



The account of Jesus' temptation in the wilderness is a fantastic story of Jesus standing strong against the cunning lies of the enemy. Immediately after Jesus' baptism He heads into the wilderness where he fasts for 40 days. This is the same amount of time that the Israelites wandered in the wilderness. This is also the same amount of time for completion in Hebrew culture. The enemy comes to Jesus when He is spiritually strong but physically hungry. The devil comes in to tempt Jesus to sin and break His plan with God. Someone once said that in this account Jesus conquered the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life.

1. Neal opened the sermon and talked about an unwanted experience he had while in college. Have you ever seen a demonic force or had a close encounter that left you thinking it was of the devil? Share your story with the group.
2. **Read Matthew 4:1.** Jesus was led by the spirit into the wilderness. Matthew writes this passage in such a way to remind the Israelites of their own wandering in the desert (**read Joshua 5:6**). Share about a time you felt tempted in life.
3. **Read Matthew 4:2-4.** Fasting is a way to deny yourself and focus more on God. **Read 2 Kings 18:6, Ezra 8:23, Esther 4:16, and Matthew 6:16.** Have you ever fasted? Share how your relationship with God grew during that time.
4. When the devil tempted Jesus in the wilderness it was a temptation to be satisfied apart from God. **Read Proverbs 3:5-6, Psalm 56:3, 90:14, and Isaiah 26:3.** Where are you most tempted to be satisfied apart from Jesus?
5. **Read Matthew 4:5-7.** This second temptation has to do with God's protection and our desire to be in control. So many of us want to be in control of our lives. Share an area of your life that has been easy or difficult to surrender control.
6. **Read Matthew 4:8-10.** The third is a temptation of power or status. **Read Matthew 11:29, 23:12, 1 Peter 5:5-6, and 1 John 2:16.** Have you ever struggled with pride or wanting to take shortcuts? What do we learn about living a humble life?
7. During the sermon Neal encouraged us to have a battle plan. Part of that included: memorizing Scripture, having Biblical community, writing down stories of God's faithfulness, and worship. Have you taken steps to write out your battle plan?
8. Close your time in prayer. Pray for strength to invite a friend to meet Jesus.