

Christian Warfare

Lesson 18: The Armor of God, Part 10

The sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, Eph 6.17. Last time we considered the weapon itself. Now let's consider *how we're to use it* in fighting our spiritual battles by taking our lessons from Christ's use of it in Mt 4.1-11.

Jesus' First Temptation, vv.3-4

- I. He was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted, v.1.
 - A. It was the Father's will that before He set the captives free, He must break the sceptre of their oppressor, 1Jn 3.8.
 1. Jesus was *led* into this testing. We must never foolishly put ourselves into times of testing where we have no promise of God's keeping power, Prov 14.15; Ps 1.1-2.
 - B. Jesus is "an Israel of one" and relives Israel's wilderness experience. But as Israel's experience was filled with unbelief, presumption, and idolatry, Jesus' experience will be marked by faithfulness and obedience as the Head of a spiritual Israel.
- II. The tempter *came* to Him, v.3.
 - A. According to Lk 4.2 and Mk 1.13, Jesus was tempted during His 40-day fast. Satan's coming to Him at the end indicates that the earlier temptations were invisible suggestions, whereas Satan administers his final three temptations as a visible tempter.
 1. Satan appears, just as he did to Adam and Eve, as an angel of light come to help, but Jesus is not deceived.
- III. Jesus' first temptation plays on two things.
 - A. The remarkable events which happened at the Jordan River.
 1. Satan wants to see what kind of *Son* Jesus will be. As disloyal as Israel? As disobedient as Adam?
 - B. The real physical need Jesus has to eat after His fast.
 1. Satan cunningly uses this real necessity as the entry point for his temptation. He insinuates that if Jesus doesn't eat He'll die.
 2. Be on your guard against temptations which arise from necessity and live by faith on Mt 6.30-33.
- IV. This temptation was a temptation to *unbelief*.
 - A. It was a temptation to disbelieve the Word of God, Gen 3.1.
 1. It also involves a temptation to doubt that He was the Son of God because of the strait He was in, Heb 12.6.
 - B. And it was a temptation to disbelieve the providence of God, which left Him without food in the wilderness.
 1. This also involved a temptation to provide for Himself by acting autonomously and self-sufficiently.
 2. Be on your guard against that unbelief in God's care and wisdom that results in the sin of practical atheism. Instead, labor to cultivate dependence upon and faith in God.

Jesus' Resistance to It

- I. Jesus refuses to comply with it. He's resolved to *fully* obey God as the Son of Man in order to save His people.
 - A. Jesus does nothing to prove His divine Sonship. Instead, His divinity fades behind His humanity in these temptations as He confines Himself to the limits of our human nature and the graces bestowed upon us in salvation in order that He might gain the victory in *our* nature and in *our* behalf.
 - B. He *refuses* to turn the stones into bread because it would've been to disbelieve the Word and providence of God.

1. Here's a lesson for us: overcoming sin begins with *refusal*, Rom 6.13, 19; Col 3.5-10; Mk 9.43-45.
 2. You'll *never* overcome a single sin if you keep assenting to it. Refuse to yield to the temptation with your mind, eyes, heart, and hands. The Lord has called you to holiness, 1Pet 1.13-16.
- C. He also *overcomes* the temptation to unbelief by fully resting His faith on Deut 8.3, in which God promises that every believer's life always rests in His able and loving hands.
1. Here's another lesson for us: overcoming temptation requires *a believing reliance upon the Word of God*.
 2. The Word is the believer's offensive sword, which stands between the Christian and *all* danger, Eph 6.17.
 - a) But you must take up the Scriptures *believingly*.
 - b) Every temptation can be dispelled with a sincere and believing reliance upon the Word of God—whether the *promises* of God's care or the *testimonies* of God's character.
 3. Jesus defeated Satan by quoting Scripture in order to show you how powerful a weapon it is, Eph 6.10-11.
 4. Satan only meets his match in that Christian who believingly wields the sword of the Spirit, 1Cor 10.13.