking if you are reading the Word of God, but are you *learning* and *loving* the Word of God? Is God's Word taking control of your heart to the point where when you are tempted, the Spirit of God rises up within with indignation against the enemy, and says, "It is written!" "Flee from me Satan!" How dare that enemy raise his ugly head against the Almighty Spirit of God! Where are you in your walk? Do you know that all we have is *today*? We are not promised tomorrow. Do you understand that? You may die on the way home. Where are you in the Word of God? Do you even care? Shame on us for abusing the Word of God. We know it. We can show it off, but do we obey it? Do we understand it? Is it inside of us? Is it compelling? Is it something that eats us up inside? Is the Word of God in our heart—is it talking to us? Or are we just going along in life, and we've forgotten. And we wonder why we are on our back and there's a lion roaring in our face—*raging* in our face—screaming at us at the top of his lungs, and we are shaking thinking, how did I get here? Get back into the Word of God. Assess your walk with God, and ask yourself some hard questions.

1. Are you reading God's Word every day? If that is a "no" you are in disobedience. You are sinning against God. So it's no wonder if you would have thoughts of adultery, or lying, or stealing. If you are not in God's Word there's no bridle for your own wicked nature. Get into God's Word.
2. Are you learning God's Word? Is it taking hold of you? If you are reading God's Word every day, and you are not learning it, you are missing something very important. You are missing what Psalm 1 calls "meditation." So if you read God's Word, but you do not meditate on it, it's not going to have it's effect. This is not a text book; this is breathed out from God. And you must inhale it. You must take it into your soul and meditate on it, and think about it and let it dissect your life and take it personally. Make it in Technicolor! Let it explode inside of you like an atomic bomb and let it blow up and let it have all the consequences inside of you! It's got to rip you apart. And if it's not, the *world* is going to rip you apart; *Satan* is going to rip you apart. Your *flesh* is going to rip you apart. So let this

Word have its work. Are you learning God's Word? Is it ripping you up; is it doing its work?

3. Are you bearing fruit from the Word of God? The Bible says that if you are a Christian you will bear fruit—some thirty, some sixty, some a hundred. If you go to God on the Day of Judgment, and you say, "I believe the Gospel" and there is no fruit at all, then you are not saved. You are not even a Christian. You've deceived yourself. You were never saved in the first place. Are you bearing fruit? Are you a consumer Christian, or are you a producer Christian? A Christian will always eventually produce fruit. There will always be the fruit of the Holy Spirit in that person's life, or they are not saved.

With what are you fighting temptation? With what are you resisting the devil, or are you even resisting the devil at all? Are you? Have you been taken away? Are you spinning around in that whirlpool in the ocean going, "What is going on?" Stop now. Stop what you are doing. Let the world stop. Let your job stop. Let all these responsibilities—everything you've got going on—stop! Imagine tonight that we go out of this place, and it is God's will to take you out into eternity. What are you going to do knowing that God can do that at any moment? There will come a day when that actually happens, and it will be very soon. It may not be today, but it may be. It may not be tomorrow, but it may be. What are you going to do now with today? That's all you have. You are not promised tomorrow. What are you going to do with the Word of God? What are you going to do with these trials? Do you think that God is not in control of them? He is. He's given to you. He's planned them for you, specifically so that you will be divorced from this world and from your sinful flesh, so that you will quit relying upon it. And that you will only have Him, because that's all you will have for eternity. And you will 100,000 times happier in eternity. All you will have is Him. Don't you understand that if He is all you have, your happiness goes up exponentially?

Conclusion: *Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word which proceedeth out of the mouth of God.* Is that the epithet they will write on your grave stone? If that's not it today, I beg you in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ that that would be what you live for day and night. The Word of God is sufficient for you! Depend on it! Defend yourself with it! The Word of God is sufficient for you no matter what is going on in your life. Stop and let this Word wrap its fingers around you and be crushed by it, and let God form you into whatever He wants you to be!