

Sermon-based Small Group Guide - Week of Sunday, March 30th

Sermon Title: Jesus' Temptation

Scripture Texts: Matthew 4:1-11

Preacher: Bruce Gore

Review the Sermon

Bruce told us about Kierkegaard's 3 types of people.

Remind each other of these 3 labels and a brief description of each.

(refer to the outline on the next page as needed)

Which of these 3 types do you identify with the most? Why?

Bruce equated the vulnerabilities of these 3 types of people to 3 temptations that the devil presented to Jesus. Listen for this correlation as you read the scripture.

Read Matthew 4:1-11

The devil challenged Jesus to choose what kind of Messiah he was going to be. We are similarly challenged to let Jesus be the Messiah he chose in our lives.

Temptation #1 – Type: Aesthetics

Vs 1-4

What difficult circumstances in your life would like Jesus to change?

How do you wrestle with asking God to change these circumstances and letting him be a Messiah who does more than make our lives easy?

Temptation #3 – Type: Ethicals

Vs 8-11

What code of ethics guides you? How do you feel when you encounter others who don't live by this code of ethics? How do you react?

When do you tend to impose your ethics on others? Is this appropriate? Why or why not?

What for you is the key that makes being a Christian more than living by a code of ethics?

How does, or can, this keep you from the temptation to let ethical behavior become more important than worship of God?

The Sermon on the Mount is Jesus' description for ethical living. On April 13th we begin a sermon series on the Sermon on the Mount. Based on this week's sermon what wrong attitude are we vulnerable to in this focus on ethics? How can we avoid this risk/temptation?

Temptation #2 – Type: Religious

Vs 5-7

How do you test your perceptions of what God is calling you to do?

Have you ever done something in God's name and then realized from the outcome that through your arrogance you had gone beyond what God had asked of you?

Do you currently have something you think God is calling you to do that your group could help you discern? If so, share it with them and have them ask discerning questions and pray with you.

Pray together!

Ask God to give us all the strength and tools to fight against succumbing to these temptations.

Sermon Outline

Kierkegaard's 3 types of people – correlated to temptations of Jesus

1. Aesthetics

Key Question: What am I going to get out of this circumstance?

Examples: looking to politicians as messiahs, church shoppers

Jesus' Temptation: to be a Messiah who makes the circumstances of life easier (vs 1-4)

2. Ethicals

Key Question: What is the right thing to do here?

Risk: imposing righteousness on all; tendency to make righteousness the goal rather than God

Jesus' Temptation: to be a Messiah who forces righteousness from all rather than drawing them into a relationship with God (vs 8-11)

3. Religious

Key Question: What is God calling me to do?

Examples: Abraham sacrificing Isaac, King Josiah, Calvin

Risk: thinking you are above risks because you are doing what God call you to do; inflated sense of self because of identity with doing God's will

Jesus' Temptation: to be a Messiah who inflates himself through his identity with God (vs 5-7)