

Kingdom Temptations Economic Temptations

Matthew 4:1-4; Mark 1:12-13; Deuteronomy 8:3

Intro: Political Temptations; Luke 4:5-8; Deut. 6:13

Religious Temptations (Allen Jackson); Luke 4:9-13; Deut. 6:16

I want you to think for a moment of your BESETTING SIN—the one that is so powerful that you cannot seem to overcome.

I want you to think about how that sin changes you, causes you anxiety and guilt, and makes you doubt your faith and your own forgiveness. Think about how it changes the future.

Along with that temptation and sin comes another small package—a package of intellectual change. You are tempted, not only to sin, but to integrate that sin into your world view, changing how you view the world so that this sin might be part of it without guilt. You have not achieved this transformation of your world yet, but you are working on it.

In the world that you envision where this sin is accepted and “good,” God does not rule over all. Maybe God does not exist in this world, or maybe it’s just the Lordship of Christ that does not exist. Perhaps you have replaced the Lordship of Christ in this world with your own lordship. You have become secular in your world. It is a world without faith in God as provider and Judge.

This is the world to which Jesus is invited by the devil. It is world where something else is the center besides the inviolable word of God. This is a real temptation, not a silly one. It has compelling force in the mind of Jesus. It offers an alternative to the self-denying, cross-bearing path that the Father points to. “Jesus,” the devil says, “you do not have to be poor and in pain. You can get done everything the Father wants you to get done without self-denial, without suffering, and without execution. You can be the Bread-King!”

Think about money for a moment. Think how having more of it could change your world, solve your problems. Imagine that today when you visit the ATM on the way home from church, your checking balance is \$100,000,000. Now for some of us, that would just begin to pay our debts. But for most of us, we could see that as a world-transforming event. We win the lottery, and we have all the money to make our dreams come true.

The economic temptation is simple: if you could change your meager situation and become the bread-king, you could achieve whatever you wanted in this world. You would always be the guy buying another round of drinks. Everyone would love you.

I. It’s the Bread-King Temptation. If you control money, you have authority over many people and their lives. You can make things happen in this world that other people cannot make happen.

A. You would never be hungry again. You would never lack for anything. You would never have to scrimp and save. You would never have to deny yourself a desire. If you could turn stones into bread, you could have it all.

***Last year Mrs. Baird’s Bread celebrated a century of baking and selling bread in Texas. I was at the Texas Businessmen’s Hall of Fame meeting back in 1993, in a great banquet hall. The crowd from Mrs. Baird’s Bread occupied two noisy tables near us that evening. The owner of Mrs. Baird’s Bread, a grandson of Ninnie Baird, the founder, was hailed as one of the

greatest businessmen in Texas and was inducted into the Hall of Fame. You make enough bread, and you can eat whatever you want.

1. Jesus was not wealthy in this life. He said once that he did not have a place to lay his head.
2. His parents were not wealthy. They brought a sacrifice of pigeons at his birth: "If she cannot afford a lamb, she is to bring two doves or two young pigeons..." (Leviticus 12:8; Luke 2:23). Mary and Joseph could not afford a lamb for the sacrifice.

B. Everyone around you could have it all. Think of how you could bless people if you could turn stones into bread. Your grandmother would get a new house. Your mother would get a new house. Your sister with all the kids would get a new house.

You would open orphanages and build hospitals and establish schools where kids could go for free. If you could turn stones into bread, the world would be at your beck and call. Everyone would want to help.

This temptation, to become the Bread King, is not just about you being in the business hall of fame. It's about all the people that will be blessed through your benevolence. You could change your world if you had enough money.

C. Other people get greedy and hang on to their bread, storing it up for rainy days in great big barns stuffed with goods. We see it all the time. Other people want more and more bread. They do not feel secure when they have one store house, they want two, and then four, and then ten. Other people spend their fortunes on themselves.

But not you. When you had enough, you would change the world with your money. It would not sit in your bank account or on your asset list. Once you had enough, you could use the interest on it to change the world.

II. It's the "Bread-alone" temptation: Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God (v4)

A. This bread is ALL you need. If you make enough of this, you will not need anything. It will provide all your needs.

B. The All-Bread life is characterized by:

1. Bread-making as a strategy for life transformation. It is the conviction that lack of money is the central and deepest problem and that gaining money is the central solution to that problem.
2. Bread-making as an all-consuming pursuit. It is the wholesale commitment of the self to bread as the central need and the ultimate solution. Envision a life with bread. Now envision one without bread. See? Having bread is better.

C. The "alone" part of this quote demonstrates that Jesus understands the need for bread, for money. That is not the issue here. Jesus is not denying the value of money or bread. But he is not willing to sell out to bread-making as the key to world transformation and personal life change.

The word of God says that we do not live by bread alone. There is something else by which we live. Our bodies need bread to survive, but the whole man needs more than bread.

III. Remember the WILDERNESS LESSON: Bread Comes from God—read Deuteronomy 8:1-9. I will describe this land for you that God is leading you to occupy.

A. God has not chosen to keep you in the wilderness always. He has a Promised Land where you will live and increase (Deut. 8:1).

B. It is a land where God will lead you one step at a time, one day at a time (8:2). God trains you in the wilderness, humbles you, so that you know you are not self-sufficient. He brings you into the testing so that you will value his words.

C. It is a land where you obey God's word.

D. It is a land where you eat MANNA.

1. MANNA comes from heaven. You learned this in the wilderness when you were starving, when you were poor.

2. All bread comes from God, and you know it and live that truth every day. DO NOT FORGET (Deut. 8:11).

3. It is a land of PETITION and THANKGIVING: petition when you need bread and gratitude when God provides.

E. It is a land where bread is NEVER ENOUGH, never the end, never the all-sufficient thing. The word you hang on in this land is not the word about how to convert these stones to bread but the word that proceeds from the mouth of God.

E. Your CLOTHES are the same way. The clothes that they wore in the wilderness were miraculously protected so that they did not wear out. They did not have to worry about bread or clothes because God provided these necessities of life.

F. These necessities of life are “disciplines” of the Lord. They are set in our path so that God may achieve something much greater in us, something that will bless us and all who are about us. God intends to do LIFE TRANSFORMATION and WORLD TRANSFORMATION through us, but it will not be turning stones to bread. It will be living on the bread from Heaven.

G. God is bringing you to a good place—bread and honey, springs and rivers, wheat and fig trees. And when you get there, make sure that you “praise the Lord your God for the good land he has given you” (Deut. 8:10).

Conclusion: Jesus wanted the people to have bread. He would soon feed thousands. He wanted them to eat, and yet he wanted them to do more than eat. He wanted them to know that “man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God” (Deuteronomy 8:3).

Jesus longed for the people to have the word of God. He wanted them to truly understand who he was. After the feeding of the 5,000, Jesus lamented that they followed him only because they ate the bread. Jesus himself is the Manna from Heaven. “I am the bread of life,” he said (John 6:35).