

Christ in Combat

Matthew: Behold Your King

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Bible Text: Matthew 4:1-11

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Matthew 4. We begin our reading in verse 1. The word of God says,

“1 Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. 2 And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungred. 3 And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread. 4 But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. 5 Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple, 6 And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone. 7 Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God. 8 Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; 9 And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me. 10 Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. 11 Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him.”

We're going to be looking this morning at the text that we've read, focusing on the topic “Christ in Combat: Lessons for Those Who Would Triumph Over Temptation.” I trust the Lord will give us wisdom as we look in his word this morning so let's ask for that wisdom as we bow together to pray.

Father, we thank you that your word tells us as we've been reminded in song, that we can come boldly before the throne of grace. What a privilege. What a fellowship. What a joy divine. Leaning on the everlasting arms. Lord, we confess this morning that round about us are temptations on every side and, O God, how we need your wisdom, how we need the spiritual stamina that can be given by the filling of the Spirit of God to stand and having done all to stand, having our loins girded about with truth and taking in our hands that sword of the Spirit.

O Lord, I pray that you'd encourage some discouraged brother or sister today, that you'd help them to see that there is a Savior who knows all of the feelings of our infirmities, "In all points he was tempted like as we are, yet without sin." How good to know that he sticks closer than a brother and he'll never leave us nor forsake us. In a world filled with temptation that could cause pain to the soul and the fragmenting of our family, the loss of our testimony, the loss of that joy and peace that you alone can give, I pray, dear God, that this morning's message would encourage some Christian to stand and I pray that it would also draw someone who's frustrated and searching to the One alone who can satisfy, the Lord Jesus Christ our Savior. May they see on the cross of Calvary that the blood was shed for the sins of the world and may they make their claim there by faith, grieving and repenting of sin but knowing that by God's grace there's a Savior.

Thank you, Lord, for the privilege of fellowship. Thank you for the music that stirs the soul. I pray that it will be an offering of praise to you this morning that as we enter into your word, we would do so humbly and gratefully, expectantly, soberly. Lord, that you'd use your word this morning to challenge your people and we'll thank you for it in Christ's name. Amen.

Put a mark with me here in Matthew 4, will you? Take your Bibles and turn back with me to James 4. With a mark in Matthew 4, we're turning back to James 4 knowing that we're living in an ever-increasing sophisticated society. We're living in an increasingly sophisticated society that seldom speaks about Satan. When he is considered, he's a cartoon character, dressed in our minds in red leotards, horns and a pitchfork but the Bible presents Satan as a very real personality. He is called in Scripture "the devil" 57 times. He is called in Scripture "Satan" 49 times. He appears in Deuteronomy, the 13th chapter, as Belial, the worthless one. He appears in Isaiah 14 as Lucifer, the son of the morning. He appears in Matthew 12 as Beelzebub, the lord of the flies. He appears in Revelation 9 as Apollyon, the accuser. Martin Luther, the great Reformer, was so convinced of the personality and reality of Satan that once in prayerful frustration, he at his desk picked up his inkwell and threw it into a place where he thought Satan was standing, marking the wall of the castle at Wartburg with his frustrations towards a very real and personal devil.

It seems to me that in the first half of the 20th century, in the early 1900s, Satan's efforts were covert, they were clandestine. He likes it that way. He is an angel who is able to transform himself into an angel of light but in the last half of the last century and now as we continue on into the century in which we are living, it seems that Satan has become far more overt. He's far more open; it's far more obvious that he has a presence in our culture. You can see that in the books that we read. Anyone who is thinking will realize that Stephen King's themes are something in the direction of Satanic. You can see Satan in the music that's listened to. Alice Cooper and Ozzie Osbourne brought into the musical genre of America a very open focus on all things Satanic. You can see it in the movies that people have watched: Rosemary's Baby and The Exorcist and the names go on and on. The whole Goth culture, it seems, is given to a fixation on things of darkness, things of death.

Satan wants to dethrone God. He has said, "I will be like the most high God." Satan wants to destroy your soul. "He is a lion who goes about seeking whom he may devour." Satan. Satan wants to defame Christians. He is the accuser of the brethren who accuses us night and day. James 4:7. Will you read it aloud with me this morning? We're going to claim James 4:7 this morning even as we look in Matthew 4 as our text. James 4:7. I'm going to read the first sentence to the period of the seventh verse and then I'm going to ask you to read the second sentence with me. James 4:7, "Submit yourselves therefore to God," all together, "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." Let's say that second sentence together aloud once more. "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you."

I want to embed that in our minds by way of competence this morning as we open our Bibles to Matthew 4. The King is in combat with the enemy of every man's soul. The Savior is in a battle with Satan. The Lord faces off in Matthew 4 against Lucifer. As we open our Bibles to Matthew 4, the King willingly reveals to us Satan's battle plan so that we can stand in the hour of our temptation. In Matthew 4, we clearly discover when Satan attacks. We're going to speak this morning on the seasons of temptation. In Matthew 4, we discover how Satan attacks. We're going to look this morning at the snares of the tempter. We discover in Matthew 4 what we can do when Satan attacks, finding here in God's word a strategy for victory.

We read in Matthew 4:1, "Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness." We will begin our focus on the seasons of temptation. The seasons of temptation: when do I find myself most susceptible to the snares that Satan willingly sets along my pathway. My wife and I have the joy of being parents of five. We found it beneficial to know when they were vulnerable to meltdowns. You'd say, "Well, all children are vulnerable to meltdowns around bedtime." Well, we didn't find that to be the case. "All children are vulnerable to meltdowns when they've had too much sugar." That wasn't a problem in our home. "All children are vulnerable to meltdowns when grandparents come to visit." That worked a little bit, we saw that happen. Do you know when we found our children most susceptible to meltdowns? After church on Sunday. Don't look at me like that, parents, you know it's true. They've gone to Sunday School, they were up early, they missed their morning nap, they've gone to the nursery, they've gone to the children's church and they come home and they are ornery. They're not here right now so I can talk about them. Sunday mornings after church feels like exorcism in your home every week. We thought it was beneficial to know that so that we could set things in order during the lunch hour and minister to them appropriately. The Bible tells me in 2 Corinthians 2:11 that we are not ignorant of Satan's devices. I need to know when the seasons of temptation most heinously come.

Two surprising seasons of temptation are revealed in the text to which we've turned. We look beginning in chapter 3:16 and the Bible says, "And when Jesus was baptized, he went up straightway out of the water and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting upon him. And a voice from heaven said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Chapter 4:1, "Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil." Did you see

the season of temptation discovered in this text? “Then.” When you are spiritually victorious, you are often vulnerable. When you are spiritually victorious. Jesus had just been baptized, the Spirit of God has just come upon him as a dove descending, the Trinity has just been revealed, the Father is speaking in heaven, the Holy Spirit descending and the Father has just sealed his recommendation of the ministry saying, “This is my beloved Son, hear him.” This was a moment of spiritual victory in the life of Christ and in chapter 4:1, in the will of God, he moves forward from a place of wonderful victory into a place of awful vulnerability. When you are spiritually victorious, you often find yourself in a time of challenge.

Matthew 4 presents many challenges. There are debates about this text. People ask the question: was this a real temptation? After all, Jesus is God and man together is one united whole. He's the God-man. He's the theanthropic person: God and man together. Is it possible for him to sin? Answer: no. He was pressed upon by temptation from without but there was no temptation from within for the holy one. Well then, is it a real temptation? And can he really succor those who are going through the hour of temptation? I have a sister who has lived through two hurricanes in Pensacola, Florida. After the first one, they said, “We're never going to stay again in the hurricane.” They had experienced a hurricane one time and said, “We're not going to do that again,” and they got out of town. If I'm in a hurricane facing a 70 mph wind and I don't fall, congratulations, I've done well. When the wind goes to 120 mph and I don't fall, congratulations, I've done better. When the wind is howling at 200 mph and I'm still not falling, have I faced the hurricane? Oh, I have and I did not fall so that when a person comes to me and says, “I fell at 70 mph,” I can say, “I've been where you've been. I fell at 110. I've been where you've been. I fell at 140. I've been where you've been.” Jesus has been where you've been but he's never fallen. He understands all of the temptations that are placed upon us and all that desire to sin and yet he's never fallen.

Oh yes, we have a dear Brother who never leaves us nor forsakes us. We have a High Priest who was tempted in all points, even as we are, yet without sin. The word “tempted” causes many people to wonder in this text for, after all, it was the Spirit who allowed Jesus to be led into the wilderness to be tempted there and so we ought to pause and clarify that the word “tempted” as used in chapter 4:1 is a Greek word that does not always mean to be tempted to do wrong. From God's vantage point, this was a test that God knew the second Adam would wonderfully win. From Satan's vantage point, this was an opportunity to tempt the one in hopes that he would fall. God is not tempted to sin. James 1, “Neither tempteth he any man.” From Satan's perspective, an opportunity. From God's perspective, an opportunity to show the victorious one in combat.

But here's what I want us to note this morning: it was in a place of victory that vulnerability came. He had been baptized, commissioned to ministry and in that place of victory, suddenly vulnerability came. John MacArthur, the pastor in California, spoke of a football game he had opportunity to observe and the score was so lopsided that a young man who never got to play was put on the field and he was given the ball and he ran through the line for a touchdown. A young man who never played at all had just scored a touchdown and he was so exuberant in his touchdown that he ran right into the goal post

and knocked himself out. Do you realize that it's often when we seem to be flying highest that we get hit the hardest? Job was in a prayer meeting when his troubles began. Elijah had just faced off with the prophets of Baal when he took a run from Jezebel. Moses moved from the prayer meeting when the Shekinah glory fell upon him and went out from that tent and struck the rock. Do you know that those animals that are predators don't attack that which is not moving? Satan is a roaring lion. He sees Jesus on the move. He sees spiritual victory all about him and he seeks to devour him.

Listen then, dear Christian, when you start your devotions for the new year with this goal of reading through your Bible, just expect that now that you're on the move spiritually something is going to happen and it may not be too pretty. When you make that decision to enter into a new ministry and you're excited about teaching God's word, just expect that frustrations are going to come. Oh, by the way, have you ever left a church service on a Sunday morning feeling ever so good about the things you learned and what the Lord was doing in your heart and you walked out from the foyer and found yourself in an awful fight and foray?

When do the seasons of temptation come? They come when you're spiritually victorious but let's make another observation in this text in answering the question: when do the seasons of temptation come? Well, they come when you're physically vulnerable. In verse 2, "And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungred." They come when you're physically vulnerable. We have three sons. I believe that my three sons are capable of eating 6-8 meals a day. When they come home from college, the refrigerator does this magic act: now it's full, now it's empty, now it's full, now it's empty. It's an amazing thing to watch. Forty days and then it says "afterward he was hungry." My translation says at the end of it, "duh."

Yes, he was hungry and there are those who say, "How did he survive that?" Mahatma Gandhi, the father of peace in India, was 74 years old when he fasted for 24 days, eating nothing. Most physicians will say that the human body can survive with water and no food for about eight weeks but what we need to understand when we read this text, Jesus was supernaturally enabled but, oh how physically he was challenged like Moses and Elijah who before him had fasted for 40 days. The point that we ought to be seeing is that there are times of physical vulnerability and Satan loves to pounce on them. He sees us during our times of deprivation when we find ourselves in the wilderness.

This wilderness into which Jesus went was such a desperate place that the Old Testament called it "Jeshimon, the place of desolation." Cracked rocks everywhere; weeds peeping out from the rocks. Brutally hot in the day, brutally cold at night. No one round about; an uninhabited place. There he is in this place of deprivation; he was isolated. The gospel of Mark tells us he was there with the beasts of the wilderness. Oh, how God has made us with a need for companionship. "It is not good that man should be alone." There are those who try to live the Christian life totally on their own. Lone Ranger Christians, "I can do this my way," and oh, how they find themselves in those places of isolation. Tremendously vulnerable.

Satan comes during times of deprivation and isolation and frankly, he comes during times of exhaustion. Survival in the wilderness certainly would not have been easy in a human body even for the Savior. And Satan was pounding, Satan was pounding, Satan was pounding and the Savior in Matthew 4, gives us the end attacks of the one who saw him in times of vulnerability. Spiritually victorious, seeking to live for God, hearing the wonderful commendation, "This is my beloved Son," physically exhausted, what a perfect time to pounce.

In 1826 Adoniram Judson was taken captive in his beloved Burma. The dear missionary to the Burmese people was grabbed by the ones they called "the black spotted guards." They put him into a desperately cruel prison, taking him from his wife while she was expecting their little one. There in the prison, they actually did this at night, they had some kind of way of putting their legs in shackles and putting those shackles along a bamboo rod and with a hoist, they hoisted the prisoners up so their heels were in the air and they slept on their shoulders and head in the midst of the vermin overnight, if they slept at all. Month after month went by. Every day was a new threat of being crushed by the iron maul that the guards carried. Then the day came that they took them out of the prison, not to freedom, they took them to a more desperate prison. They walked them along hot sand. They called it "the trail of blood." How did Anne Judson find her husband? She followed the blood in the sand to his new prison home and there month after month he languished while she desperately tried to bring him in food so that he would not perish. He went down to skeletal form. He was depressed to the point of writing letters of goodbye to family members and friends. He composed poems of his love for his little daughter when she was born and he could not hold her because he was behind bars.

Then he got out. The war was over. Freedom at last. And in that freedom, he clutched his wife, he held his dear daughter and he set about to bring the gospel to the people in Burma and as he set about to do so, within months, his wife died. He recounts the story of being out of town and receiving a black sealed envelope and opening it and reading the tragic news of the death of his wife. He never expected that to happen. This was a time of victory. He'd been in prison for two years. He went back and held the emaciated form of his little daughter knowing what the end would be and he buried Maria as well.

Two more years went by. He'd been two years in prison and two years grieving and at the end of those two years grieving he had someone dig a grave next to his wife's grave. He sat by that grave so morbid in his thoughts that he thought about his wife's smoldering body and thought about what it would be like to just allow his body to decompose next to hers. He didn't eat. He prayed. He fasted. Satan had him where he wanted him just like Satan may have you where he wants you. You've seen spiritual blessing, you've been on the mountaintop, you're physically vulnerable. Yes, you have new little ones in the home, aren't they great? Ask me at three in the morning. Yes, you're a newlywed and isn't it exciting? Let's talk about it after about a year. You've got that new job that you prayed for. You've been a witness recently at work and then the flu season hit and Satan has you just where he wants you. The seasons of temptation.

Let's move from the seasons of temptation to discover the snares of the tempter as they're shared in this text. Satan's strategies, after all, are predictable to those who study God's word. "There is no temptation taken you," 1 Corinthians tells us in chapter 10:13, "but such as is common to man." You know, the American army is forced to always provide battle plans on three fronts: the land, the air and the sea. As we look at the snares of the tempter in this text, we discover that Satan launches attacks on three fronts and we need to be aware of them. Here is our battle manual and in the battle manual, the word of God says in 1 John 2, "Love not the world neither the things that are in the world for all that is in the world is not of the Father and those who love the world do not love the Father for the love of the Father is not in them." Then the Bible says, "For the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh and the pride of life are not of the Father but of the world and the world is passing away and the lusts thereof."

So, we discover in 1 John 2: the lust of flesh, the lust of the eyes, the pride of life. These are the three fronts that we always need to be considering because Satan's considering them. He's going to engage you there. He's going to engage you in the lust of the flesh. He's going to engage you in the lust of the eyes. He's going to engage you in the pride of life. And even so, he engages the Son of God and as we study the movements of our great Champion this morning, I discover that the first temptation that Satan brings as he seeks to snare the Savior, he tempts him with pleasure. He tempts him with pleasure. I call this "the instant food" temptation. Verse 3, "And when the tempter came to him, he said," watch this, "If thou be the Son of God." Now, wait a minute, God in heaven had just said, "Thou art my beloved Son." Isn't it interesting that Satan always loves to begin a conversation by implanting doubt. He loves to implant doubt to get us in debate mode and once we're in debate mode he'll lead us into denial.

"If thou be the Son of God," here comes that instant food temptation, "command that these stones be made bread." Did our Lord have a legitimate physical need? Yes. Was he legitimately able to turn the stones into bread? Yes. He didn't even have Philippians 4:19, "My God shall supply all my need," but he had Psalm 37:4, "Delight thyself also in the Lord and he will give thee the desires of thy heart." And he had Psalm 84:11, "No good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly." My flesh is just crying out, "I want this so bad. Just one drink. Just one dose. Just one date. I just want this so much." Oh, how Satan loves to tempt the flesh with the free fast food that's never free.

Satan tempts our pride with fame even as he tempted the Savior with fame for, "The devil took him up," verse 5, "into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple, And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down." This is the instant fame temptation. Malachi 3:1 says, "The one that you're seeking will suddenly come to the temple," and he calls it "his temple." So, it makes sense then, that Satan would take Jesus to the pinnacle of the temple 400 feet above the ground below and apply Psalm 91, "Just jump. He'll give his angels charge concerning you. You'll have a magic parachute and you'll land there in the courtyards and everyone is going to say, This is the one that we've been looking for. It's the Messiah." Hmmm, will you compromise your principles in order to be popular? Will you put aside your convictions in order to be famous? How

many have set aside their judgment because they loved the accolades of the ones who judge them and their judgment does not matter?

Satan tempts him a third time. This time, verse 8 says, “He takes him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, All these things I’m going to give you if you just bow down and worship me. Hey, I’m going to give you all these things. Just bend your sale's pitch a little bit. I'm going to give you all these things. Just do the work but don't do it ethically. I'm going to give you all these things. Grab for the gusto and go for it.”

Here are the three sinister snares that Satan is always laying: the pleasure snare. “My flesh will be gratified but oh, how I’ll deny God's will. He wants me to wait. My pride will be satisfied but oh, how I deny God's word even when I put him to the test. My possessions. I have so much. I can't even count it,” but who have you worshiped and what has become your idol? Isn't it true we're bombarded by these kinds of temptations every single day?

It was a couple of years ago, I sat in an emergency room with a man who had recently made a profession of faith and shortly after making a profession of faith in Christ, he found himself again in a drunken stupor. The flesh craving what ultimately could bring destruction.

In my home church in West Virginia, a man was teaching a Sunday School class. He got called out of the class to the hospital. His college-aged daughter was in the hospital. She was dying. She was bleeding profusely. Her parents didn't know that she had just had an abortion. The lust of the flesh.

My friend's father started running to get in shape. His mid-life crisis led him to run with another lady in the neighborhood. “Oh, just to get in shape.” And then he ran away with her.

There was a former pastor in a midwestern jail having embezzled over a million dollars of God's funds. The lust of the flesh. The lust of the eyes. The pride of life. “I want. I want. I want.”

James 4:7, do we still remember it? “Resist the devil,” finish it now, “and he will flee from you.” Resist the devil and he will flee from you. How good to see in Matthew 4 that the Savior resisted the devil. Let's see the Savior's strategy for triumph and make it ours. The strategy for triumph that we need to make ours. Folks, understand when we read this passage in Matthew 4, it's recorded in Matthew, Mark and Luke. Why is this temptation recorded in each of those books? The Spirit of God is never redundant. Understand that no one was there with Jesus except the Spirit of God and the angels and so when we read this account of his temptation, this is what the Savior shared with his disciples, for us. He revealed it to his disciples that he'd been through this temptation alone for you and for me. Jesus said in Luke 22, “Simon, Simon, Satan hath desired to have you. He wants to sift you as wheat but I have prayed for you.”

As I read Matthew 4, I'm encouraged because the strategy for triumph that was the Savior's strategy will work. I realize there are seasons when I am terribly vulnerable. Frankly, I feel vulnerable all the time. When spiritual joys are compounded with physical difficulties, I am vulnerable. When Satan sets in with his snares, whether it be through the eye. I heard recently of a pastor who took a second look at a lovely young lady as she was walking down the sidewalk and his wife happened to notice. Her comment was great. She said to her husband, "Was that second look worth all the trouble you're now in?"

The lust of the eyes. The pride of life. Oh, how we love to be loved. How we love to be accepted. Everybody is going to applaud you. You're going to be somebody. Hmm. Two keys to the Savior's strategy that jump off the page and must jump into my heart: key 1. we must face Satan in the power of the Spirit. The 16th verse of chapter 3, "And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water and the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove." Is there any doubting the power of the Spirit in the life of the Savior? Chapter 4:1, "He was led of the Spirit into the wilderness." Chapter 4:11, "And the angels came and ministered to him."

Be filled with the Spirit. The word of God says in Galatians 5:16, "This I say, walk in the Spirit and you will not fulfill the lusts of the flesh." Hey friend, news for you, news flash this morning: you can't defeat Satan alone. But, 1 John 4:4 says, "Greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world." When you trust Christ as Savior, what? Don't you know your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you? Be filled with the Spirit. Be living a Spirit-centered life. You cannot conquer Satan with the absence of the Spirit. Only by the power of the Spirit can he be conquered. That, by the way, is why some in this room are not successful. There are some Christians who never pray for the empowering of the Spirit of God. After all, it seems so charismatic to do that. There are some Christians who never long for the filling of the Spirit of God for, after all, isn't that the work of the pentecostal brethren? No, no, no, every Christian needs to live a Spirit-filled life.

Without the Spirit there is no power in the day of battle and, oh by the way, if you've never trusted Jesus Christ as your Savior, you have no power against Satan. You say, "Pastor, you're not telling me anything there. I know that. I fail, I turn over a new leaf. I fail, I turn over a new leaf. I mean, it's an awful pattern. Who can deliver me from the body of this death?" The Apostle Paul asked that very same question and he said, "I thank God through Jesus Christ my Lord. In the body and in my flesh flows no good thing. The things I want to do I don't do. The things I know I shouldn't do, that I do." How is this puzzle then solved? When I look to the cross of Calvary I see one who bore up under every temptation given to him and died upon the cross for my sin. My old sin then, is buried with him and by faith he died in my place and by faith I believe he rose again. By trusting in him, you know what he's done? It's so wonderful: he's sealed me with the Spirit of God. He's placed the Spirit of God in my life and I'm not the same man I used to be.

So, as I look in this text, I see the blessing of living a Spirit-filled life and I see a second key: we must face Satan with the proper use of Scripture. Remember, in the time of trial, Jesus left a model for us. I see him reciting, if you will, the book of Deuteronomy over and over again. In chapter 4:4, "It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone," that's Deuteronomy 8:3. Chapter 4:7, "It is written, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God," that's Deuteronomy 6:16. Chapter 4:10, "It is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God and him only shalt thou serve," that's Deuteronomy 6:3. For every attack, he had an answer. Not one that he made up in the moment, one that he meditated on in the moments before. He was Bible-centered. He was Scripture-empowered. He had lived a life of hiding God's word in his heart and now he's able to pick up the sword of the Spirit. In a generation that's moving away from being Bible-centered and not knowing how to properly apply God's word, may God help you and me to be people of the Book who can come back and say, "God has said, It is written, this is the pathway of righteousness for me."

In the book "Forever Triumphant," WWII General Jonathan Wainwright's story is told. Some of you lived through WWII and you can tell me his story. Jonathan Wainwright was the highest ranking prisoner of war in WWII. After MacArthur withdrew from Corregidor, Wainwright stayed. Wainwright and his men were taken to Manchurian prisoner camps and Wainwright was treated like every other common prisoner under the Japanese regime. He was a desperate, starved shade of the man once powerful. Then it came: victory for the Allies. Knowing of Wainwright's condition and that he was still alive, a full-bird Colonel went to bring the news to General Wainwright that the Allies were victorious. Wainwright heard the news, stiffened his shoulders, went back to his barracks knowing the ramifications that now he was a free man and as he was heading back to his barracks the guards who had watched over him and so verbally and physically abused him began to draw near, again with sneers, again with threats. He stiffened his shoulders and with a loud voice he said, "I am now in command here and these are my orders." Oh, how they trembled.

That's how I feel when I read verse 10, "Jesus said to him, Get thee hence, Satan. And he is able to save them to the uttermost who come unto God by him for he ever liveth to make intercession for you and for me." What a joy to know. Let's say it again: Resist Satan and he will flee from you. He's in charge here. These are his orders. Do you understand the seasons of temptation so as to be wise? Can you see how Satan seeks to snare us? Do you have a strategy for victory? A very simple strategy, isn't it? Be filled with the Spirit and be filled with Scripture. Be filled with the Spirit and be filled with Scripture. Are you this morning victorious in the hour of temptation?

Father, I pray that you would use your word this day to help us live a life that counts rather than being counted out. Lord, around this room this morning, there are those who have had victory on their brow and joy in their eyes and they found themselves falling ever so rapidly off the precipice and you have warned us, "If you think you stand, take heed because that's when you fall."

Lord, there are those in this room who have been discouraged in the battle and need your courage and need your Spirit to infuse them today with new strength. Lord, we want to hear, "Well done." We want to walk in faith and not fulfill the lusts of the flesh. We want to know the joy of living for Jesus.

Thank you, dear Lord, that you shared in your word your strategy for victory over Satan. Thank you that you told your disciples so that we could be encouraged, that the awful slayer of man's soul can be vanquished. O Lord, I pray this morning for someone in this room who finds themselves in the battle, finding their legs and their arms weary in the race, that this would be a day of healing and triumph.

Heads are bowed and eyes are closed and no one looking around this morning.

Hey, are you finding victory over the battle with the flesh? Has the pride of life caused you to compromise your scruples? Are you so delighting in the possessions of this world that you've forgotten the eternal possessions that are in glory? Isn't it good to know that if we confess our sins, he's faithful and just to forgive us our sins? What a joy to know "whosoever will call upon the name of the Lord will be saved."

In a moment, we're going to stand together as our instruments play Hymn 81, "A Mighty Fortress is our God." As we stand there, maybe Christians around this room this morning, we need to come and on bended knee and straighten the account up with the Lord. That is very appropriate. The strength of submission, God gives grace to the humble but resists the proud. The strength of submission is real. The strength of walking an aisle is real. God loves to meet his people in places of humility.

There may be someone in this room today who has never trusted Christ as Savior and you find yourself weary with the constant cycle of frustration. In a moment, as we stand, if you want to know eternal life through Christ, if you want to know the blessing of being victorious in him, we'd have no greater joy than to introduce you to Jesus Christ the Savior. We'd ask you to come. Step out from where you are, we'd never embarrass you. Come here to the front. Someone will take you to a private place and show you from the Bible how you can know for sure that you're on your way to heaven.

As we stand together, our heads are bowed and our eyes are closed and no one looking around and the instruments play this hymn of invitation, friend, don't wait if God has challenged your heart to come and get some things straight with him. The account can be straightened this morning before you go out from this room. Won't you come? Friend, if you're here and you're not saved, what a blessing it would be to introduce you to Christ this day, to have the privilege of showing you from God's word that "whoever calls upon the name of the Lord can be saved."

In this moment of quietness, if God is working in your heart, we'd invite you to come. In a moment we're going to sing Luther's song together and I trust that God will seal the message through that song to our hearts. But during this moment, if you need to step out by faith, we invite you to do that.