

Lent 1A, 2011

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Text: Matthew 4:1-11

Title: "Son of God"

Come, let us fix our eyes on Jesus.

When you look at Jesus, what do you see? Is He a baby in a manger? Is He teacher? Is He the blesser of children? Is He the humble king, riding on a donkey? Is He the host, breaking bread? Or is He the meal? Is He crowned with thorns, dying on a cross? Is He crowned with glory at God's right hand?

What do you see, when you look at Jesus?

Scripture is an art museum, filled with portraits of your Savior. He is Lamb of God and Good Shepherd. He is King and Servant. All throughout this Lent we will fix our eyes on Jesus, meditating on a different picture of Him each day.

Today, we see Jesus as the Son of God.

When Jesus was baptized in the Jordan River, a voice spoke from heaven, "This is my beloved Son." Jesus was proclaimed to be the Son of God.

But what does it mean to be God's Son? What does it look like? What is God's family life like? What do you expect?

What does your family picture look like? When we take family pictures we get all dressed up, sometimes in matching clothing. We go to a professional who sets the background and poses everyone just right. We get our family pictures to look as perfect as possible.

But in reality, our families don't always look like the pictures. Real life looks much different. It's not always perfect. We don't always stand there smiling together. Real life is much harder.

Satan and Jesus had two different pictures of what it looked like to be the Son of God. They had two different pictures of family life.

Satan's picture of family is that perfect, posed, portrait from the studio. Everyone dressed up. Everyone smiling. Everything perfect.

For Satan, the Son of God should have an easy, comfortable life. He shouldn't be hungry and thirsty, fasting in the wilderness. God the Father should provide for His Son, especially things like food and water. The Son of God should at least have bread to eat. What Father would let His Son starve to death in the wilderness? In Satan's family picture, the family is seated around a table full of food.

For Satan, the Son of God should not have any cares or worries in the world. His heavenly Father and His angels should take care of Him at every turn. The Son of God should be able to jump off tall buildings and know that God would catch him. God should be there to protect, defend, and watch over His Son at all times. In Satan's family picture, the family is safe and healthy, without a care in the world.

For Satan, the Son of God should have all the power and wealth and glory to Himself. He shouldn't be poor and meek. All the kingdoms of the world should be his. And if His Father won't give these things to Him, the Son should get them however He can, even if it means compromising His beliefs and worshipping Satan. In Satan's family picture, the family is wealthy and well-dressed

That is the picture of God's family that Satan presents to Jesus. A life of ease and comfort. A life free from cares and worries. A life full of wealth and power and glory. God the Father gives His Son everything- food, protection, and the kingdoms of the world.

And that is the picture that Satan tempts you with, too.

If you are a child of God, then you shouldn't be suffering. You shouldn't go hungry. God should provide for you.

If you are a child of God, then God should take care of you. You shouldn't have to worry about accidents or sickness or pain or death, because the holy angels will take care of you and watch out for you.

If you are a child of God, then God should give you wealth and glory. You should have a comfortable, easy life.

Satan tempts you with this same perfect family portrait. And if things in your family aren't perfect, then there must be something wrong with you.

Satan tempts you the same way that he tempted Jesus. The hidden message is this: If things go bad for you- if you are hungry, if you suffer, if you are poor. Then either you're not really part of God's family, or God doesn't love you, or even God doesn't exist.

This is the same temptation Satan used with Adam and Eve. If God really loved you, He would give you whatever you wanted.

Adam and Eve decided that they knew best and took what they wanted, rather than trusting in God and His Word.

Jesus, on the other hand, shows us what it is truly like to be the Son of God. He paints a picture of what family life should look like in God's family.

The Son of God isn't interested in bread. He's not out to fill His own belly. Instead, the Son of God lives by God's Word. He's a hearer. He knows that life is about more than food or drink or

clothing. As long as He has God's Word, He is content. In Jesus' family picture, there will be times that the children go hungry, but they always have God's Word, and that is enough

Secondly, the Son of God doesn't need a test to prove that God loves Him. He doesn't need to throw Himself off tall buildings and wait for God to catch Him. He knows that even if He suffers, God still cares for Him. Even when all the evidence seems to point to the contrary, God is still His Father, and still loves Him. In Jesus' family picture, people are hurting and suffering, but the family still sticks together.

Finally, the Son of God doesn't need the kingdoms of the world and all their glory. He is content with what God has given Him, and He won't compromise His faith for worldly gain. In Jesus' family picture, people are poor and needy, and they don't have many things that the world values.

When we look at Jesus, we see Him as the Son of God, suffering in the wilderness- hungry, vulnerable and poor. This is what it means to be part of God's family. It's that picture perfect portrait Satan so often uses to tempt you. It's a picture of real life.

As children of our Heavenly Father, things will be hard for you. Like Jesus, His Son, you will find yourself in the desert, tempted by Satan.

Yet in the midst of his difficulties, Jesus trusted in God's Word. He knew that His Father would care for Him. Jesus teaches us to listen our Father, not to test Him, but to worship and serve Him. Jesus shows us what it means to be sons and daughters of God, our Father.

But Jesus is more than just an example to follow. He's your brother. He's part of the family. We're all in the picture together.

Just as Jesus loves His Father, so He loves you. He'll do anything for His brothers and sisters, even give His life.

Jesus remained faithful to His Father, even when tempted by Satan, even to the point of death.

As Jesus hung on the cross, Satan tried one last time to get Jesus to change His mind. Satan tried to get Jesus to buy His family picture. Listen to Matthew 27, beginning at verse 39,

And those who passed by derided him, wagging their heads⁴⁰ and saying, "You who would destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, save yourself! If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross."⁴¹ So also the chief priests, with the scribes and elders, mocked him, saying,⁴² "He saved others; he cannot save himself. He is the King of Israel; let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in him."⁴³ He trusts in God; let God deliver him now, if he desires him. For he said, 'I am the Son of God.'"

One last time Satan tempts Jesus, "If you are the Son of God..." you shouldn't be suffering and dying. But one last time, Jesus stays faithful to His Father, He resists Satan, and He lives in a different sort of picture. He stays obedient to His Father, He loves His brothers and sisters, even giving His life for them.