

Voices in the Wilderness

1. The Father's Voice (*Matt 3:17*)

- A) Approval comes before performance
- B) Identity is established before the wilderness

2. The Tempter's Voice (*Matt 4:3*)

- A) WHEN: at our weakest
- B) WHY: to bypass the Father's will for what is easier
- C) HOW: by attacking our identity

3. The Son's Voice (*Matt 4:4*)

- A) "It is written"
- B) Where Adam fell, Jesus stood
- C) Where Israel failed, Jesus trusted
- D) He refused the shortcut so He could walk the long road to the cross

Small Group Discussion Questions:

When it comes to modern conveniences (like air conditioning, smartphones, or drive-thru coffee), what is one piece of everyday technology you would hate to give up?

Was there anything from the sermon that you found encouraging, challenging, or thought-provoking?

Read Matthew 3:16-17 and Matthew 4:1-2. If you were standing there at the Jordan River and heard the Father's overwhelming approval of Jesus, how do you think you would have expected the story to unfold next? (Why would God include this immediate, jarring shift from the blessing of the river right into the deprivation of the wilderness?)

Read Matthew 4:3-4. What do you make of the fact that Satan doesn't tempt Jesus to do something obviously evil, but simply suggests He turn stones into bread? (Why do you think temptation so might look like an invitation to skip over something painful rather than an invitation to do something malicious?)

The sermon pointed out that Satan's temptation was a direct attack on Jesus' identity, twisting the Father's "You are my beloved Son" into "If you are the Son of God." Where have you seen the enemy use a difficult season to try and make people question who they are or what God has spoken over them?

We heard a contrast between Adam, who failed his test in a garden of abundance, and Jesus, who passed His test in a wilderness of scarcity. What do you make of that comparison? Why do you think our hearts are often just as quick to turn against God when we have plenty as when we are deprived?

Where have you seen the cultural mindset that "discomfort is the enemy" impact the way people view their relationship with God?

The message highlighted that Satan and God have two different intentions in the wilderness (Satan wants to accuse and destroy, while God wants to reveal what is underneath and refine us). If you were walking through a dry season, how do you think you would spot the difference between the enemy's accusations and the Father's testing?

We were challenged to see that the wilderness reveals what we truly trust in when our comfort is stripped away. What might it look like for a person to realize they have been relying on a shortcut (like safety, approval, or immediate relief) more than the Father's voice?

The sermon pointed out that Jesus is the true Son who walked the long road and refused to take a shortcut, succeeding where Israel, Adam, and we have failed. How does knowing that Jesus stood firm where we so often fall change the way you view your own struggles in the wilderness?

What might it look like for you to simply "hang on" to the Father's voice right now, rather than letting a current pain or frustration speak louder than His love? (How can we as a group encourage each other to trust God's intentions when the road gets hard?)