

# (Christ Formed) 05 - Christ as Mature Adult

by Ed Miller

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*Ed Miller explores the stages of Christ's growth and their implications for our spiritual maturity in 'Christ as Mature Adult'.*

**Duration:** 1:00:58

**Scripture:** Jeremiah 31:2-3, Matthew 6:33, Mark 1:12, Luke 4:5-8, Ephesians 6:19, Colossians 4:2-4

**Topics:** "Christ Formation", "Spiritual Maturity"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher focuses on the connection between the baptism and temptation of Jesus. He emphasizes that these two events illustrate the culmination of the 30 years of Jesus' life and his role as the representative man who came to obey God perfectly. The preacher suggests that the three representative temptations Jesus faced are significant and instructive, but does not delve into them in detail. He also highlights the idea that Christ's maturity is a process that God is responsible for, and that believers should not try to mature themselves.

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## Transcript

...the blessing. That always comes. As we come once again to look in God's Word, I remind myself, I remind you of that indispensable principle of Bible study, total reliance upon God's Holy Spirit.

It's only as we trust him that he opens up his precious page to our hearts. Before we pray together and look into the Word, there are two mysteries that the Bible talks about. There are many, but two.

When the Bible uses the word mystery, it doesn't mean mysterious. When the Bible uses the word mystery, it means something that needs to be revealed by God, that no way we're going to see it in any other way until he shows us, and then it's not a mystery anymore. And so, the Bible talks about two mysteries.

Two times in the New Testament, Paul asked for special prayer before he spoke. Both times had to do with a mystery. He said, God has called me to speak the mystery of the gospel, the good news, the new covenant.

And there's no way the new covenant can be known unless God reveals it. So he called it a mystery, mystery of the gospel. He said, I'm also called to preach the mystery of Christ.

There's no way to know Christ except he be revealed. In these interesting verses, only two times in the New Testament do you have the expression as I ought to speak. So I want to speak as I ought to speak.

And Paul wanted to speak as I ought to speak. And so he asked for prayer. He said, will you pray for me that I speak as I ought to speak? And in Ephesians 6.19, he says, pray for me as I preach the mystery of the gospel, that I might speak as I ought to speak.

And then he added this, boldly. Pray when I handle the mystery of the gospel, that I might preach as I ought to preach, boldly. And then in Colossians 4.2-4, he says, pray for me as I preach the mystery of Christ.

That I might preach as I ought to preach. And then he added this, clearly, simply. So I come to the Bible and I know how I ought to speak.

I ought to speak boldly and I ought to speak simply. But because it's a mystery, because you can't know it until he reveals it. Pray for me that I might speak as I ought to speak.

The mystery of the gospel, boldly. And the mystery of Christ, clearly. So let's pray.

Our Father, how we praise you that you've not left us on our own when we come to this precious book. But you have given us your Holy Spirit and you have promised that you would unveil the Lord Jesus through the hungry heart. And so create in us a desire and a hunger.

Men, fill that desire, we pray. By your grace, we're going to open our mouths wide. By your grace, fill us.

We ask in Jesus' name. Amen. We come now to the end of our little look at that 30 years.

I hope it means more to you now than it did when you first came. Those preparation years. The years, as I understand it, there's no other segment in scripture that gives us the progressive revelation of Christ more than these 30 years.

It's clear by now the track that we've been following. As he came, he comes. God has given us a record of the progressive unveiling of Christ.

He began as a seed and then as a fetus and then as an infant and then he grew and he became a child and a young adult and so on. And as he once came, he comes. We've been trying to follow, and I gave you that outline sheet, exactly the same principles that were true when he was on the earth are true now.

He comes, he's conceived in us as a seed by the Holy Spirit. He is formed in us. He grows in us.

There's a stage when he's a fetus in our hearts. There's a stage when he's an infant in our hearts. A young adult in our hearts.

And of course, you know as he's being formed, it's toward that end that he might be perfected to be the perfect savior and the perfect priest. Preparation for ministry. We've been following as a prayer, Galatians 4.19. Galatians 4.19, Paul says, I'm in travail for you.

I labor for you until Christ is formed in you. And I've just suggested that as we have the gospel record, he's formed in us individually and corporately. I think the season of each stage of the maturity of Christ as he matures might be longer or shorter depending on certain things.

I'm not going to take time to summarize everything because I want to get into the new material. I won't go over the principles. I hope you have the tapes and notes and so on.

When Christ was a fetus or is a fetus in our heart and when Christ is an infant. But let me summarize again what we looked at last night to prepare us for what we're going to look at now. Christ as a young adult, illustrated by 12-year-old Jesus, you know in the temple at Jerusalem.

Now what would it look like when Christ is formed that much in my life? Let me just mention those principles again that we looked at. At that stage of the maturity of Christ, there will be a great involvement with the things of God and the word of God and the people of God and so much so that it should by now have become a custom, a habit, illustrated by the Passover. God's people are now as a custom.

They're getting together. But those are also the days where there is the temptation because we've been so used to the presence of God to take his presence for granted. And there's where we sometime get so involved in the festivities, in the fellowship, in the praise, and in all those other things connected with the Lord, celebrating our redemption, that it's very easy to get our eyes off the Lord Jesus.

And because we have at this time, it's a growing but still a limited view of who he is. We don't yet see him in every way that our children portrayed him on those wonderful banners. We're starting to know him.

But because of that, we sometime have expectations from him, of him. We expect him to do things a certain way. And when he disappoints our expectations, then we get into a frenzy and we get anxious and sometime we even blame him.

It's at this stage where he lays out that great principle, the will of God. I must be about my Father's everything. His will, his pleasure, his purpose, his interest, his house, his temple, his people.

It's about his will. And now for the first time in your life as Christ developed, you begin to see it's not my will, it's his will. And I've got to be about my Father's business.

But it's also at this stage where he does a very unique thing. He says it's all about my Father's will. And then he turned around and he submitted himself to his parents.

And he laid on them a great burden. Because now it's God's will. But you must find out what that is.

And it's during this time where we drag Jesus here and there. And he submits. He comes.

We're going here. You go, alright, we'll go there. And he blesses.

It's marvelous. But not forever. As he matures, and that's what we're going to look at now.

As he matures, there comes a time as there came a time for Mary. For eighteen years he was submitting to her. She said, this is what, Jesus do this.

And he said, alright, I'll do it. Then she says one day, they ran out of wine. And he said, woman, what do I have to do with you? Sounds so harsh on the level of earth.

Read that. Mary learned in that moment, God gave her light and she knew right away what it was. That he's no longer subject to me.

But now I'm subject to him. And I'm not going to take him on my mission trip. He's going to take me on his mission trip.

I'm subject to him now. Whatever he says, do it. And she learned.

Well, that's Christ as a young adult and I think we've all experienced that phase of his formation in our heart. That brings us this morning then to the climax. Two stories wrap up the preparation years.

One is the baptism of our Lord Jesus and the other is the temptation. Now, we're going to use a different version than we saw this morning. They used the reversed version.

I believe that those two events, the baptism and the temptation are the end of the preparation time. Now I acknowledge that some make the temptation of Christ not the end of his preparation but the first step in his ministry. And there are some that say that's where his ministry begins.

But humor me please, at least for this morning, there are reasons that make me think that that's the end of his preparation. Not the least of which is Matthew chapter four ten and Jesus said to Satan, be gone. Depart.

Be gone. Because here I think the last Adam wins the victory that the first Adam did not win. And the last Adam now, and with that, Satan be gone.

He's prepared. And then his ministry begins. Look at characteristics, not all of them, but what will my life look like if Christ is a fetus in my heart? What will my life look like when Christ is an infant in my heart? What does my life look like when Christ is a young adult in my heart? And now what does it look like when he's mature and ready for ministry? To be a perfect savior and to pour himself out redemptively.

I know it's true of me and perhaps it's true of you. We're going to touch on the maturity of Christ in your life. You can say they've arrived.

You know, I look at some of this and I feel like I'm looking in the window, longing for that day when he's conformed. Don't try to mature yourself. That's his business.

He's maturing. He's forming. Christ will be formed in you.

There is a seed. When he's begun, he'll complete until the end. But let me suggest some principles.

What will it look like when Christ is mature, illustrated by the baptism and by the temptation? Notice that God has linked these two together. Matthew 4 begins with the word then. Right after the baptism, without intermission, then Jesus was led to the wilderness.

It's almost like they're not two stories. Like it's one story. Luke 4.1 gives the same idea.

Luke 4.1 says Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led in spirit in the wilderness. Mark, in his characteristic way, uses the word straightway. Mark 1.12, and straightway the Spirit driveth him into the wilderness.

Kenneth Wiest, in his expanded translation, translates Mark 1.12 this way. And immediately, the Spirit thrusts him into the uninhabited place. My point for calling attention to this is to show you that they're one story.

The baptism and immediately the temptation. They're connected. I believe these two stories graphically illustrate the whole reality of the 30 years.

The 30 years are now coming to a climax. And of course, the whole point of the 30 years, we call attention to in the introduction to the lesson. That Christ has come to be the representative man and to obey God.

To live perfectly. All 30 years, our Lord Jesus lived a sinless life. Now I didn't mention this when we looked at Jesus as a young adult, but it was illustrated there.

It's beginning to take shape as you go through these stories. It gets clearer and clearer and clearer. But in the story of Jesus when he was 12 years old, he submitted to his parents.

He also said, I must be about my father's business. When he submitted to his parents, he illustrated that he was rightly related to man. When he said he had to be about his father's business, he was declaring that he was rightly related to God.

That's the two tables of the law. To be rightly related to man and to be rightly related to God. God doesn't tell us everything about the 30 years.

But it tells us all we need to know. That he was rightly related to man and he was rightly related to God every hour of every day of every week of every month of every year throughout that whole period. And just so, I believe these last two stories give exactly the same thing.

I think the baptism illustrates that he's rightly related to man. And his victory over the devil illustrates that he's rightly related to God. It's a wonderful climax of the 30 years because as we come to the end, we see that he is rightly related to man and rightly related to God.

He has now perfectly obeyed and passed the test as the representative man and now his ministry can begin. Let's begin and look at his baptism and then his temptation very briefly. As you know, if you take a section of scripture like his baptism and like the temptation, there's too much material.

There's no way. I mean, in one lesson, in an abbreviated lesson, it's just not possible. It's too much.

I'd love to be able to discuss with you. It'd be a very interesting discussion. When John the baptizer resisted baptizing, Jesus had one attitude toward him.

Later, Peter resisted the cross. Jesus had another attitude. Very interesting to compare those two things.

I'd love to be able to discuss John 133. John says that he was given a sign. He wouldn't know Messiah until the dove descended on him.

But then when Jesus came to be baptized before the dove descended, he resisted. It looks like he knew him already. What's that all about? Matthew 3.15, permit this to fulfill all righteousness.

What does that mean? And the baptism of fire. What's that all about? And how does it relate to Luke chapter 12 and 49 and 50? So much we could talk about. And when you come into the temptation, a thousand directions we could go.

In fact, as I studied it, my head was swimming. Swimming with so many different directions. Was he impeccable? Could he have sinned? What is temptation? In what way was Jesus tempted in all points as

we are? Is that illustrated in the temptation in the wilderness? Was it literal or was it figurative? When he went out into the wilderness, did he then leave the wilderness and go to the mountain? Did he leave the mountain and actually go into the city? How did he get there? Did God allow Satan to carry him through the air? Was it all a vision? Did it happen in his imagination? What does it mean when Satan shows him all the kingdoms and all the glory of all the kingdoms in a moment of time? What's that all about? What form did Satan take? Why does Mark tell us that he was with the wild beasts when he was in that temptation? Was it a complete fast? Was it bread and any kind of liquid? Is there significance in the forty days? What's the ministry of angels when someone is being tempted? In what way are there representative temptations? Get ready.

We can't, we don't have time to look at all of that. Every one of those things I suggest, you come reverently before the Lord and you seek his face. They are so instructive and so rich and so full of manna for your spirit.

But this morning, I want to come back, step way back and look at those two events and once again in order to see Christ as he matures. We'll have to jump over so much, but if we can lay hold of the essence, what is it like when Christ is mature? And so that's what I'd like us to look at and answer the question, then what will my life look like if he grows that much in me? Oh may God help us. I'm going to ask you to turn to Matthew chapter 3 please and we'll pick up the reading in the middle of Matthew's record.

Matthew 3 verse 13, Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to the Jordan to John, to be baptized of him. But John would have hindered him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it now, for thus it becomes us to fulfill righteousness. Then he suffered him.

And Jesus when he was baptized went up straightway from the water. And, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove and coming upon him. And, lo, a voice out of the heavens saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

The Gospel of Mark records pretty much the same thing. Luke chapter 3 verse 21 adds a detail that the others don't give. When Jesus was in the water, he was praying.

You see there were other people in the water at the same time and they weren't praying. They were repenting. They were confessing.

Jesus didn't have to repent. He didn't have to confess. And so, he was standing in the midst of a bunch of people who were confessing their sins and while they were confessing, he was praying to his Father God.

The Apostle John tells us that the coming of the dove was God's signal to John the baptizer that this was Messiah. Listen as I read these verses. John 1.33, I knew him not, but he that sent me to baptize in water said to me, Upon whomever you shall see the Spirit descending and abiding, the same is he that baptizes in the Holy Spirit.

And I have seen, I have borne witness, this is the Son of God. This is Christ now at the end of his preparation. This is Christ in his maturity.

In order to make it practical, let me just take three of the facts and answer the question, what will it look like when Christ is mature? The first fact is the dove. Now we've got to get away from that notion of the dove of peace. And only in an incidental way can we relate back to Noah's dove with the olive leaf in his

mouth.

And it's not the comment of our Lord Jesus that we're to be wise as serpents, harmless as doves. That's not what's going on here. In the Gospel of Luke, the dove, when Mary and Joseph brought the Lord Jesus for dedication, they came with doves.

They came with doves. Because they knew that Leviticus chapter 5 verse 7 said, if you can't afford a lamb, you can bring the substitute for the lamb, you could bring the doves. The lamb was the substitute for the sinner, and the dove was the substitute for the lamb.

In fact, there was another substitute. What if you were too poor to afford a dove? Then you could bring a pinch of flour, and the flour would be a picture of the dove, and the dove would be a picture of the lamb. And God was just saying, don't anyone have an excuse.

You can all come. If you can't afford a lamb, you can bring a dove. If you can't afford a dove, you can come with a little pinch of flour on your fingers, and I'll accept that.

Grace of God. Grace of God. But we've got to understand that when our Lord Jesus identified with sinners, and he didn't have to.

John makes that clear. You don't have to do this. He said, no, but I've come to a place in my maturity where I know I don't have to, but I want to.

I want to stand and identify with sinners. I don't have to do it. Now, there's a double symbolism in the dove.

It's not only the picture of the lamb of death, of the cross, of dying, but it's linked to the Holy Spirit. It's a picture of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit descended like a dove, and it's a picture of death.

And I'm suggesting in that hour when he is mature, one of the first characteristics will be death. The cross. How selfless he was in that moment.

He didn't have to do that. He wanted to do it. And so he deliberately identifies, and yet he's separate from them.

They're confessing. He's praying. He's different.

But he stands with the sinner. He identifies. He pours his life out, and the Holy Spirit enables him to die.

And puts, anoints him with death. That's one of the main characteristics of the mature Christ. Now it's no longer wondering about, am I going to drag him here, or is he going to take me in my will and his will? That's done.

Now it's just the pouring out of the life. He stands with sinners in the water, gives up his rights, gives up his own ambitions, and lets the Holy Spirit come down on him with death. The second characteristic is illustrated by the open heavens.

As he stood there in the water, identified with sinners willingly, he's chosen it by the power of the Holy Spirit, the heavens were opened. Now, I'm going to leave you to develop that you know, you've used the expression, I've heard it around here, living under an open heaven. But the fact that under that open heaven, he was praying, and God spoke from heaven.

The open heavens is a two-way conversation. There's a fellowship there. Want to know what it looks like when Christ is mature in your life? You've identified now, you've chosen, you don't have to.

You decide, I want to do it. I'm going to stand with them, and I'm going to let the Holy Spirit bring death on my life. And I'm going to live under an open heaven, and I'm going to communicate with him, and he's going to communicate with me.

That's what it looks like. That's why sometimes I think, oh, I'm just outside looking in the window. Oh, I long that God would work that in my heart.

Long for Christ to be so conformed that I can choose to stand with the world he came to save, and to allow the Holy Spirit to bring me into death. Not try to kill myself. Not try to die yourself.

But allow the Holy Spirit to anoint me with death. Oh, what a precious thing. And then to live under an open heaven.

And then the third principle, a voice out of heaven. Matthew 3, 17, this is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased. God is satisfied.

God is happy. In the mature, when Christ is mature, he stands in death under an open heaven, and God is pleased. That's the sign of maturity.

What a precious, precious place to be. That's how he looks as he stands before man. Let me share a little bit as he stands before the Lord.

I'm going to ask you to turn to Luke. We're going to read Luke's account. Beginning at verse 1, Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led around by the Spirit in the wilderness.

And for thirty days, being tempted by the devil, he did eat nothing during those days. And when the days had ended, he became hungry. And the devil said to him, If thou art the Son of God, command this stone that it become bread.

And Jesus answered unto him, It's written, Man shall not live by bread alone. And he led him up and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. And the devil said to him, To thee I'll give all this authority and the glory of them, for it's been delivered unto me, and I'll give it to whomsoever I will.

If thou therefore will worship before me, it shall all be thine. And Jesus answered and said unto him, It is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord by God, and him only shalt thou serve. And he led him to Jerusalem, set him on a pinnacle of a temple, and said to him, If you're the Son of God, cast yourself down from that.

For it's written, He'll give his angels charge concerning thee, to guard thee. And on their hands they shall bear thee up, lest haply thou dash thy foot against the stone. And Jesus answered and said to him, It is said, Thou shalt not test the Lord thy God.

And when the devil had completed every temptation, he departed from him for a season. Now, you'll notice Matthew's order of the temptations and Luke's are not the same. Some think Matthew is probably the correct order because of the words, Be gone, Satan.

But I think Luke's order is the spiritual order. And so we're going to follow, at least this morning, Luke's order. The fact that God gives us two different orders at least tells us not to argue about which order is

correct.

It doesn't matter, because God has given us both. But we'll follow Luke's order because I think it's the spiritual order. He's tempted in the wilderness.

He's tempted on the mountain. He's tempted in the temple. No doubt you've had wilderness experiences in your life.

He's tempted in the wilderness and victorious. No doubt you've had mountain experiences in your life. He's tempted on the mountain and he's victorious as the representative man.

No doubt you've had temple experiences in your life. He's tempted in the temple, victorious as the representative man. Almost all who study this portion of Scripture point out how those three temptations are representative temptations.

There's no doubt Jesus was tempted these three times, but also before this. We won't look at the verses, but Hebrews 5, 7 to 8 tell us that he was tempted all his life. All his life he was tempted.

And Luke 4, 13 tells us that he was tempted all 40 days. Remember Luke 4, 2. He was tempted all 40 days. And then 13 says after this Satan left him until an opportune time.

He was tempted after this too. He was tempted all his life. He was tempted all 40 days.

And he was tempted after this. But God says I want you to see this. And so God focuses in on these three representative temptations.

Some say that's the same as Genesis 3 and verse 6. The three areas. Eveshaw was good for food. Delight to the eyes.

Desires to make men wise. And so there's three and there's three. Some say well it's like 1 John 2, 16.

All that's in the world. The loss of the flesh. The loss of the eyes.

The pride of life. It's the same three. I don't know if it is or not.

I think some of that's a little forced. I tried to relate all of that. Others say there's three temptations because it's body, soul, and spirit.

Another commentator I read said no it's mind, emotion, and will. Another says no it's the three natural desires. God has given us the desire to enjoy.

The desire to acquire. The desire to achieve. Well I don't know about all of that.

The will, the flesh, the devil. Just because there's three. But I don't think that's the bottom line.

I think all of that saying, trying to relate all of that. It's interesting but I don't think it's the bottom line. Misses the point.

In our introduction lesson I quoted 2 Corinthians 11. And I tried to show you how Paul was so concerned for the Corinthians because he was afraid Satan would do to them what he did to Eve. And then he labels it and he calls it.

He said what he did to Eve was and what he was afraid of was that they would lose the simplicity and devotion to the Lord. It's all about the Lord. All these temptations whatever else we can see in them.

Satan was concerned that Jesus was in fellowship with his Father. That's what he was after. You know we're talking about temptations and I know if we're talking on the level of earth, man to man, we're talking about temptations.

This is a little different. Have you ever been tempted to turn the stone into bread? It's different. Satan's not, please understand me I'm trying to be reverent.

But Satan's not tempting Christ to chase skirts. He's not tempting Christ to be addicted with some kind of a substance that would hold him in bondage. That's not what this is about.

He's not trying to get him caught up into some shady deal or some fraud or something like that. That's not what this is about. He's not trying to get him discouraged so he'll throw himself from the temple and kill himself.

That's not what this is about. It's deeper than that. Jesus was walking in simplicity and devotion to his Father and Satan says I've got to destroy that.

That's what it's all about. You know why? Because that's the sign of maturity that nothing's going to destroy this. Nothing.

We take each temptation and give you what I think is God's heart on each one and then we'll try to wrap this up. I say this in passing. What's true of the head is true of the members.

I don't think Satan is really concerned if you run away with your secretary either. He's after your relationship with the Lord. That's what he wants.

That's what he's trying to get. To bring you up to the temple just to cast you down. That's what it's all about.

Let me try to make this practical and give you the heart of each one. I believe the first temptation in Luke's order is this. Satan tried to get Jesus to doubt God's love.

To doubt the Father's love. Our Lord Jesus had just stood under the open heavens. God had just anointed him with death.

He was standing before man as God created man to stand before man in love. He had willingly chosen to identify with them and pour himself out for them. And he heard a voice.

This is my beloved son. Immediately he goes into the wilderness. Thirty days fasting.

In the wilderness. And Satan begins in verse 3. If you are the Son of God, you've got reason to doubt that, Jesus. Look at where you are.

You're in an uninhabited wilderness. If God loved you, would he allow that? You're in a dry place. A barren place.

A waste place. If he loved you, would he allow that? You're all alone. Very lonely out here, isn't it, Jesus? And he's your Father and very Son? He allows that? See, the angels didn't come till the end.

A lot of wild beasts around you, huh, Jesus? I thought you were his child. Would he allow that? My, you look tired, Jesus. You look run down.

You look hungry. Would he allow you to get tired and run down and hungry? See, that's the power of Satan's temptation. If God loved you, would he do that? Let me rescue you.

Provide your own need. Why are you waiting for him? Why are you waiting for your Father? I'll tell you, there's such a destructive element in this suggestion. If God loves me, he'll deliver me.

And if he doesn't deliver me, he must not love me. I knew a dear saint. Oh, how we prayed with her.

How we wept with her. How we cried over her. So suicidal.

So suicidal. And when she was normal, we could talk. But then she'd get into these deep depressions.

She had rheumatoid arthritis like I've never seen. Her joints were just so swollen and massive. And somebody told her, if you're truly God's child, he will heal you.

If he doesn't heal you, you're not God's child. Oh, we wept with that woman. She was convinced she was not God's child.

Went in. Went in. We were able to save her the first time from the coat hanger in the closet.

She tried to kill herself. We prayed with her. We longed for her.

And she finally took her own life. He whispered into the ear of our Lord Jesus as he hung on the cross. The same temptation.

If you're the Son of God, come down from the cross. And then he put this together. If he delights in him, let him deliver him.

And somehow that idea that if he doesn't deliver, he doesn't delight. He would love you to judge God's love by your circumstances. He would love me to judge God's love in my life by my circumstance.

And when the bread fails. And when the strength fails. And when the health fails.

And when the opportunities dry up. I don't have time to fully develop this. But Satan does not want us to believe the Father's love.

He wants us to doubt God's love. And he chooses those very facts. He waits till you're in the wilderness to come after you on that.

He waits till you're alone. You single men and you single women. You widows and you widowers who are alone.

This is a special temptation to those who are alone and lonely. Vulnerable to his attack. When you're so tired as Jesus was from doing God's will.

And you get so well from doing God's will. He comes. Does he really love you? Does he really love you? Adam and Eve fell before food and they weren't even hungry.

Our Lord Jesus was victorious after this fast. Have any beasts coming against you? We all have our own set of hyenas and jackals. And your beast may not be my beast.

But I'll tell you it's all the same. Bottom line. God doesn't love you.

I'll tell you. You want to know when Christ is fully matured what it looks like? He loves me. I don't care what happens.

It's a mature Christ. When he's conformed. He loves me.

It doesn't matter what happens. Let me close that first one with this verse from Jeremiah chapter 31 verse 2 and 3. Thus says the Lord that people found grace in the wilderness. Israel when it went to find rest the Lord appeared to him from afar saying.

I have loved you with an everlasting love. Found grace in the wilderness. Brothers and sisters in Christ as we get ready to close Joshua.

2004. Don't ever doubt God's love for you. Whatever circumstance you're in.

Whatever wilderness. However alone you might be. However many beasts come at you.

However tired you are. However hungry you are. Don't doubt it for a moment.

He loves you with an everlasting love. And there is grace in the wilderness. Look at the second one.

Luke chapter 4, 5 to 8. Christ as our representative had this temptation in the extreme. All the kingdoms and all the glories of all the kingdoms offered to him in a moment of time. At best will be offered probably a wedge of gold and a seat of honor and an hour of glory.

And that's it. He was offered everything. Now what's the bottom line of that? You see to the Lord Jesus his father was everything.

His father was sufficient. His father was enough. In his father he was satisfied and happy and content.

And when Satan dangled all that before him it was for this one purpose. To say God is not enough. There must be something here that you can see that you can desire that you can want.

Because God is not enough. He's going after his relationship with God. If he can get him to believe that God doesn't love him it's over.

If he can get him to believe that God is not enough it's over. That's what this temptation is all about. In the wilderness we almost automatically run to Jesus.

We need him. We're in the wilderness. On the mountaintop that's where we get this temptation.

Where maybe he's not enough. Maybe we can have some of this other thing. David said in Psalm 30.

I said in my prosperity I'll never be moved. Thou hast made my mountain to stand strong. Thou didst hide thy face I was dismayed.

When the world is laid out before us in all of its vain glory. When some opportunity of authority and lordship is put before us. Is he enough? I meditated on that in a moment of time.

I saw that in a moment of time. And the closest I could come in my life to that is daydreaming. You ever daydream? And sometime in a moment of time.

You get all these grandeur ideas. About what I can be and what I can have and what will happen. Is he enough? When you're daydreaming is he enough? Satan would love you to doubt God's love.

He'd love you to doubt his sufficiency. Quickly the third. Chapter 4 verse 9 to 12.

What was the devil trying to accomplish? Inviting him to the temple. This spiritual place. To throw himself from the pinnacle of the temple.

I believe this is the most subtle of all. Because it's the most spiritual. It takes place in the temple and so on.

Not in the wilderness not on the mountain. But in the temple. Once again the target is the same.

It's his relationship to God. Satan thinks if I can't get him to doubt that God loves him. And if I can't get him to doubt the sufficiency of God.

Maybe I can get him to doubt the faithfulness of God. You see how he does that? It's so clever. He quotes a promise from Psalm 91.

God promised he'd be with you. And that he'd give his angels charge over you. And watch over you.

So much so that you won't even stub your toe. You won't stub your foot against a rock. He'll watch over you.

And here's the temptation. Jesus your father has given you a promise. Do you trust it? Is he faithful? Will he do it? And there's only one way you'll find out Jesus.

May God help us now. You're going to have to take your eyes off his faithfulness. And put them on your faith.

You see what he did? How subtle is that? If he can get him to take his eyes off the faithfulness of God. And put them on his own faith. He's done.

Can I suggest to you what it looks like? When Christ is mature in your life? When Christ is mature in your life. By an act of your will. You have decided.

I don't have to do this. But I want to pour my life out. I will identify with them.

I will step in the water. I'll be separate. I'll be different.

But I'm going to identify with them. And I'm going to allow God in his Holy Spirit. The power of God to allow me to die.

And I'm going to live under an open heaven. And I'm going to just talk to him. And God is going to be happy.

And God is going to be satisfied. And God is going to be pleased. And nothing is going to shake me from my union with him.

I'm going to walk with him. I don't care what circumstance comes into my life. I don't care what wilderness, what spiritual temple, what mountain comes into my life.

I will never doubt, says Jesus, that he loves me. And I will never doubt that he's enough. And I will never doubt that he's faithful.

You see, at that point, you're ready for ministry. When God can bring you to that place. Before man, you're dead.

Before God, you're alive. When God can bring you to that point. That nothing will make you doubt his love.

And nothing will make you doubt his sufficiency. And nothing will make you look to your own faith rather than his faithfulness. If you know that he loves you.

And you know he's enough. And you know he's faithful. He's ready then to begin his ministry.

Let me close with this. Now, we've talked about the fact that he's a representative man. And so, I don't want you to get confused saying, Now, I've got to believe that he loves me.

He has come into your life to do it again. He was not tempted as your example. To be tempted first to show you how to be tempted second.

He did it once so you don't have to. And now he's come in to live it again. When you're in the wilderness.

It is Christ who rests in the Father's love. There's not a chance that we're going to make it. I'm going to look at the wilderness.

I'm going to look at those beasts. That hyena that's coming at me. I'm tired.

I'm worn down. I'm weak. I'm not going to make it.

But he is. And he's the representative man. It's the substitute life.

It takes God to be a Christian. It's the Lord himself that is going to trust the Father's love. It's God himself who will trust the Father's sufficiency.

It's the Lord who is going to constantly show himself. He's the one maturing. And when he comes that far in your life.

Then he begins. Now see that's the beginning of the Christian life. Now he begins to live through you.

It's not a surprise to me when I come to the end of this. It's not a surprise to me as I come to the end. That I just see Jesus living in devotion and simplicity.

That's how it's got to end. You say what's maturing? It's not confusing. It's you and the Lord being one.

And nothing's going to change that ever. That's it. That's how simple it is.

Let me close with a Bible verse from the New Testament. Romans 7.18 I know in me that is in my flesh dwelleth no good thing. You know for years what I thought that verse said was this.

In me dwelleth no good thing. But it doesn't say in me dwelleth no good thing. It says I know.

In me dwelleth no good thing. Happy is the man who knows it. Happy is the woman who knows it.

It's true of all of us. No good thing in us. But happy is the person who knows.

I know in me dwelleth no good thing. Because then he can live. He wants to be formed in you.

And honestly not probably to the intensity of Paul. God has begun to put it in my heart. I labor.

I travail. Until Christ is formed in you. Let's pray.

Father thank you so much. For this little look at such a great thing. We just pray as you continue to mature and grow and develop.

To the place where you can finally minister through us. That you would show us whatever it is that is our part and our openness and our willingness. That we would not hinder you in your growth or your maturity.

And we know that you want to live redemptively through us. And we know that means death for us and life for them. Work it in us we pray.

Work it in us. And for those who are in some wilderness or on some mountain. Or find themselves in some spiritual pinnacle.

Will you be victorious in them. We pray in Jesus name. Amen.

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