Pastor Dave Teixeira
October 18, 2009
Matthew 4:1-11

Please use the space below to take notes on today's message:

Take It Homework

We encourage you to not only do these exercises on your own, but also with a group of friends, co-workers, neighbors, small group or family members.

Repent: To change the total direction of one's life
Sounds intense, huh? Hard to discern what that even looks like. Well, that's why Jesus is so challenging—because He calls us to stuff we can't even comprehend or imagine. So, to get a better understanding, let's look at Jesus.

Matthew 3: 13-17 talks about Jesus' baptism of repentance. What? Why did Jesus need to be baptized? I think it had to do with a shift, a turn, a repentance, a change in the direction of Jesus' life. He goes from just living life under the radar in Nazareth to living the life of public ministry God prepared for Him. At this baptism of repentance, Jesus' life turns and is now focused, redirected and pointed toward the cross. Then, "as soon as Jesus was baptized" there was this heavenly moment. (You can hear the music that would be playing if this were a movie, can't you?!) But that's exactly it. There's this affirmation from God about Jesus: "Yes, that's My Son. He turns and follows My will perfectly and nothing makes Me happier!"

- Where does God want your life to turn right now? What thing could you turn from or turn to that would cause God to say to you, "with him/her I am well-pleased."

So heaven opens, a dove (representing God's Spirit) descends, God cheers and things seem to be nothing less than perfect. Then right away (the gospel of Mark says, "immediately") Jesus goes from all of that to...the desert, the Devil and temptation...from high to low almost instantly.

- Why does turning toward the will of God always meet with resistance? Aren't God's will and ways supposed to be easy?
- Share a time when you have turned or been moving toward God and there has been resistance.

The word Matthew uses in this passage, *peirazō,* can mean "to tempt" and "to test." Tempt has the sense of enticing to sin, while test has more to do with quality determination. Herein lies the great Bible truth. While Satan seeks to entice to sin, God uses challenge and adversity as an opportunity for us to be tested and grow. Every test is an opportunity to mature, stretch and succeed.

- Does this change your attitude toward the challenges and temptations or tests you are facing in your life? How is Satan tempting in those places and how is God testing?

It is interesting to notice that Satan tests/tempts Jesus to use His abilities and gifts. There is often the temptation to use whatever abilities or gifts God has given us selfishly, for our own comfort, betterment or advancement. "Hey Jesus, You're hungry—turn these stones into bread." William Barclay says, "God has given every man a gift, and every man can ask one of two questions. He can ask, 'What can I make for myself out of this gift?' or 'What can I do for others?'"

- What gifts do you have and how are YOU using them? (Be bold. If you can, share an example of each.)

- Is there anything else you learned from the sermon this week that challenged, motivated, encouraged or caused you to think/act?