

Dwelling in the Word

Prayerfully read Matt 3:1-4:17 and ask: 1) What words, phrases, or images stood out to you? 2) What does this say about what God desires to accomplish in you? 3) How could you respond to what God says in this passage?

Beginning the Conversation

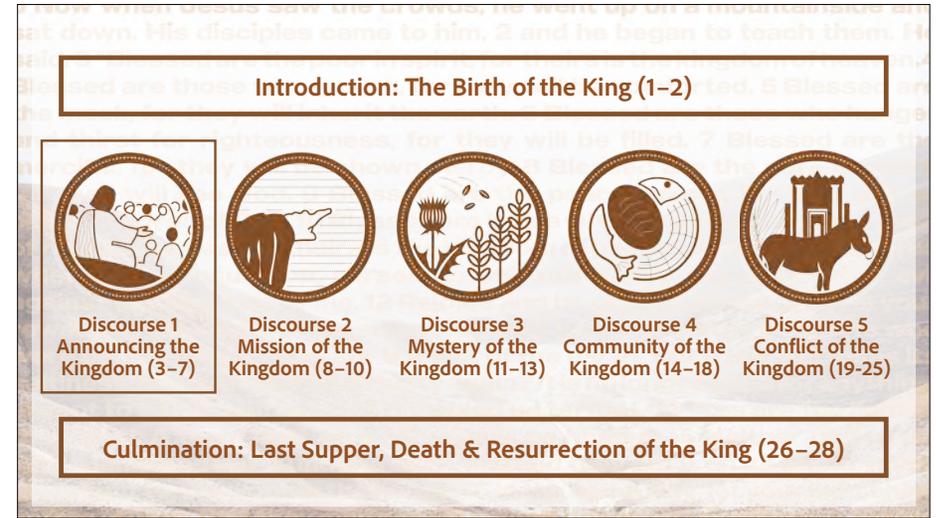
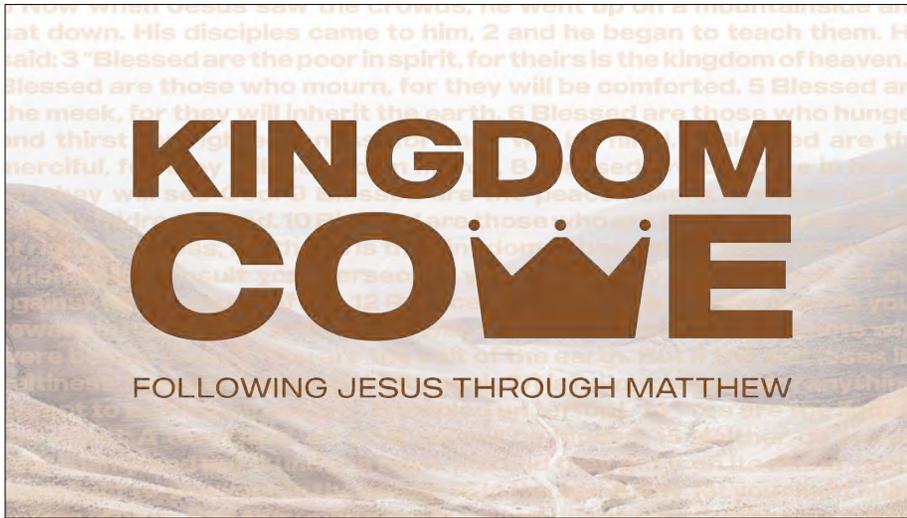
1. There is a theme of preparation as we start off this section of Matthew. What are some ways you can prepare yourself for the things the Lord will teach and reveal to you during your times of study during this series? Anything you should start or stop doing?
2. What tempts you? How do you deal with temptation? Looking at 4:1-11, why do you think the devil tempted Jesus with these particular temptations? What tactics did he use? How did Jesus respond? (see Heb 4:14-16)

Digging Deeper

1. Throughout Matthew's portrayal of Jesus as the Messiah, he related Jesus' story to the story of ancient Israel and Moses. What were some of the parallels you noticed in this week's passage? What do you think Matthew was trying to accomplish with such parallels?
2. Chapter 3 opens not with Jesus, but with notice that "John the baptizer" was preaching and baptizing people in the wilderness of Judea. This is the first account dealing with John in the gospel (others are 9:14-15; 11:2-15; 14:1-12; 17:10-13; 21:23-27). How would you describe John? What is his relationship with Jesus?
3. What do you think are some of the differences between John's baptism and later Christian baptism?
4. When Jesus came to John to be baptized, John initially refused. How did Jesus respond (see 3:13-15)? How do you understand "to fulfill all righteousness"?
5. What is the difference between "test" and "tempt"? What do you think is the primary sense in 4:1-11?
6. Jesus refused to go the way of the tempter and instead remained faithful to his vocation as the beloved Son of God, by not using his messianic power to meet his own needs. How does power tempt you? How should Christ followers use power?
7. The account of Jesus' temptation shows that even the Devil can quote Scripture! But Jesus' discerning use of Scripture asks, Does it love and honour God? Does it love and serve people? (and, e.g., throwing himself down from the temple does neither). What can we learn from Jesus' use of Scripture from this encounter?

Living it Out

1. What aspects of your identity and mission feel uncertain to you, areas that might make you vulnerable to testing and temptation? How could you trust God for provision in your life to resist temptation?
2. Jesus overcame the Tempter by recalling Scripture. There are many amazing passages from Matthew to commit to memory. Perhaps this fall you can pick some to memorize, such as: Salt & light (5:13-16); The Lord's Prayer (6:9-13); priorities in the Kingdom (6:33); Rest for the weary (11:28-30); the Greatest Commandments (22:37-40); the Great Commission (28:18-20); among others.
3. Have you been baptized? If you have, how are you encouraged when you think of your baptism? If you are a follower of Jesus and haven't, why not? I would encourage you to consider it. Some key passages on baptism you may want to look at include Matt 28:19-20, Acts 2:38-41, Rom 6:3-4, Gal 3:27, and Col 2:12.



The Forerunner

John the Baptizer (3:1–12).

- Prophet & forerunner of the Messiah (Isa 40:3).
- A baptism of **repentance** to prepare the people of God for the coming of the Messiah.
- Subversively preached that **everyone** (not just proselytes) needed to repent and be baptized to prepare for the coming of the Messiah!



The Baptism

“Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by John. But John tried to deter him, saying, ‘I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?’” (3:13-14).

- Despite John’s reluctance, Jesus submitted to baptism because “it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness” (3:15), not because he needed to repent of anything.
- Jesus **identifies** with the people of God in baptism.

The Baptism

“As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, ‘This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased’” (3:16-17).

- As a result of Jesus’ faithful submission,
 - Jesus is **empowered** by the Holy Spirit for ministry,
 - and is **confirmed** as the beloved Son of God.



The Temptation

“Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil” (4:1).

- Echoes Israel’s testing in the wilderness (Exodus 15–17; Numbers 11–25) as reflected on in Deuteronomy 6–8.
- The tempting/testing (*peirazo* πειραζω) revolves around the nature of Jesus’ vocation: As the beloved Son of God, will Jesus be faithful to his mission?

The Temptation

First Temptation: “**Since** you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread” (4:3).

- Temptation is for Jesus to use his messianic power for his own ends, rather than accept the path of the cross laid out for him.
- Jesus responds by quoting Deuteronomy 8:3 and affirms his reliance on God and his will.

The Temptation

Second Temptation: “**Since** you are the Son of God, throw yourself down” (4:6).

- This time the Devil quotes Scripture! (Psalm 91:11-12).
- Jesus replies with Deuteronomy 6:16 where the Israelites tested God in the wilderness, and Moses encourages obedience.
- **Testing God is not trusting God.** At stake again is Jesus’ implicit trust in and obedience to his Father; Jesus will be obedient and will not fail as did God’s son Israel.

The Temptation

Third Temptation: “All this I will give you, **if** you will bow down and worship me” (4:9).

- Unlike the first two temptations, this one has an actual condition to be met: **if** Jesus gives allegiance to the devil, **then** the devil will give Jesus “all the kingdoms of the world.”
- Jesus dismisses Satan with a quote from Deuteronomy 6:13 (“Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only”).

The Temptation

In the wilderness Israel failed... But **where Israel failed, the beloved Son of God is faithful.**

- “The goal of obedience to the Father is accomplished, not by triumphant self-assertion, not by the exercise of power and authority, but paradoxically **by the way of humility, service, and suffering.** Therein lies true greatness” (Donald Hagner, *Matthew*, 70).

The Beginning (4:12-17)

After this, prompted by John's arrest, Jesus goes to **Capernaum** in the Galilee region of northern Israel (4:12-16).

"From that time on Jesus began to preach, 'Repent, for the kingdom *reign* of heaven has come near'" (4:17).



Invitation

Lessons I invite you to consider...

Preparation

Faithfulness

Scripture

Baptism

Testing/Temptation