

The True Son of God

Matthew 4:1-11 (ESV)

Grace, mercy, and peace be unto you from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ.

Let us pray:

O Lord, implant your Word in us that, with good and honest hearts, we may keep it and bring forth the fruits of faith. Amen.

Adam, the man made in God's image and likeness, received the breath of life from the Spirit of God and became a living being. God placed him in the luscious and vibrant garden of Eden. Then he met temptation from the devil. When Satan appeared, he caused Adam to doubt God and his word. Where doubt entered, then came disobedience and sin. The new Adam, the new man, Jesus Christ, came down from heaven, sent by the Father. He too received the Spirit of God, publicly at his Baptism. Yet, instead of placement in a lush desert, he faced the arid and wasted wilderness. He was driven by the Holy Spirit to this location; he was driven there to meet and conquer temptation. The tempter Satan confronted him to knock down Jesus as he did to the first Adam. The devil attempted to cause the Son of God to be disobedient. Yet, he met his match. Our Lord conquered the devil and his temptations. He proved to be the obedient Son.

JESUS PROVED TO BE THE NEW ADAM, THE TRUE SON OF GOD.

Jesus proved to be the new Adam, first, by relying on the Word of God. When Adam sat in the garden with his wife, they had received the abundant promises of God. God had blessed them and given them all of the land. They had kingship over all the plants, all the beasts of the field, all the birds of the air, and all the fish of the sea. Anything green was given them to eat. They were given the ability to be fruitful, to grow in the knowledge of the Lord, to grow in the fear of the Lord, to be faithful children of God. They were given the ability to multiply and fill God's earth with more children. They lacked nothing because of God's promises and blessings. Yet, there one specific command of God: **“but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die”**. They were told to abstain from one specific tree and one specific meal. God warned Adam of the grave danger which awaited if he should be disobedient. God meant to test Adam, to humble him and help him rely and trust in the one true God. Adam listened not to the voice of the Lord, but to his grumbling stomach. He looked not to his heavenly Father, but to the beautiful and pleasant fruit of the forbidden tree. Adam could not reject his desires of faithlessness. He succumbed to the temptation against the care of God's word.

Jesus faced a much greater fast and temptation than Adam did. Where Adam had the whole produce of the garden to eat from and only had to abstain from one fruit, our Lord fasted for forty days and forty nights and had nothing to eat in the wilderness. Yet, our Lord did have a word of promise to rely on, just like Adam. The word that Jesus clung to was **“Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.”** Man ultimately is sustained by the word of God. He can lay aside physical food. He can be certain that his heavenly Father will have everything provided. Man can learn that things do not depend on himself, but upon God.

Of course, our Lord Jesus already knew this. He came from the bosom of the Father; he knew the Father’s love and protection. Yet, when he became man, he learned this obedience as God had desired. This lesson, which Jesus quotes, is from Moses’ reminder to the Israelites that God cared for them even when they had nothing in the wilderness, even when they had to receive the bread God gave them from heaven. He made sure all their clothing and shoes did not wear out for 40 long years. God did this, just like he did with Adam, to test the Israelites’ faith, to help them show their trust in God. Why did Jesus have to learn this obedience? He learned this obedience to his Father to become a source of salvation for all. He proved that he was the new Adam, the true Son of God, made and kept in the image of God. Now, all who receive the new Adam, this Jesus Christ, receive his perfection and obedience as their own. They receive the ability to learn and grow in this obedience as the true children of God.

It wasn’t just that Adam did not rely on the Word of God. He also failed to trust in the Lord God as his gracious heavenly Father. Adam felt that what God had given him was inadequate; it wasn’t good enough. Adam was not given the ability to know good and evil. God had shielded that from him. Adam and Eve desired that ability to be wise apart from God’s direction and guidance. The devil made Adam believe that God was holding out from him. “God doesn’t have your best interest in mind. He won’t even let you eat from that amazing tree right here. What is he trying to hide from you?” Adam was tempted by the thought that God didn’t know best. He was tempted that maybe he had to make his own decisions.

Yet, Jesus, the new Adam, does trust fully in his Father. He proves to be a good Son, letting God’s will be done. When Satan provokes Jesus to test the Lord his God by jumping off of the pinnacle of the temple, Jesus rebukes him and this foolish and evil idea. Jesus says, **“Again, it is written, ‘You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.’”** This time Satan tries to convince Jesus in a more crafty manner. This time the devil gives Jesus a promise of God that Jesus would be safe no matter what he did, even if he should carelessly jump off a high building. The devil quotes a prophecy of the Christ which says, **“He will command his angels concerning you. On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone.”** The devil wants Jesus to think that this promise means Jesus could make God do whatever he wants for him. Whatever our Lord’s heart desires is attainable, because he has this Word of God.

Jesus rejects this temptation too. He does not seek to show off his majesty and glory by endangering his life, jumping off the temple. Our Lord is satisfied with the lot and gifts that God has provided for him. He knows his Father will care for him no matter what, but he does not want to require his Father to prove that; Jesus already knows it. And it wasn't just that God asked Jesus to live any normal life as a man. No, this lot and circumstance which the Father gave his only-begotten Son was the mission to save all mankind by becoming a servant of all, even unto death on the cross. This was Jesus' fortune, not living recklessly and jumping off of high buildings. So, Jesus rebukes Satan and proves his willingness to trust his Father and his Father's task.

Lastly, what Adam failed to do was to reject the devil and his temptation. He failed to rebuke the devil's evil purpose and plan. He listened to the devil and became disobedient to God. Now, Adam had the means to reject him. God did not leave Adam empty-handed. No, Adam had everything necessary to remain faithful. Adam had the word of God. Adam could have sent the devil packing and told him, "The Lord God said, 'You shall not eat.' That is reason enough for me to heed him and refuse you, you crafty serpent." Yet, Adam set aside this clear word of God and gave into the devil's temptation. He was not able to remain true to his duty, to his obligation as God's creature, as God's son.

No matter the failure of the first Adam, the success and victory of the new Adam proves greater. Our Lord Jesus did show that he is the true Son of God. Our Lord commanded Satan to depart and go away; for the devil's power was worthless and weak compared to God's Word. In his final attempt, when the devil asked Jesus to do the thing Adam and Eve had done, when the devil asked Jesus to worship him, Jesus said without wavering, "**You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve.**" In this way, our Lord Jesus defeated Satan with the almighty power of the Word. The devil faced his match. He could do nothing but depart and leave Jesus.

Afterwards, when the devil had left, the angels came and proved the prophecy true. They came and served Jesus, helping him with whatever he needed. Now you can see and behold this amazing sight. Jesus has taken the place where man was meant to be. Our Lord as true God and man, has shown himself as the faithful Son of God, the faithful and obedient son. He rules over all creation, even over the angels who serve him. He has proven to be the lord and master of God's creation. He has proven to be made in the likeness and image of God. Since you are in Christ Jesus, since you have received the title of God's child and have become one with this new Adam, you have his example. The Lord has already defeated Satan; he can harm you none. Yet, the devil continues to work and try and fight. He works tirelessly to tempt and to mislead you, just as he tried with Adam and with Jesus. So, take up the fact that you are in Christ Jesus, the man who has conquered Satan. So, take up the Word of God so that you too can fell the evil foe. Our Lord showed the power of God's Word; it's power for all Christians.

The devil worked hard against God. Even though God the Father declared at Jesus' Baptism, "Behold, this is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased," Satan

still worked by sowing doubt. He kept prodding Jesus, “If you are the Son of God, if you are the Son of God...” Well, our Lord proved the devil true. He is the Son of God. He is who Adam was made to be. But, Jesus did not prove it by doing what the devil asked of him. No, Jesus proved it by listening to God’s word and showing himself the faithful and obedient Son. He proved it by rebuking Satan, by conquering the prince of this sinful world. Now, Satan stands defeated until the return of Jesus, when he is thrown into the lake of fire for eternity. Come quickly Lord Jesus. Amen.