Satan is smart, he’s cunning and deceptive. He’s not going to attack you on a Sunday morning during church, or at a BBQ with friends from church. But he will attack you when you’re alone.

**Supporting Thought | Satan Uses Our Fleshly Desires To Tempt Us.**

This passage of Scripture is actually one of my favorite Scriptures in the Bible because it shows Jesus’ humanity.

* Jesus was tempted too! He was human! Satan used Jesus’ fleshly desires in his weakest moment to attack him and to derail the start of his ministry.
* And he does the same with us. He uses our fleshly desires, in every area of our lives to distract us and tempt us when we are the weakest.
	+ There are three areas of life that we see Satan tempt Jesus in, and he does the same to us.

**We Are Tempted With The Physical.**

**Read | Matthew 4:2-4 NLT**

Jesus was not only hungry, but he was physically weak. He had already been fasting for 40 days! Satan knew that, and the first thing he did was tempt Jesus in the physical.

* You see, Satan may be smart, but he isn’t wise. He’s also predictable. You better believe that the first place Satan is going to attack you is the area where you are the most vulnerable.
	+ If you have health issues, he will attack your health. Self-esteem issues, he’ll attack that. If you are struggling financially to meet the needs of your family, he will attack your finances with a vengeance.

And in those moments we are attacked, and we struggle, we are tempted to go outside of God to meet the need.

* We are tempted to go on the medication with way too many side effects instead of first praying and believing the Lord for healing. We are tempted to lose weight, do our makeup every day before leaving the house, or having to have a certain image instead of resting in the fact that we are fearfully and wonderfully made! We are tempted to work more hours at work to miss church, get another job, and chase success instead of relying on God to provide for our financial needs!

Satan will attack you at your weakest moment first, and that is why we need to know the word of God!

* Otherwise, we will be tempted to meet our physical needs on our own.

**We Are Tempted With Purpose.**

**Read | Matthew 4:5-7 NLT**

Here we see Satan trying to tempt the will of Jesus. He’s trying to get Jesus to do things on his own and then hope and pray that God comes through and delivers him if things go wrong.

* “Find your own purpose in life and if it’s wrong God will intervene and tell you”.

This is the wrong kind of thinking!

* I can’t tell you how many times I have seen people give their lives to Christ and have a fresh start with the Lord only to be tempted by their own purpose and ambition.
* Satan begins to capitalize on all of the desires that you have had. Desires to grow your business, to start a new career, to provide for your family. All things that are not bad in and of themselves.
	+ But if you do them outside the will of God, they become sinful because you are attempting to create your own purpose and destiny instead of relying on the one God has for you.

Before God formed you in your mother’s womb He had a plan for you! Not to harm you, but to prosper you, to give you hope and a future!

* But, just like how Jesus was tempted to ‘throw himself down’ and hope that God would intervene, we are tempted to test God by throwing ourselves into whatever we believe will bring us fulfillment and value.

I can guarantee you that every time you throw yourself into a job, a relationship, a financial situation, or anything else without first praying and asking God, you are putting yourself in harm's way and not following God's plan.

* You are being tempted to create your own purpose and your own plan.

**Note |** When it comes to being tempted with purpose, this is where Satan throws Scripture back at Jesus (see verse 6).

* Satan will try and justify your decisions to live life on your own with Scripture. Saying things like, “God wants you to provide for your family, so you need to work harder.” Or, “God will work it all out for your good”. But he never looks at the full picture.

**We Are Tempted With Power.**

**Read | Matthew 4:8-10 NLT**

I have heard people preach on this text before. And some people will read these verses and say, “When the devil tempts you, he lies! He never had the power to give anything away to begin with. He’s trying to write a check he can’t cash!”

* But I disagree. I don’t think Satan is lying here. He is a liar, but not here.

*The time for judging this world has come, when Satan, the ruler of this world, will be cast out. -* ***John 12:31 NLT***

Satan had the authority to give all the kingdoms of the world to Jesus. He had the authority to grant him earthly power and authority! But God had more in store for Jesus!

* We worship the things that give us power. And Jesus knew that if he took this power from Satan, he would be bound to Satan. “Remember what I did for you? Now do this for me…you didn’t deserve this, but I did it for you.”

And while Jesus was tempted, He knew in each one of these temptations that God had more in store for Him. And God has more for you!

**Supporting Thought | God Has More For You!**

He has a far greater purpose than you or I could ever have imagined on our own! And he has more in store for us than Satan could ever give!

* Satan tempted Jesus with satisfying his physical needs, but God satisfies our physical needs *and* our spiritual needs! He is the bread of life!
* Satan tempted Jesus with fulfilling his own plan and purpose for his life, but God’s ways are higher than our ways!
* Satan tempted Jesus with earthly power and authority, but after Jesus rose from the dead “all power and authority in heaven and earth” had been given to him!

God doesn’t always let us in on his plan, and that’s when Satan comes to tempt us. When we are at our weakest and most vulnerable. When we are surrounded by the unknown.

* But the one thing that we can know is that God always has more in store for you! His purpose for your life is far greater than you could ever imagine!

**Supporting Thought | Your Temptation Is Only Temporary!**

Temptation is not like sin. It doesn’t leave a lasting mark on your soul. In fact, if Satan can’t tempt you good enough to get you to sin, he will try and get you to believe that the fact you were tempted was sinful enough!

* But nowhere in the Bible does it say that being tempted is sinful. If it is, then Jesus just sinned three times in the passage of Scripture we just read.
* Your temptation is not sinful, which means that it is only temporary.

**Read | Matthew 4:11 NLT**

You can always count on two things.

1. For Satan to leave and God to come.

In verse 10, Jesus literally told Satan to get out of here. And because he allowed the power of the Holy Spirit to work in his life, and not his own power, Satan had no choice but to obey!

* If you are in a place of temptation right now, there is a way out! Tell him to leave, you have started fresh in Jesus! And let the Holy Spirit come into your life and minister to you in those moments of temptation and difficulty.
* I promise you will find victory!

**Call/Challenge | We all have moments when things go wrong, and even though we shouldn’t, we give in to the temptation.**

* We get our priorities out of whack. That temptation to put finances before family, lust before love, or career before calling.
* But we can always start fresh with the grace and mercy of Jesus Christ!

As we prepare to receive communion this morning, will you allow the Holy Spirit to show you the places in your life that you have been tempted and failed. But also allow him to show you the places you are most vulnerable to be tempted, so you can start relying on God more in those areas.

**Series:** Fresh Start | **Title:** Fresh Start Gone Wrong

**Scripture:** Matthew 4:1-11 NLT **| Date:** September 18, 2022

**Opening Line |** We have all been in a position where we start fresh and inevitably something goes wrong!

**Introduction |** I remember when Kenzi and I first moved. I had taken a position as an Associate Pastor two hours away.

**Illustration |** U-Haul Accident

Needless to say, our fresh start had gone terribly wrong!

* But, it’s okay because our fresh start had a purpose.
* The church we were moving to was extremely generous! Donating furniture and household supplies that we never would have been able to afford as newlyweds! It allowed us to truly create a home while we were there and instantly bonded us to all the people in the church.
* To this day, some of our greatest friendships have come from that situation. God had a purpose.

**Main Thought | God Always Has A Greater Purpose In Store!**

When things go wrong and when things don’t go wrong when they easily could have, God always has a greater purpose in store for us. This principle proves itself true, not only in our lives, but the life of Jesus as well.

* John the Baptist has prepared the way for Jesus to start his earthly ministry, and he was baptized in water by John declaring that his ministry is beginning.
* And the next thing that happens goes into the wilderness to fast and pray. And things have the potential to go very wrong when Satan shows up to tempt him.

**Read |** Matthew 4:1-11 NLT

**Supporting Thought | Satan Attacks When We Are Alone**

Satan was nowhere to be seen when John the Baptist was preaching his message of repentance.

* He was nowhere to be found when Jesus was baptized and the Spirit of God came and rested on him.
* That’s because Satan ain’t no dummy!

Satan isn’t going to attack you when other people are watching.

* He isn’t going to go head to head with God over your soul. He’s going to wait until you are alone and in isolation. And then, He is going to try and trip you up.

How many times have you had a powerful move of God in your life only for it to be turned upside down the next day, or the next week.

* I have always found that after my greatest moments in the presence of God comes the greatest tempting from the devil!
	+ On the car ride back home when no one can hear the conversation with you and your spouse.
	+ The thoughts of doubt and anguish when you are in the shower with your own thoughts, or you’re working on that project alone in the garage.