



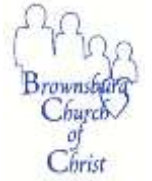
The God Filled Trust the God Who Fills Them

Brownsburg Church of Christ

by Edwin Crozier

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PM Assembly



Introduction:

On the job, Mary was known as an encourager. She always pumped everyone up and she never said anything bad about anyone. If someone started to badmouth a fellow co-worker, she would always cut in with a compliment. To be honest, for many she was just too sickeningly sweet. Everyone wanted to hear her at least once come down from her high horse of perfect encouragement and succumb to the desire to simply blast someone. The day after the boss let everyone know there would be no raises and the break room was filled with complaints about the slave-driving boss, Mary reminded them that the boss didn't take a raise either and that he graciously gave them work. Then there was Joe that nobody liked. He was sour, fickle, and grumpy. He was about as opposite to Mary as you could get. In the break room one day a couple of co-workers were complaining about Joe and Mary chimed in, "Guys, the other day Joe held the door open for me. He's a good guy. Give him a chance." One day at a company party the workers had had enough and challenged Mary, "Isn't there anyone you want to say something bad about? I mean, you can't find something good to say about everyone." To which Mary said, "Well, I do my best to see the best in everyone. I think I can find something good to say about everyone." To which Joe (remember him) said, "Yeah whatever. I bet you couldn't say something nice about Satan." Mary cocked her head slightly, thought for a moment and said, "Well, Joe, I've never met anyone quite as persistent and dedicated to his work as Satan. In fact, I imagine if we were all persistent like he was, our company would have made enough money this year that our boss could have afforded to give us all raises."

Mary was right. Satan is persistent. He is no quitter. And the temptations of Jesus demonstrate that. In the first temptation, Satan had suffered a failure on the scale of being unable to give a glass of ice water to a man traveling through Death Valley. He tempted a man who hadn't eaten in 40 days with some bread and bombed. But he was not to be outdone. He came back with a vengeance and in the second temptation (as we follow Matthew's order) redoubled his effort to get Jesus to fall. In many ways, this second temptation is really the first temptation multiplied or even squared. But there are some specific lessons we can learn about our fight to overcome temptation that I hope we can learn now. Examine **Matthew 4:5-7** with me.

Discussion:

I. The Battlefield: The Battle for Trust

- A. Jesus has weathered one temptation. He was victorious on the battlefield for reliance and dependence. He had spent 40 days relying on God to care for Him and when Satan immediately attacked that devotion and dependence, Jesus stood tall, and laid the smack down on Satan. But, as we said, Satan is no quitter.
- B. Understand what is happening in this temptation in order to understand the battlefield it represents. Jesus has just said, "No matter what, I'll rely on God." And Satan comes back and says, "Really? Are You sure You want to do that? Alright then, if You're going to rely on Him, how far do You think You can actually trust Him. You think He'll take care of Your hunger, but will He really be there for You when it counts?" Then Satan manufactures a situation by which to test the providential care of the Father. "Let's see if You're Father is dependable. Make Your Father put His money where His mouth is. Throw yourself down off this temple pinnacle and let's see if He's really with You. I mean, You are His Son, aren't You?"
- C. Do you see what this battle is? It's the battle for trust. Satan tempts us this way all the time. It's that little bit of us that is looking for a sign. It's that little voice that wonders if God is really there. After all, if He were really there would He let me go through whatever it is I'm going through? It's that desire that says, "God, I believe you're there, but can't You prove it?"
- D. This is the perennial struggle when serving an invisible God. It is the struggle Israel faced continually. We see it raise its head for them when they were at the foot of Mt. Sinai in Arabia in **Exodus 32**. Moses had been gone for weeks and the plagues, Red Sea crossing, and the enveloping cloud and thunder of God's presence wasn't long past but was being quickly forgotten. Moses had been the visible representation of God's presence for these people and now they didn't know what had become of him. Each day they watched for his return from the mountain, but he didn't come. They gave up on him and convinced Aaron to make gods for them and in **Exodus 32:4**, he presented the calf and said, "These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up

out of the land of Egypt!" They were so used to idols and icons that they couldn't imagine a God who was present without a statue. What was going on here? It was an issue of trust.

- E. Understand that this battlefield is not about some arbitrary ability to handle Scripture properly (though that is an important part of overcoming temptation). This battlefield is the battlefield for your heart, soul, and mind. Who do you trust? Do you trust money because you can see the balance in your retirement fund? Do you trust some enmeshed relationship because whenever you call they come running? Do you trust yourself because you are convinced if you want something done right, you're the only one you know is always with you? Or do you trust God? Do you trust that even though You can't see Him and He isn't always doing things exactly how you want that He is there and He is guiding all things together for good for those who love and trust Him? Here's the point. You may show up to church on a regular basis, but your God is whoever you actually trust. That is the battlefield. Satan is happy to let you "come to church" if he can get you to trust someone or something other than God.

II. The Attack

A. Past victories:

1. Let's start with the most shocking part of this temptation. Satan actually uses Jesus' past victory against Him. I've already hinted at this. This is essentially a redoubling of the first temptation. Jesus has said, "God will take care of me." It's almost like Satan says, "Oh, so you're going to rely on God. Well, aren't you the good Son. Are you sure He's a good Father? Are you sure He is really worth that reliance? Can You trust Him to be there for You when You need Him most? How about we put that to the test?"
2. Satan will use our victories against us as well. He may simply try to attack us again with the same temptation. He may increase the pressure. He may try to attack us while we are reveling in our victory and our guard is down. He may try to pump us up by letting us have a few victories so that we think we can stand on our own two feet and then try to kick our feet out from under us because of our pride. Or, like Jesus, he simply may try to get us to wonder if God is really worth all this dependence and reliance. It's like Asaph of **Psalm 73:13-14**. He looked around and saw the ease of the wicked and the struggles he faced, and he began to wonder if God was even there. Was God even worth all his devotion? In this kind of attack, each moment of victory over sin in the past can become a temptation to sin in the present. If Satan can get us to question God's presence or care about our past victories, we become willing to give it all away just to spite God.

B. Perverting Scripture

1. The next shocking aspect of this temptation is that Satan used Scripture against Jesus, quoting **Psalm 91:11-12**. **Psalm 91** is a psalm of trust. It expounds God as an ever present fortress, refuge, and rock. It proclaims that those who serve Him will not be harmed. It promises that God's angelic messengers watch out for us to keep us from harm. When twisted, it sure sounds like God is saying we can recklessly put ourselves in harm's way, but He'll care for us.
2. Satan will do the same thing with us. He knows Scripture and he is willing to twist it to lead us astray. How many people have twist passages about God's love to justify disregarding God's law? How many people twist passages about God's law to ignore God's love? How many people have recognized passages that show God wants us to be happy and taken them to mean that in action we think will provide us pleasure is allowed? How many people have taken one passage out of context to ignore another passage, for instance allowing a passage like **John 3:16** to convince them that **Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; and I Peter 3:21** don't mean we must be baptized for the remission of our sins?
3. We know that our lives must be anchored in Scripture. But it takes more than ripping a verse out of context, wrapping some seeming spirituality around, and claiming it glorifies God. We must make sure it is really anchored in the fullness of God's Word. More about that when we talk about our defenses.

C. Expectations

1. While the other two attacks are more shocking, this one is the most dangerous. Satan had twisted **Psalm 91**, but the real danger is he twisted it to get Jesus to develop a set of expectations. "Jesus, if You were really God's Son, He wouldn't let you suffer any harm." If he can get Jesus to develop faulty expectations, he can get Jesus to resent the Father when He doesn't come through on them. This is especially poignant since Jesus knows He is walking resolutely to the cross.
2. What kind of expectations have we developed because of a faulty view of God's promises? Do we expect every day to be rosy? Do we expect that we should never suffer hunger or want? Do we believe that since we are God's children we should never have sadness or hurt? Do we believe that as God's children we should have a fast pass to financial success, never getting fired, never being laid off, always excelling? Do

we believe that since we are God's children we should never get sick, our loved ones should never die, our friends and family never hurt and betray us? When those kinds of things happen do we begin to wonder if God is with us? Expectation is premeditated resentment. If we let Satan twist the promises of God to build faulty expectations, he is setting us up for the fall.

III. The Defense

A. The sum of Scripture:

1. If Satan is going to pervert Scripture, the only defense is for us to know Scripture as well and better than he does. In response to Satan, Jesus quoted **Deuteronomy 6:16**. Please understand that this was not Satan lobbing "his passages" at Jesus while Jesus lobbed "His passages" back. We can't treat isolated verses like hand grenades that we think blow up the verses that false teachers use. What Jesus is pointing out is that even the promises of God have a Scriptural context. None of God's promises are to be recklessly tested just to prove His presence.
2. If we wish to overcome temptation, we have already said we must use His truth, it will set us free. But this points out that knowing His truth means more than knowing some isolated passages. We need to know the sum of His Word. **Psalms 119:160** says the sum of God's Word is truth. What this means for us is the Bible is a life line. And the more we know it, the more we will overcome. The more we understand it in its entirety, the better off we'll be when Satan attacks.

B. Count your blessings:

1. The passage from which Jesus quotes provides us some great insight to overcoming this attack. Satan is trying to get us wonder if God is really worth all our dependence and trust. In the context of **Deuteronomy 6:16**, God was telling Israel, "Don't test Me, just obey Me." Then a few verses later in **Deuteronomy 6:20**, God explains what the Israelites should do when their sons ask what's up with all of God's rules and commandments. The answer? Count your blessings. "Sure, some things seem tough some times, but this is the will of the God who delivered us from slavery in Egypt with signs and wonders. And He brought us into this good land to preserve us alive. And here we are today, preserved and alive."
2. The fact is, sometimes our expectations aren't met. Sometimes things don't go the way we think they should or want them to. In those moments, we get resentful and may think God is picking on us or not even there. That is when we need to count our blessings. Are you breathing today? Have you eaten today? Do you have clothes today? Do you have brethren beside you today? Did God send Jesus to die for you? When we count our blessings, we diffuse Satan's expectations attack. We begin to realize that God really isn't picking on us. He has taken care of us in the past and He continues to do so today even if it doesn't look exactly like we want.

C. Reckon God's grace sufficient:

1. There is a subtle yet powerful defense against Satan's attack demonstrated by Jesus on the pinnacle of that temple. When Satan says, "If you are God's Son..." he is still banking on that doubt he tried to get going in the first temptation. "Are You sure? Why not get God to prove it? Surely if You are His Son, He'll treat you infinitely better than any of His other servants and protect You if You jump off this tower."
2. When Jesus said, "You shall not put the LORD your God to the test," He was in essence saying, "Look, the other day the heavens opened up at my baptism and the voice of my Father declared Me His beloved Son. That's good enough for me. I don't have to test Him." Do you see the defense? Jesus was saying that what God had already done was enough. Whatever grace God had already given was sufficient. This is very much like Paul in **II Corinthians 12:7-10**. When he asked for God to remove his thorn in the flesh, God reminded him, "My grace is sufficient for you." The point is God gives us the grace that is sufficient to save us and accomplish His glory. We need to be satisfied with that grace. We need to recognize that God really is in control and that He really is working for our good (**Romans 8:28**). If there is some blessing that we expected and hoped for that He hasn't given us yet, He has His good reasons. When we learn to be satisfied with the grace He has bestowed, we disarm Satan's attacks to get us to test God for more.

D. Hang on to God's promises:

1. Perhaps the greatest defense in all of this is also seen in the context of the passage Jesus quoted. In **Deuteronomy 6:16ff**, Moses explains that instead of putting the LORD to the test, the people will simply obey Him, doing the right thing. Why? "That it may go well with you, and that you may go in and take possession of the good land that the LORD swore to give to your fathers..." (ESV). The Israelites had been through some tough times over the past 40 years. In fact, an entire generation had died off. They had gone through hunger and thirst, but God had provided. They had faced serpents, but God healed. And now, Moses was encouraging them to simply obey because of faith in God's promises.

2. This is the heart of the temptation. Satan wants to get us to doubt the promises of God by looking at what is going on this moment. The number one way for us to overcome his attack is to simply hang on to the promises of God. We've already read **Romans 8:28**. God is working everything together for good. **Romans 8:18-25** explains that we didn't get saved in order to have an easy life here. We were saved in hope of a better eternity. We were looking forward to the promises of God. In **Romans 4:20-21**, we see that Abraham found victory for this very reason. He was certain God could and would do what He had promised. If we want to be victorious over Satan, we must hang on to God's promises as well.

IV. The Victory

- A. When we examined the first temptation, we recognized that life comes from the mouth of God. Thus, when I've overcome sin and found life, I need to give God the thanks. In this second temptation, we go a step further. This temptation was all about trusting God. And here is the amazing thing. When we have chosen to trust God and been victorious over the sin, we have proven the presence of God. Because He is with us, filling us, we were victorious.
- B. Therefore, when we win the victory, we do not turn to God asking if He saw what we did for Him. Instead, we get on our knees and thank Him for what He has done for us. Thank you, God, for being with me and carrying me through the temptation. What a victorious God we serve.

Conclusion:

The God filled do not live by bread alone and they learn to trust the presence of the God who fills them. They do not have to barter with God to get Him to prove His presence or test Him to make sure He is there. They count their blessings, reckoning God's grace as sufficient, and hang on to His promises knowing that He ready, willing, and able to keep His promises in His way which will be for our greatest ultimate good. Praise God!