**Matthew 4:1-11**

I. The Context: Jesus’ baptism

A. Jesus’ baptism is a high point in his life

B. He is filled with the Spirit and is affirmed with wonderful words of God’s love, delight, and approval in him

II. The Wilderness

A. What a contrast from his baptism!

B. The first thing the Spirit does upon filling Jesus is to drive him out into the wilderness

C. A time of tempting/testing

1. God tested Abraham 22:1: Trials are a way of us coming to know the depth of our own faith

2. Why did Jesus need to be tested if he was perfect?

a. To prepare him as a human being on his path to the cross

b. To teach him dependence as a human being (dependence on a God who is spirit)

c. To give him the full breadth of human experience in testing and trial (see Hebrews 2:16-18)

III. Satan’s Temptations

A. Temptation # 1: stones to bread

1. Satan calls into question Jesus’ desperate circumstances, asks if that is befitting the son of God, and tempts him to provide for himself rather than be dependent on God’s word/plan

2. Jesus responds with Scripture and chooses dependence on God’s Word and timing rather than providing for himself in his timing

B. Temptation # 2: Jump off the temple

1. Satan now quotes Scripture himself and tempts Jesus to do something dramatic and spectacular that would show to himself and the crowds that he is truly the Messiah

2. Jesus again responds with Scripture and points out that, while God can rescue him in that way, it would be utterly presumptuous and arrogant to force God’s hand in that way

C. Temptation # 3: bow down and worship me

1. Satan shows him all the kingdoms and tells him he can have them all quick and easy without having to go the painful and humiliating way of the cross

2. Jesus again responds with Scripture and chooses the worship of God only

IV. Takeaways

A. Jesus believed in the absolute authority of God’s Word and used it when in trouble, and so should we

B. Satan is both real and personal. He has been ultimately defeated but his armies still fight against us

C. Temptation and suffering are linked. Resisting temptation is painful.

D. Being filled with the Holy Spirit precedes temptation. Struggles and temptation can be as much evidence of the Spirit’s presence as they are of his absence.

E. Jesus was tempted in every way, so he is able to help us in our weaknesses. He now lives to intercede for us in the midst of our weaknesses.

V. You can practice the presence of your problems, or you can practice the presence of your Savior.

**Discussion Questions**

1. On Sunday it was stated that Jesus’ temptations/testing were a part of the process of preparing him for his ministry and calling. How do you respond to the idea that Jesus was a fully human being who, like us, needed preparation, needed to learn obedience, needed to develop perseverance? Do you see Jesus as fully human like us in those ways?

2. Discuss the nature of each of the three temptations. That is, what was the essence of each temptation? How do you see the essence of each temptation playing out in our own lives today?

3. Spend a few minutes considering the 5 takeaways from Sunday’s message. Which one of those takeaways do you most need to be reminded of at this time, and how do you want to respond to that takeaway?

4. Consider the final comment made on Sunday: “In the midst of your problems, you can practice the presence of your problems, or you can practice the presence of your Savior.” How does that comment strike you, and how does it intersect with your own experience of life at this time?