

MATTHEW: sermon study guide

Pastor: Ashwin Ramani

Date: February 15 /16, 2020

Sermon Title: Matthew: Tempted - Chasing Ambitions – Part 4

IN - PURSUE RELATIONSHIP

1. What were some of your childhood or young adult dreams of what you would like to do and be when you grew up? What about those dreams meant so much to you?
2. What hopes and dreams for you did others close to you have? How did their expectations shape your future?
3. Do you have dreams that are still unfulfilled? Are these dreams different from your reality?

UP - PURSUE GOD

Read Matthew 4:8-10; Luke 4:5-7; 2 Corinthians 4:4

4. Satan promises Jesus the world in this temptation. Do you think that Satan had the ability to fulfill this deal and why? Because Jesus was fully human, what do you think may have been going on in His mind as He was presented with this proposition?
5. What was at stake in this temptation of Jesus? How did Jesus model for us a way to deal with temptation?

OUT - PURSUE MISSION

6. How does the world measure ambition and success? How does the Christ follower respond to the temptation for selfish ambition?
7. *Read Matthew 28:18-20.* What does it mean to live in the authority God has given us? What would it look like to live in that authority? In our homes? At our workplaces? In our church?

For Personal Reflection/Prayer:

Pastor Ashwin made the following statement:

“Behind every temptation are these questions – Who do you worship? Who do you put first? What are you sold out to? Who rules your life?”

As you go through your week and are faced with events, decisions and people that ask for your time, talents and your resources, ask yourself these questions in each of those situations. Be conscious of what the answers will look like when you put God and His Word first each and every time.

THE WORD (NIV)

Matthew 4:8-10

⁸ Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. ⁹ “All this I will give you,” he said, “if you will bow down and worship me.”

¹⁰ Jesus said to him, “Away from me, Satan! For it is written: ‘Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.’”

Luke 4:5-7

⁵ The devil led him up to a high place and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. ⁶ And he said to him, “I will give you all their authority and splendor; it has been given to me, and I can give it to anyone I want to. ⁷ If you worship me, it will all be yours.”

2 Corinthians 4:4

The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel that displays the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

Psalm 2:8

Ask me,
and I will make the nations your inheritance,
the ends of the earth your possession.

Daniel 7:13-14

Matthew 16:23

Jesus turned and said to Peter, “Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns.”

Matthew 28:18-20

¹⁸ Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

MATTHEW: sermon study summary

Matthew: Tempted – Chasing Ambitions – Part 4

Pastor Ashwin Ramani

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Today's sermon focuses on Jesus' third temptation: ambition. While Satan's first two temptations were subtle, this time he brazenly showed his true colours. Satan tempted Jesus to worship him instead of God and so take a shortcut to accomplish the end goal of His life (Matthew 4:8-10). Satan told Jesus, "I have authority over all kingdoms and can give it to anyone I want to" (Luke 4:5-7). Jesus didn't argue this point. In the Gospel of John, Jesus referred three times to the devil as the ruler of the world. In 2 Corinthians 4:4, Paul spoke of Satan's power to blind the minds of unbelievers.

However, the reality is that the inheritance of the nations belongs to Jesus (Psalm 2:8). God has allowed Satan to rule for a time. Jesus' purpose in coming was to dethrone Satan and seize back God's dominion and authority. Jesus' path was through the cross. He knew the cross meant the greatest and most powerful victory to defeat the enemy.

After Jesus' death and resurrection, His mission was accomplished. He was given authority, glory and sovereign power, and His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will never be destroyed (Daniel 7:13-14). With this foreknowledge, Jesus firmly rebuked Satan with Scripture: "Away with you! Worship and serve only God!" (Deuteronomy 6:13).

Satan left Jesus for the time being. However, he later tempted Peter to challenge Jesus' predictions of suffering and death. Jesus rebuked, not Peter, but Satan. "Get behind me, Satan!" (Matthew 16:21-13). Satan's temptations resurfaced again in the Garden of Gethsemane. A few hours later when Jesus was nailed to the cross, Satan incited the cheering crowd to yell, "If you are the Son of God, show your power and come down!"

What can we learn from Jesus' answer to Satan? We're faced with the same temptation to worship Satan through ambition. Pastor Ashwin referred to the "Gospel According to Satan". His vision for our age is, "Live the good life. Whatever you want, you can have it all and have it now. Leave your convictions, religious beliefs, upbringing, and values. Let your ambitions be centered around you." If we do so, we give Satan allegiance and allow him to shape our ambitions-- by chasing the wrong dreams such as illicit sex or making life revolve around our career and our success. As a result, our family life becomes a mess. We will have no time for our family or our mission in life. But most importantly, we'll have no time for God.

If we worship Satan through wrong ambitions, we turn ourselves into an idol and worship ourselves, our ambitions, our self-actualization, our self-assertion, our self-fulfillment, and our self-approval.

The reality is, however, that Satan has no authority over us unless we willingly choose to sin. We need Jesus' ambition—to only do the will of the Father. To do this, we need to surrender our dreams and plans and ask God to replace them with His plans for us. As we do so, we will activate our God-given authority, to spread God's Kingdom as we teach others to obey all the commands Jesus gave us (Matthew 28:18-20).

Pastor Ashwin gave us one tool to battle this temptation to worship Satan. When we praise and worship God, even aloud, declare we will worship Jesus alone.

In conclusion, who do you put first in your life? Who do you worship? Declare Jesus to be the centre of your life. Ask God to replace selfish ambition with His plans and align yourself with His purposes for you. Honour and glorify Him.