

7The Power and Authority of God's Word - Matthew 4:1-11

Matthew 4:1-11.

1 Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. **2** After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. **3** The tempter came to him and said, "If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread."

4 Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.}'"

5 Then the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. **6** "If you are the Son of God," he said, "throw yourself down. For it is written:

"He will command his angels concerning you,
and they will lift you up in their hands,
so that you will not strike your foot against a stone."

7 Jesus answered him, "It is also written: 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'"

8 Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. **9** "All this I will give you," he said, "if you will bow down and worship me."

10 Jesus said to him, "Away from me, Satan! For it is written: 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.'"

11 Then the devil left him, and angels came and attended him.

This passage that I have just read is often referred to as the '**Temptation of Jesus**' and rightfully so, in fact some bibles have it under the heading as '**Satan Tempts Jesus in the Desert.**' However, today I want to give it this title '**The Power and Authority of God's Word.**' My reason for giving this title today is outlined in verses 4, 7 and 10, where Jesus responds to;

Satan's IF statements.

Jesus' IT statements.

1. Verse 3. If you are the son of God...
2. Verse 4. IT is written... (Deuteronomy 8:3 - that man does not live by bread alone)
3. Verse 6. If you are the Son of God...
4. Verse 7. IT is also written... (Deuteronomy 6:16 - Do not put the LORD your God to the test)
5. Verse 8. IF you will bow down and worship me...
6. Verse 10. FOR IT is written... (Deuteronomy 6:13 - serve Him only)

I want to stop there momentarily, and shift our focus to six bible verses that I think will help build the pillars of our Christian faith regarding the **power and authority of God's word**.

I want to encourage you to use these bible verses and also invite you to develop your own group of bible verses and start building your own foundation and pillars for your own Christian faith.

Let us now go back to those passages outlined in Matthew 4:1-11.

Let us jump back to **Matthew 3:16-17**. Here we see Jesus at his baptism, and we are told in **verse 16** the Spirit of God descended on him like a dove and **verse 17** tells us that a voice from heaven said "this is my beloved Son, whom I love; and with him I am well pleased.

Matthew 3:16-17.

I love that proclamation from heaven... whom I love. The agape love of God, love that is totally unconditional. I love you despite of...

Then the proclamation continues, with him I am well pleased. In the Greek it signifies a state of approval and delight. Jesus enters into the desert at the start of his ministry knowing that God (voice from heaven) proclaims his agape love on Jesus, coupled with approval and delight. What a way for Jesus to enter his ministry. However, as we all know, whenever we have a mountain top experience, there is a lull in the valley. Whenever there is a commission there is an attempt to decommission. Whenever there is a blessing there is anathema (curse).

Genesis 3

When we look back at the first book in the bible, Genesis 3, we see that the serpent is often interpreted as a representation of Satan, playing a crucial role of temptation by

deceiving Eve into eating the forbidden fruit from the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Eve then shares the fruit with Adam.

Job 1:1-2:13

The book of Job tells us of an encounter between God and Satan. Here Satan attempted to drive a wedge between God and Job by getting Job to believe that God's governing of the world was not **just** and **good**. Satan had to ask God for his permission to take Job's wealth, children and health. Satan was limited to what God allowed.

Matthew 4:1-2

The first two verses of chapter 4 tell us that Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil, after he had fasted for 40 days and 40 nights.

Here in Matthew 3:16-17, as I have already mentioned God proclaims his (agape) love and how pleased he is with His Son. Directly after that proclamation, Jesus was led into the desert by the spirit where he was tempted by the devil, after he had fasted for forty days.

Whenever you and I are **led out by the Spirit** to do **his will, his ministry, his service**, whether it is **significant or insignificant, large or small, church based or para church based, community or regional, national or international**, always know that the same **Divine voice** that **proclaimed Jesus as loved and well pleased** is the same **Divine voice** that proclaims you're going out and coming in. (**Proverbs 121:8**).

Never forget;

1. **God loves you.**
2. **God is well pleased with you.**

No matter what circumstances confront you, good or bad, God loves you and is well pleased with you.

FIRST SCENE- VERSES 3- 4.

Matthew 4:3-11. We read in **verse 3**, Jesus is confronted with Satan (The tempter) and Satan commences his allegations against Jesus, **"IF you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread"**. The allegation statement made against Jesus is the "IF you are the Son of God"?

If - something that is not certain.

If - a conditional clause

If - something that could happen or could not happen.

Here Satan is challenging the very divinity of Jesus. Satan was challenging Jesus' relationship with his Father in Heaven. Satan was attempting to sow seeds of doubt about the existing relationship between Father and Son. John 17:21... Father just as you are in me, and I am in you... It is that very unity that exists between Father and Son that Satan is trying to bring division.

Satan's plan is to sow doubt in Jesus' Divine heritage, Jesus divine relationship,

Family / whanau of God, do not let Satan sow doubt in you about your relationship with Jesus, About your salvation. About God's agape love for you.

Matthew 8:29 and Mark 5:7 - demons recognise Jesus as the Son of God and express fear that he (Jesus) has come to torment them before the appointed time of judgement. Here we see Satan pours out his allegation, coupled with the tone of sarcasm, cynicism and plain out-right cheek. (The cheek of old Nick - that devilish audacity).

Tell these stones to become bread.

Let's not forget Jesus had just spent forty days and forty nights, in the wilderness, fasting. Here I am of the view that Satan was playing on one of the basic survival needs of any human being. One is water and the other is food, in terms of human nourishment. Satan knew that Jesus would be hungry. Satan loves toying around with us, and so he continues his cheekiness to Jesus, by saying... tell these stones to become bread or as other bibles renditions say... tell these stones to turn into bread.

Satan did not say to Jesus, "You turn these stones into bread, " Satan said to Jesus, "Tell these stones to turn into bread".

Again, you can see Satan and his cheekiness, first, IF you are the Son of God and now you tell... **as if he was the ring master at a circus for a bit of a show**, a bit of a laugh, a bit of a concert. Satan was probably saying to his little minions/demons come and watch the show.

BUT

Jesus would have none, verse 4, the Son of God would not succumb to the theatrics and histrionics of Satan and his wild schemes and vices.

Jesus responded by saying, **"It is written: Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God."** Here Jesus uses the word of God as his response. This quote is taken from **(Deuteronomy 8:3 - that man does not live by bread alone.)** John 6:35. I am the bread of Life.

1. Hebrews 4:12. For the Word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.

2.1 Peter 1:25. But the word of the Lord stands forever. And this is the word that was preached to you.

3. Matthew 25:35. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.

4. Isaiah 40:8. The grass withers and the flowers fall. But the word of our God stands forever.

5. Psalm 119:89. Your word, O LORD, is eternal, it stands firm in the heavens.

6. John 1:1. In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning.

7. 2 Tim 3:16. All scripture is given by inspiration of God.

8. God's word is Truth.

SECOND SCENE - VERSES 5 - 7.

Jumping from the temple.

The devil tempts Jesus to test God by throwing himself from the temple, relying on God to send angels to save him. Again we see that seed of doubt thrown out by Satan to challenge Jesus' divine character and his relationship with His Father. The devil loves to bring disunity, division and separation to God and his much loved Son - Jesus. Then Satan continues to show his cheek, by quoting scripture back to Jesus. In this verse Satan starts off by saying, "If you are the Son of God. Now Satan in his cheekyness says, "For it is written, He will command his angels concerning you and they will lift up their hands and you will not strike your foot against stones", **Psalm 91:11-12.**

The devil uses God's Word to twist and manipulate the truth. (For it is written)

Again Jesus responds by saying in **verse 7** it is also written. "**Do not put the Lord your God to the test**".

Here Jesus displays his **utter reliance on God's word** and **Jesus rejects Satan's deceptive tactics of failing to understand the entirety of God's word and Jesus is aware that Satan is manipulating God's word for his own purposes.** Whanau, you and I must have a good grasp of God's Word and comprehend God's Word in its totality.

THIRD SCENE - VERSES 8 - 11.

Worshipping Satan for worldly kingdoms.

In this third scene the devil offers Jesus all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. **Verse 9** "All this I will give you, ...if you will bow down and worship me." Jesus rejected this offer and said to him, **Verse 10.** "Away from me Satan! For it is written: Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only."

Throughout these scenes we see the **divine character and nature of Christ** put to the test. **Scene 1** if you are the Son of God. **Scene 2** if you are the Son of God. **Scene 3** if you will bow down and worship me. In these same scenes we also see the **humanity of Jesus put to the test.** **Scene 1** His need for nourishment - food. **Scene 2** His need for protection - in these two scenes, there is the immediate human need and each of these needs other spin offs that affect us. We all know when we are not fed, we are tired, grumpy. When our safety is at risk, we have emotions of fear and other human emotions kick into place. Yet here in **Scene 3** here Satan tries to infiltrate Jesus' self worth. He has already attacked his self worth by attacking identity. If you are the Son of God. Now

in the 3rd and final scene of chapter 4 he infiltrates Jesus' self worth by saying "You can have all these if you bow down and worship me". **Satan manipulating the situation.** Just think **how people will see you, you will become famous, new ruler of many kingdoms, your wealth is immeasurable, your power is immense.** All about **elevating your self worth.** Jesus' response, Away from me Satan. (Te Reo - whakangarohia to kanohi.) "For it is written, Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only".

Jesus' identity as the Son of God.

1. Jesus responded to each of Satan's claims with the Word of God.
2. In this context, each of Jesus' claims come from the book of Deuteronomy.
3. Jesus utter reliance on God's word.
4. Jesus' authority and guidance is the Word of God.
5. Jesus was carrying out the will of His Father.
6. Satan departs, angels come to minister to Jesus.
7. Jesus has authority over Satan.
8. The absolute imperative nature of God's Word.
9. God's word is his weapon against Satan
10. Resist the Evil one.
11. Remain in the vine.
12. Remain faithful to God's call on your life.
13. Victory of Good over Evil.

Verse 11 Then the Devil left him, and angels came and attended him.