

—Matthew 4:1-11 || Expository Thoughts on Matthew by J.C. Ryle—
Module 7– The Temptation of Christ

How do the temptations come to you? When was the last time you resisted temptation? Are you struggling with temptation or just succumbing?

The first event in our Lord's ministry which Matthew, Mark, and Luke record after his baptism, is his temptation. This is a deep and mysterious subject that is difficult to explain. Ryle points out four practical lessons for Christians to meditate on.

I. In the first place, let us learn *what a real and mighty enemy we have in the devil.*

- A. He is not afraid to assault even the Lord Jesus himself. Three times he attacks God's own Son.
- B. The devil brought sin into the world at the beginning. He vexed Job, deceived David, and gave Peter a heavy fall. Who is he? (*John 8:44; 1 Pet. 5:8*); his enmity to our souls never slumbers and never sleeps; he who for over 6000 years has been working at one work, - to ruin men and women and draw them to hell; his cunning and subtlety pass man's understanding; (*2 Cor. 11:14*).
- C. Pray daily against his devices. He is an enemy that is never seen and never dies and is near to us wherever we go. To be saved we must crucify the flesh, overcome the world, and 'resist the devil'.

II. In the next place, let us learn that *we must not count temptation a strange thing.*

- A. 'The disciple is not greater than his master, nor the servant than his lord.' If Satan came to Christ, he will also come to Christians.
- B. Believers find evil thoughts arising within their minds; doubts, questions, and sinful imaginings are suggested to them which must not destroy their peace and rob them of their comforts. There is a devil. Don't be surprised when you find him near you. To be tempted is not itself sin: it is the yielding to temptation, giving it a place in our hearts, which we must fear.

III. In the next place, let us learn that *the chief weapon we ought to use in resisting Satan, is the Bible.*

- A. Three times the great enemy offered temptation to our Lord. Three times his offer was refused, with a text of Scripture – 'It is written.'
- B. Here is one of many reasons why we should be diligent readers of our Bibles. The Word is the 'sword of the Spirit:' we shall never fight a good fight if we do not use it as our principal weapon. It is not sufficient to have the Book: we must actually read it and pray over it ourselves.

IV. In the last place, let us learn *what a sympathizing Savior the lord Jesus Christ is.*

- A. 'For because he himself has suffered when tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted' (*Heb. 2:18*). The sympathy of Jesus is a truth which ought to be dear to all believers.

"Those who seek their happiness in this life only, and despise the religion of the Bible, have no idea what true comfort they are missing." J.C. Ryle

—Matthew 4:12-25 || Expository Thoughts on Matthew by J.C. Ryle—
Module 8— Jesus Begins His Ministry and Calls the First Disciples

In these verses we have the beginning of Jesus' ministry among men. He chooses men to be his companions and disciples. He confirms his ministry by miracles, drawing multitudes to hear him. Again, Ryle highlights four practical lessons for Christians to meditate on.

I. First, *he began to preach.*

- A. There is no work so important to the souls of men as the preacher. It is an office that the Son of man was not ashamed to take up: it is an office to which he appointed his twelve apostles; it is an office to which Paul in his old age specially directs Timothy's attention; he charges him with almost his last breath to 'preach the Word' (2 Tim. 4:2).
- B. Why is it so important? Preaching is the principal means which God has always been pleased to use for the conversion and edification of souls.

II. Second, let us notice *the first doctrine which the Lord Jesus proclaimed to the World. Repent.*

- A. The necessity of repentance is one of the great foundation stones which lie at the very bottom of Christianity: it is a truth which needs to be pressed on all mankind without exception.
- B. True repentance is no light matter: it is a thorough change of heart about sin, a change showing itself in godly sorrow for sin, - in heart-felt confession of sin, - in a complete breaking off from sinful habits, and an abiding hatred of all sin.

III. Next, let us notice *the class of men whom the Lord Jesus chose to be his disciples.* They were of the poorest and humblest rank in life. Peter, Andrew, James, and John were all fisherman.

- A. The religion of our Lord Jesus Christ was not intended for the rich and learned alone: it was intended for all the world: and the majority of all the world will always be the poor. Intellect, and money, and rank, are worth nothing without grace.
- B. The religion of Christ must have been from heaven or it never could have prospered and overspread the earth as it has done.

IV. In the last place, let us notice *the general character of the miracles by which our Lord confirmed his mission.*

- A. Here we are told of them in the mass; hereafter we shall find many of them described particularly.
- B. These miracles are meant to teach us our Lord's power. He that could heal sick people with a touch, and cast out devils with a word, is 'able to save all them to the uttermost that come unto God by him.' He is almighty.
- C. These miracles are meant to be types and emblems of our Lord's skill as a spiritual physician. Fallen, crushed, bruised, plague stricken as we all are by sin, Jesus by his blood and Spirit can make us whole.
- D. These miracles are meant to show us Christ's heart. He is a most compassionate Savior. There is no kindness like his. His compassions fail not.
- E. May we remember that the Lord Jesus is 'the same yesterday, and today, and forever' (Heb 13:8).