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Please turn with me to Matthew 4 and let's stand to give our attention to the reading and hearing of God's word. Matthew 4, the first 11 verses. Hear the word of the Lord.

1 Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. 2 And when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, afterward He was hungry. 3 Now when the tempter came to Him, he said, "If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread." 4 But He answered and said, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.'" 5 Then the devil took Him up into the holy city, set Him on the pinnacle of the temple, 6 and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down. For it is written: 'He shall give His angels charge over you,' and, 'In their hands they shall bear you up, Lest you dash your foot against a stone.'" 7 Jesus said to him, "It is written again, 'You shall not tempt the LORD your God.'" 8 Again, the devil took Him up on an exceedingly high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. 9 And he said to Him, "All these things I will give You if You will fall down and worship me." 10 Then Jesus said to him, "Away with you, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the LORD your God, and Him only you shall serve.'" 11 Then the devil left Him, and behold, angels came and ministered to Him.

This is the word of the Lord.

Let's bow before the Lord. Let's pray.

O great and gracious God, we've heard this week of the great themes of the Reformation and the way in which Your word transformed Europe and eventually the world, Father, we confess that though we would profess that we believe that can happen again, we often

act as if it's a remote possibility. Father, give us grace to give ourselves to the ordinary means, to trust them because You have appointed them. O Lord, we pray this evening as our brother comes into this pulpit to bring the word to us, that You would anoint him, that You'd give him unction, that we would be given grace to see beyond him and to be given a vision of the Lamb who sits on the throne, that we with the hosts of heaven would declare His worthiness, and we would have a glimpse of that eternal glory and that we would return to our homes and to our pulpits emboldened to speak the great glorious truths that we've learned here, and that we know that Your word has made known to us. Father, we ask that You pour our Your blessing upon us this evening, not that we deserve it but that Your name would be high and lifted up now and evermore. Amen.

I've known Dr. Morales for a number of years now and know his family as well, and he is a great scholar and a very good teacher and preacher, but the one thing I would tell you tonight that you wouldn't maybe know about him and you won't see in your thing, is that he is a godly man, a godly husband and father. It's been a privilege to know his family as well. We've actually had them in our home in the process of considering to move to Greenville and work at the seminary, and so they bring that very important dimension that's a part of our commitment to experimental Calvinism and we are very pleased to have him and the family, and I'm very pleased now to introduce him to you, to preach to us about God's glory.

Thank you. Let's pray.

Our glorious God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, we confess our utter dependence and absolute need for the presence and the working of Your Holy Spirit to turn Your word into a profitable word in our lives, to cleanse and bend and mold our wills that we might come out of this place not as we were before but more selfless, more humble, with hearts that love You more. We want to come out of this place with a deep-seated desire to honor You in all our lives, and so we pray that Your Holy Spirit would see to that end and we ask this for the sake of Christ. Amen.

As the first Question and Answer of our Shorter Catechism teaches us, man's chief end, that is, man's ultimate purpose and pursuit is to glorify God and to enjoy him forever. This is Soli Deo Gloria in its full sense, encompassing justification to be sure, but working through it to a life lived for the glory of God. And so we believe as Sinclair Ferguson wrote, that the essence of the Calvinistic life, the essence of it is to live in such a way as to render glory unto God. We who are saved, the Apostle Paul wrote in Ephesians 1:12, should be to the praise of his glory, and it's just here that the question comes: how do we glorify God? We confess freely that all that we do should be to the glory of God, if we eat and drink, we drink to the glory of God, we eat to the glory of God, if we raise children, it is to the glory of God, when we exult in Christ, it is to the glory of God, but how really do we glorify God? That is, what is the sort of life that brings God glory? And once we phrase the question in those terms, the Scriptures provide us with a crystal clear answer, namely, by obedience to his word. The life that renders glory to God is a life of obedience to his word.

Now it must be said that such a life has to be lived in Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit and that means that if we're going to learn how to glorify God in our lives, that we must be conformed by the Holy Spirit to the one human life and the only one human life that has ever been lived utterly to the glory of God. That means we need to look to him, to Christ Jesus, who lived a life of absolute total commitment to the word of God, everything he did, everything he thought submitted to the word of God unto the glory of God. And you see the passage before us here, Matthew 4:1-11, offers us a summary of Jesus' life of obedience. Friends, this, this is what has brought God glory immeasurably beyond anything else ever accomplished in human history.

You know, Christians often use SDG, Soli Deo Gloria, as a signature line. We affix SDG to works of accomplishment like published books or musical scores or paintings, and this is all well and good but may we also understand that what truly pleases and honors and glorifies God above anything else is simple obedience to his word, like the kind of obedience Jesus demonstrates whether as a child obeying his parents, or when he laid down his life in submission to the will of God. This obedience to the word of God brought God immeasurably, infinitely more estimable honor and glory and pleasure than anything else that humans have accomplished by works of industry or skill. Eric Liddell understood this principle. He would not forsake his regular, ordinary Sabbath day keeping for the sake of winning a race, even to win it in God's name. He understood that God was rendered more glory in his life, that God was more pleased with his regular Sabbath obedience than he was for any gold medal that he had won in his name.

Now in the verse preceding our passage, Matthew 3:17, God vocalizes his pleasure with his Son. He says, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." And we need to understand that this isn't just a statement about his status, but this is a reflection of God the Father already upon the 30 years of quiet, humble submission to the word of God rendered by Jesus Christ thus far in his life. And so we're going to look at Matthew 4 and see how the Son glorifies God by obedience to his word, and Matthew 4 is set within a larger presentation of Jesus as analogous to Israel, that is, Jesus functions as the true and faithful remnant of Israel. He represents Israel and so what we'll see is in many ways his life mirrors the history of Israel. And so in Matthew 2, just as Israel received the exodus out of Egypt, Jesus is brought forth out of Egypt by God. And in Matthew 3, just as Israel then proceeds to cross through the sea, Jesus is brought through the waters of baptism. Now to chapter 4, just as Israel experienced 40 years in the wilderness, tested by God, Jesus is now tested in the wilderness 40 days and 40 nights. And what that means for us is that in order for us to understand the profundity, the depth of all that Jesus Christ is accomplishing here, we need to read it in the way Matthew wants us to read it, within this backdrop by way of contrast to Israel's failure to glorify God in the wilderness.

So that's where I want to begin in the first half of our talk this evening, is to consider together Israel's failure to glorify God in the wilderness, and it may be simplest, I should say, just to listen along. I'm going to try to summarize various episodes. It might be better afterward to use the recording, if you like, to flip around and take notes but I leave that up to you.

Well, the wilderness period for Israel begins essentially as soon as they are brought out of Egypt and through the waters. They find themselves in the wilderness and the period of testing begins, and so that really takes us to the middle of Exodus 15. As soon as the Lord has submerged the Egyptian host in the sea, the Israelites find themselves in the wilderness and what we find, then, is several stories back-to-back and progressing, carefully crafted stories that are meant to give us progressive lessons about what we might call the theology of the wilderness.

And so that first story begins in the second half of Exodus 15 and this is really the foundational one, Exodus 15:22-27. This lays the foundation for Israel's life in the wilderness so in this account the people are thirsty and they grumble, they find only bitter waters, and they complain to Moses and the Lord heals the water, but then the Lord instructs them and this is the key text for wilderness theology. Exodus 15:26, we read there God made an ordinance for them and there he tested them and he said, "If you diligently heed," obey my voice, "the voice of the LORD your God and do what is right in His sight, give ear to His commandments and keep all His statutes, I will put none of the diseases on you which I have brought on the Egyptians. For I am the Yahweh," your healer, the one "who heals you." And again, this is the foundation, this is the paradigm. God is giving Israel here the key to life in the wilderness, namely obedience to his word.

This sets up the whole theology of Israel in the wilderness and that means for us that Israel's ensuing failure cannot be generalized. It's not merely that they happen to grumble in the midst of privation, no, it's a very particular failure. They did not glorify God through obedience to his word. They disobeyed his word, and as we'll see, Israel's failure in the wilderness can really be tracked in three steps. Let's look at the first step together which begins in the very next episode, Exodus 16, and this is an immediate application of this ordinance we've just read in Exodus 15. So the Israelites are hungry and they complain to Moses. The Lord tests them as to their adherence to his word. Listen to Exodus 16:4-5, "Then the LORD said to Moses, 'Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you. And the people shall go out and gather a certain quota every day, that I may test them,'" and here's the test, "'whether they will walk in My law or not. And it shall be on the sixth day that they shall prepare what they bring in, and it shall be twice as much as they gather daily.'" So essentially we're talking about a twofold test. Only gather what you need for each day trusting the Lord to provide the next day. You don't have to hoard and those that did found that their bread rotted. But then on the sixth day, gather enough for the seventh, the Sabbath day, this time trusting the Lord that it will provide for the family and it will not rot. And we understand how this works. In the midst of their hunger, God is testing their hearts in relation to his word, and we understand this, we use this even with animals. We train dogs, we put food on the floor and we say, "Stay," and we want to see if that dog's loyalty is to his master or to his belly. And this is what God does with Israel. But notice again that the test is very particular, whether or not they will adhere to his word is very specific laws that he had just given them. The issue concerns Israel's disposition to the word of God.

So God tests his people to uncover their hearts, and as it turns out, as you know, Israel's appetite turned out to take priority over their love for the word of God, over their

obedience to the law of God in their lives. And so in this account, the Lord says in verse 28, "How long do you refuse to keep My commandments and My laws?" And so what we find in Exodus 15 and 16 combine to portray that Israel, like Esau, prefers the temporary fleeting pleasures of the flesh to the eternal word of God. Their momentary appetite took priority over the living promises of God to bring them into the land. Distrusting God himself, they didn't believe his word and so the first step in Israel's failure in the wilderness is they disregarded the word of God.

The second step we find in the very next story, Exodus 17:1-7, and here Israel turns the tables and we are told that they test the Lord because they thirst, they contend with Moses, they're ready to stone him and they even call Yahweh himself into question. The concluding statement in verse 7 says they tested the Lord saying, "Is the LORD among us or not?" That is, if the Lord doesn't intervene miraculously when we are thirsty, then somehow something must be wrong with God. He must not be our God. Israel assails the very being and character of God by the measuring rod of their own well-being. And you know, you and I do this too, don't we? When that healing doesn't come as fast as you'd like, when we hear about our brothers and sisters persecuted seemingly without any intervention or care on the part of God, we start to impugn God. Israel here is trying to force the hand of God, "Prove Yourself, God! Demonstrate! Give us a sign! Are You among us or are you not?" And if you don't act, then the Lord fails the test. That's their second step of failure is they tested the Lord. They act as if God is in the wilderness to serve Israel rather than the reverse, Israel is in the wilderness to serve God. Instead of waiting upon the Lord in quiet trust, they stubbornly refuse to submit to him and they impugn him.

So the narrative states twice they tested the Lord, verses 2 and 7, and if that were not enough, the entire place is named Massah which means "tested." They tested the Lord and so we find this development in Israel's failure. They move in this digression from a disregard for the word of God to a testing the Lord, testing the presence and the power of the Lord. And so, friends, we cannot be surprised that the third step in Israel's failure in the wilderness is apostasy. They abandon God. They commit idolatry in Exodus 32. Growing impatient in this heinous act of self-will, they exchange the glory of God for an image of a beast and they bow down to a golden calf. Do you see that this is the very antithesis of the calling of Israel? And in doing so, it should be noted that Israel abandons its status in calling his God Son. They forsake God himself.

So this is the road to apostasy in the wilderness, you move from a disregard of the word of God, to a testing of the Lord God in your life, to an abandoning of God in idolatry, apostasy. And this pattern repeats itself in the book of Numbers. You may know Numbers 11 through 25 presents the second period, as it were, of testing in Israel's life as soon as they depart from Mount Sinai. And how does Numbers 25 end? With the second generation committing the same sin as the first generation, idolatry. They commit idolatry at Baal Peor. They exchange the glory of God in idolatry.

Now before turning back to Matthew 4, there's two questions that we need to ask and answer in order to deepen this theology of the wilderness and the first question is this:

why test Israel in the wilderness at all? Presumably God could have led them out of Egypt and immediately into the land of promise without any period of privation or testing. Indeed, God could have provided so much food and water along the way that they never felt any discomfort and were ushered in to inherit the promises. And so it's a valid question: why test Israel in the wilderness at all? And the basic answer is that the wilderness is the secluded training ground for public ministry in the land. Remember that Israel was created and redeemed by God for the sake of public ministry among the nations. Israel will be brought into the land to be a royal priesthood between God and the nations. Israel is called to be a servant of God and a light unto the nations. As Jesus put it in Matthew 5:7, Israel was called to let your good works be seen so that the nations would glorify your Father in heaven.

So Israel was called to live as an obedient son, bringing honor and glory to God the Father among the nations. This is their public ministry. And in the wilderness, we have a time and an area secluded for training. The wilderness serves as the secluded training ground for learning obedience before they can be allowed into the land for public ministry. Now we do this as well. Parents train and discipline their children in the seclusion of the home with the hopes that in public rather than bringing shame and dishonor to them and to God, they will bring honor to them and to God, and the wilderness was this home environment before setting Israel in the land. Remember, friends, Israel is not called out by God merely to create another ethnic political entity. No, Israel was brought forth out of Egypt for public ministry among the nations, and before setting Israel upon the pedestal of Mount Zion to be a city on a hill shining the light of the glory of God, Israel like every beloved son needed to be trained and disciplined in the wilderness so that it could be ready to be set up on this pedestal. You see, the great goal, the great end of Israel's existence is *Soli Deo Gloria*, to God alone be glory, and the wilderness was the place for Israel to learn this and primarily the lesson came in terms of glorifying God by obedience to his word.

By covenant bond, you see, Yahweh's name, his fame, his reputation was linked to Israel's trust and obedience, to Israel's love and loyalty, and so this is why when the first generation rejects their calling, refusing to enter into the land of promise in Numbers 13 and 14, that God simply needs to destroy the entire generation. Not only did Israel refuse to enter the land but they want to reverse the exodus, "Let us appoint ourselves a leader and go back to Egypt," they say. And you see, when this happens, they've completely rejected the very reason God created them and when this happens, we find God making a very curious statement that I don't think can be understood apart from the calling of Israel. In response to their defiance, in response to their unbelief and refusal to enter the land, the Lord says these words in Numbers 14, beginning with verse 20, he says, "truly, as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the LORD." Where did that come from? This was the very purpose that Israel, as it were, was frustrating at this moment. Israel was called to be this obedient son that the glory of the Lord might fill the earth. But the Lord continues, "because all these men who have seen My glory and the signs which I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, and have put Me to the test now these ten times, and have not heeded," they have not obeyed, "My voice, they certainly shall not see the land of which I swore to their fathers, nor shall any of those who rejected Me." Do you see

Israel's threefold failure there? They didn't heed the voice of the Lord, they tested the Lord, they rejected him in idolatry. But God continues saying, "But My servant Caleb, because he has a different spirit in him and has followed Me fully, I will bring into the land where he went, and his descendants shall inherit it."

So again, the agenda for Israel's public ministry is to spread the glory of God among the nations, and so when they refuse this calling, when they fail in the wilderness, yes, they need to be destroyed in the wilderness, to bring them into the land for public ministry would be worse than useless, worse than useless because they would bring and heap shame upon the name of God. And so that generation will not be allowed to enter but listen to how God describes the Israelites who is allowed to enter, Caleb. He describes Caleb as a servant who follows Yahweh obediently. It's all about the word of God and our obedience to it.

Now the book of Numbers, as you know, is followed by the book of Deuteronomy and the whole point of the book of Deuteronomy is to bring precisely these lessons to bear upon the second generation. The book of Deuteronomy is Moses pleading with the second generation, "When God brings you into the land, cling to His word, heed His word, obey His word. Live as an obedient son. Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and this is how you will be a blessing to the nations."

So that was the first question: why test Israel in the wilderness at all? Well, because the wilderness is the secluded training ground for public ministry. And the second question is this: why do the nations need Israel? And part of the answer is that the target of God's redemptive acts in history is the scattered nations and Israel is created to be the means to that end. You see, this question really brings us back to the tower of Babel episode in Genesis 11 where we read about all humanity gathered together for this great construction project, building a city with a tower whose top would reach into the heavens. And remember what their highest and deepest motivation for this building project was? "Let us make a name for ourselves." Name refers to honor, fame, reputation, glory. You see, the whole history of humanity and the history of redemption turns around this subject of glory. Humanity's heart is bent upon boasting in self, glorying in self, publishing and promoting one's own name throughout the ends of the earth, and this is why I think Paul loves the gospel so much and is so fond of asking that rhetorical questions, "Where then is boasting?" It's excluded by everything we've been talking about this week.

Well, as the story goes, they didn't exactly finish that building project. God comes down in judgment and he divides them into separate tongues which is into separate nations, and then he scatters them from his presence so that the nations are in exile. They are cut off from Yahweh God. They are without God and without hope in this world. They are utterly separated from God. And as you know, the very next chapter God raises up Abram and he creates the nation of Israel, promising that through the seed of Abraham all the families of the earth would be blessed. And he promises in Isaiah 2 that one day that tower of Babel judgment will be reversed and all the nations will be regathered, this time they will gather together streaming to the holy Mount Zion to the house built for God's

name, for the name of God, for his fame, for his reputation, for his glory. One day all the nations will be glad with the salvation of Yahweh and sing praises to his name.

And you see, it's within this context that Israel's calling is to bring blessing to the nations through its public ministry. Israel is to shine a light of the knowledge of the glory of God among the nations into the darkness of their hopeless plight. Israel was to be a living catechism in its international public ministry. When the nations saw Israel, they were to understand, "Oh, the chief end of man is to glorify God and not ourselves, and to enjoy Him." This again, this is Israel's international public ministry. This is their calling. And so friends, it's this very reality, isn't it, that makes Israel's utter failure such a profoundly devastating shame. I mean, why create an entirely new nation if its immediately going to leap headlong into the same profanation, sexual immorality and idolatry as all the other nations? And of course, it gets worse. They actually heap shame and dishonor and disgrace unto the name of Yahweh God. That was the verdict. "The name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you," Paul writes in Romans 2:24. He's just repeating the verdict of the prophets Isaiah, Ezekiel. And remember that God's name is God's glory.

So let's summarize our considerations so far. First of all, Israel is called to glorify God among the nations by obeying his voice. Like the exceptional Caleb, Israel is called to follow Yahweh closely. Secondly, the wilderness was the secluded training ground for Israel's public ministry in the land. And thirdly, Israel failed to glorify God in the wilderness in three steps: Israel disregarded the word of God, Israel tempted the Lord God, and Israel rejected God for idolatry. And then finally, we noted that Israel's very election was for the sake of God's agenda of bringing salvation to the nations.

So having that theology of the wilderness in mind, let's now then return to Matthew 4 and allow me, please, to make a few observations. First, of course, notice that Jesus' testing follows the threefold paradigm of Israel, replacing Israel's faithless disobedience each time with his own faithful obedience, and so this is how Jesus Christ glorifies God.

In response to the first temptation, Jesus says in verse 4, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.'" Obeying God's will is more important than food. He says that in John's gospel, doesn't he? "My food is to do the will of My Father who sent Me." And this means that there simply is no greater priority for us than heeding the word of God, and this point is underscored in as much as all three responses are Jesus' quotation of Scripture. In all three responses, he's particularly quoting the book of Deuteronomy which is Israel's charter for how to live a life to the glory of God. So rather than disregarding the word of God, Jesus clings to it. He upholds it. He honors the word of God.

And in the second testing when tempted to force God's hand for a presumptuous act, Jesus responds, verse 7, "It is written again, 'You shall not test the LORD your God.'" And he's quoting Deuteronomy 6:16 there. If you turn to Deuteronomy 6:16 you see the fuller quote actually includes a direct reference to Massah of Exodus 17. "I will not presume upon God's goodness. I will not call God's being and character into question."

Then in the third temptation when promised all the kingdoms of the world and their glory in exchange for idolatry, Jesus full of holy indignation cries out, "Away with you, Satan! For it is written." You see, there's no human wisdom here, there's no dialog. It's simple repetition of the word of God. "It is written, 'You shall worship the LORD your God, and Him only you shall serve.'" And notice that this last temptation is not prefaced by, "If You are the Son of God," because of course, the temptation itself is calling upon him to abandon God and to abandon his own status as the Son of God which is precisely what Israel did in the wilderness. And more than this, this temptation unveils Satan's deep-seated desire to deflect glory away from God and to bring it upon himself.

And if to obey the word of God is what glorifies God, then Satan's greatest goal in our lives is disobedience to the word of God in our everyday lives. Here in the wilderness he uses every possible means to deflect Jesus from obedience to the word of God. Horribly he tries to drive a wedge between the beloved Son and the faithful Father. And so, yes, we see the threefold paradigm here but it's inverted, a refusal to disregard the word of God, a refusal to tempt the Lord his God, and a refusal to exchange the glory of God in idolatry. So, yes, where Israel failed, Jesus the true Israelite, Jesus the obedient Son succeeds. He honors God the Father and renders God obedience to the glory of his name.

A second observation to make and this also is in keeping with the wilderness theology, is that Jesus' testing in the wilderness is also a prelude to his public ministry in the land. In fact, Jesus actually, his testing here functions as a summary of the gospel of Matthew itself. Notice, for example, the geography of testing, how it moves from the wilderness to the holy city and the temple, and to a mountain, precisely the movement that we find tracked throughout the gospel of Matthew. And notice the pattern. The first two tests questioned with this phrase, "If You are the Son of God," and then the third test is about the kingdoms of the world and their glory in relation to worship, and what we find is that the first section of Matthew ends in chapters 14 through 16 with Jesus feeding the people of God in the wilderness, followed by Peter's declaration, "You are the Son of God." He proves that he's the Son of God not by feeding himself but by feeding others.

And then the second section of Matthew ends in chapters 26 and 27 in Jerusalem and we find in there an allusion to Psalm 91, the very Psalm that Satan quoted. You recall in the garden of Gethsemane where Jesus said, "Don't you know that right now I could call upon My Father and there would be 12 legions of angels to deliver Me?" Why didn't he do it? How else would the Scriptures be fulfilled? And then as he hung on the cross of agony, being tortured, the echo of Satan's temptation came around as the crowds proclaimed, "If You are the Son of God, come down from the cross and save Yourself." But notice that it is when he gives in to the suffering and death that is the Father's will that the Centurion proclaims, "Truly this is the Son of God." He proves he's the Son of God not through angelic deliverance but through submission to the Father's will, even submission to suffering judgment and death.

Then, of course, the third section of Matthew ends on a mountain in chapter 28 when we are told that Jesus himself is worshipping in that the nations have been granted to him by

God. In the third temptation, Satan had offered him all the kingdoms of this world and their glory but Jesus rejected that for he's not seeking the glory and the boasted pomp of the world. Far from committing idolatry to claim the nations, the goal of Jesus is for the nations themselves to glorify and honor God in worship. So upon his resurrection, Jesus the obedient Son, is given all authority in heaven and on earth and he commissions the apostles to go forth into all the world and to disciple the nations into obedience. It is through their obedience that the nations will render glory unto God. Having redeemed the nations with his own blood, he will now train those nations how to glorify God with his own Spirit.

So clearly, then, Jesus' testing in the wilderness was the training ground for his public ministry. In the wilderness his heart was molded and shaped, his will was trained. He grew by the sufferings that he endured. He matured under them so that he was ready to accomplish all that the Lord God had sent him to accomplish. He demonstrated in the wilderness the priority of the word of God in his life so that he can bring Israel's calling to fruition that all the nations might know the blessings of the salvation of our God.

Let me give us a third observation and that is that Jesus' obedience renders glory unto God because it is a loving God-ward obedience. Now Deuteronomy is the great backdrop to our text and Deuteronomy is the text that establishes that true obedience means God-ward love. It's animated by a love for God. So we're not talking about when we discuss the fulfillment of the law on Jesus' part, we're not talking, of course, about outward conformity to the law, neither are we speaking about merely a horizontal interaction between a tempter and one tempted. No, Deuteronomy describes obedience as God-ward love and this is precisely what we find here in the heart of Jesus in the wilderness.

Have you ever noticed how every response of Jesus to Satan in the wilderness amounts to a defense of his Father's honor? He doesn't just say no to Satan, he zealously defends the reputation of God. "Man lives not by bread but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God. That is what is precious to Me, what proceeds from the mouth of God. That is My joy, My life. Don't tempt Me to put something above the word of My God and Father." And he doesn't just simply refuse to leap from the pinnacle of the temple, he says, "It is written, 'You shall not test the Lord your God.'" That is what makes this sin, this leaping so heinous. "I will not impugn My God. I will not force His hand. I will not try to bend His will to My own will. I will not put a test before God that if He doesn't accomplish, if He doesn't act, if He doesn't intervene and suddenly He's not God and I'm not His loyal follower. I'll not force God's hand." Then of course, in the third temptation his refusal to bow down to Satan is a zealous guarding of the exclusive devotion owed to God alone. "Away with you, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the LORD your God, and Him only,'" him only, "shall you serve."

Every response of Jesus Christ is just filled with his devotion and love for God the Father and we have to understand that every temptation of Satan is an attack on God the Father. Law-keeping is not horizontal, friends, it's about our love for God. But now consider with me that the Son's love of the Father is an eternal love. His seeking the Father's honor springs from an eternally flowing wellspring, and so only imagine how throughout the

annals of human history human life must have grieved the heart of the Son. Not one single human life lived utterly to the glory of God. From Adam's downward plunge and onward, all of humanity's acts have been tainted and stained by self-will and pride, even the thoughts and words and deeds of God's own people. Think of David, one of the central characters of the Old Testament, and how he heaped shame upon the favor that God demonstrated upon him, David who had a heart after God's own heart committing adultery and murder. Yes, even as God's people, real disobedience brings real dishonor and real displeasure to God. And I say just think about the Son's heart so zealous for the glory of God the Father throughout all the generations of history. Then think about the people outside of God's people, the rest of humanity. Every word, thought, and deed committed for the sake of self. Every moment of life, every eating and drinking done to the shame and the scorn of the name of God.

Now you and I know what it's like when someone mistreats or dishonors someone we love. Imagine, for example, a mother spending time with her son and his family only to discover that her son's wife has no true love for her son. Even as simple human beings, we know how grievous that is to the heart. Imagine she overhears her son telling his wife that he has important business in the morning so he has to wake up extra early and she overhears her daughter-in-law responding to him, "Well, make your own breakfast. Don't wake me up. Leave me alone." We know how that would grieve a mother's heart and we know precisely what a mother would do in the morning. Now I'm not talking about your Type A moms, I'm talking about your meek gentle mothers. But you know what she'll do. The son will arise early in the morning to discover that she had woken up much earlier and out of both love and deep sorrow she would have prepared for him a grand feast. In other words, the mother will do for her son what his wife would not do for her husband.

But now I say think again of the Son's care for the Father's glory and the Father's honor throughout human history, and how it must have grieved his heart. No one righteous, no, not one. How humanity had blasphemed the name of the Son's dear Father. We can almost picture his heart beating with this zeal and this desire to honor God until that desire has to blossom forth into the incarnation. "Here I am, send Me. Prepare for Me a body. I come to do Your will, O God." He comes not only to fulfill Israel's vocation but humanity's creation. What you and I would not do for our maker, Jesus out of an eternal love for his Father takes upon himself to do.

So he takes upon our flesh in order to render glory unto God and, you see, this is the loving adoration that we see here in the wilderness. In all of his trusting submission and comprehensive obedience to the Father, this is the Son's driving aim and chief motivation. It comes out in everything he says. The disciples say, "Teach us how to pray." Jesus gives them the first petition, "Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Your name." And he fleshes that out with the second and third petition, God's kingdom will come when his will is done on earth as it is in heaven. Everything Jesus says, everything he does he seeks the honor of his Father. This is what the Son yearns for. It is for this that he lives. It is for this that he preaches. It is for this that he heals. It is for this that he dies. This is the one common unifying denominator in all of Jesus' life, loving obedience to the honor of God. It's what brings unity to everything he says and does and

that means that the incarnation is first and foremost a defense of the honor of God the Father.

Well, it's evident in Jesus' responses to the devil, as I mentioned, he quotes from Deuteronomy particularly, Deuteronomy 6 through 8. This is the main background for Matthew's presentation of Christ's testing in the wilderness. And as you know, Deuteronomy 6:4-5 is the very heart of this section. It's the heart of the whole book of Deuteronomy, the so-called Shema. "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one! You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength." There's a rich history of Jewish interpretation that connects Israel's threefold failure in the wilderness to the Shema, to loving God with heart, soul and strength, and it goes like this. So to love God with undivided heart means that you cherish his word above all sustenance, above bread. And secondly, loving God with one's soul means that you're willing to lose your soul, which in Hebrew means life, for the sake of God, that is, if God decides to withhold his protection from death, you will not deny him, you will love him with your soul. And then strength was understood as property, possession, wealth, and in Deuteronomy 6 and 8 Moses pleads with the people, "When God brings you into the land you inherit all this property and enjoy all these riches, take heed that you do not forget the Lord your God and go and worship and serve false gods, rather you should love the Lord your God with all your strength."

And you see, from this perspective we have an open window into Israel in the wilderness, don't we? Israel's disobedience, it's so shameful even to think about that we're just creatures made of dust who owe God everything, but Israel had no love for Yahweh God. Israel had a divided heart, a divided soul, divided strength. And what about you tonight, my friend? When we look to Jesus here in the wilderness, this is what we see, friends. It's underneath the surface perhaps but we see Jesus loving God with all his heart, with all his soul, with all his strength. We see in his obedience the Son rendering unto God glory and honor, and my basic point this whole night is that he does this through obedience to the word of God. It's that simple.

Well, let me make a fourth and final observation and that is that the cross is at the center of Christ's obedience which means that the cross is really at the center of each of the three temptations. After fasting 40 days and 40 nights, Jesus is hungry with a hunger unto death but he's submitting to the Father's will. The temptation is to distrust the Father and to reject God in order to preserve himself, presumably to avoid death by feeding himself. And similarly the second test isn't about leaping from the temple but rather about calling upon angelic deliverance to save him from death so that he would not dash his foot against a stone. And we've already noted that in the garden of Gethsemane after Jesus was praying such an anguished prayer that the sweat was like drops of blood, that this was on his mind. This was the temptation he had overcome so that as soon as Peter draws his sword, he says, "Don't you know I could call upon angelic deliverance?" And we've already noted how when he was wracked on the cross, the cross of torment when every pained molecule of his body was straining to submit to the judgment of God, that the temptation came back, "If You're the Son of God, come down from the cross, save Yourself." In this third test, Satan goes to the very heart of Jesus' mission. Jesus had come

to reclaim the nations through the redemption of the cross and Satan says, "I'll give You the kingdoms now. Take the glory, take the pomp without the suffering."

And so what we see here in the wilderness, friends, is that out of love for his Father, Jesus offers up a threefold embrace of the cross. Here in the wilderness, in the training ground for public ministry, he embraces the very instrument of his own death. Simply put, loving, God-ward obedience requires self-mortification. But friends, through the cross of suffering, through the cross of death, the obedient Son was embracing the Father he so loved. It was through submission to the cross that the Son gave his Dad the tightest hug he had ever given him. And friends, this is why the cross is the act of obedience that renders glory unto God. John Owen wrote that the cross was the most glorious spectacle unto God, that through the cross Jesus set a crown of glory on the head of the law, that through the cross Christ was glorifying the holiness and justice of God so that God was well-pleased, satisfied and reconciled unto sinners. The heart, soul and strength with which Jesus loved his Father all the days of his life, that life of ever-hallowing the name of his Father, he then laid upon the altar as a sweet-smelling aroma to his Father.

Mark Jones wrote in his book "Knowing Christ": the sweet aroma of Christ's death pleased and glorified God more than he was dishonored by the sins of all people everywhere. What a majestic thought that is. When the Apostle Paul speaks of Jesus' obedience in Philippians 2, he tells us that he was obedient unto death, even, even the death of the cross, and that tells us that fundamentally the cross is an act of obedience from a Son to his Father, therefore, Paul goes on God has highly exalted him and even this exaltation, we go on to read, is to the glory of God the Father. Everything Jesus does, everything he accomplishes is to the glory of God the Father because it's all through obedience to God the Father. Everything he does is for this breath-taking goal. If we want to know what Soli Deo Gloria looks like, we look to Christ and we see how through his obedience he has glorified God. And so as the period of Jesus' testing ends, God as a token of his approval and pleasure with his Son, he sends angels to minister unto him. I believe that that's a foretaste of the exaltation that awaited Christ after his completed work on earth was done.

Well, friends, as we conclude, it would be a deep mistake to think that the Son's eternal zeal for the Father could ever be satisfied merely by his own singular incarnate thoughts, words and deeds, that this one human body at one definite period in human history, rendering glory unto God the Father, this friends, was not the end-all of the Son's desire. No, the incarnation was but the very beginning of fulfilling Jesus' desire to see the Father glorified. The Son's taking upon himself our flesh and our humanity as one individual human person in history who lived to the glory of God was supposed to be just but the drop that falls into a placid lake sending ripple upon ripple upon ripple throughout the extent of the body of water. That means that the Son will not be satisfied until you and I render unto God the Father loving, trusting submission to him and so render him glory. Jesus, in other words, is in the wilderness as an obedient Son, not only as our substitute, and praise God that he is that, but he's also there as our forerunner and leader in the life that renders glory to God. Jesus obeyed God in the wilderness by his faith. By the power of the Holy Spirit, he trusted and obeyed the word of God and God's people are called to

live in Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit self-denying lives to the glory of God the Father, and the indwelling Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Christ who conforms our crooked, bent wills and hearts and minds so that they'll be conformed to the will and heart and mind of the Lord Jesus Christ. And it is this Spirit who sheds abroad the love of God in our hearts and he implants the Son's love for the Father within our hearts so that we might obey the word of God out of love for God, not out of slavery and servanthood but as sons and daughters of the living God.

But friends, all of this means that you and I must be convinced and convicted that mundane obedience to God's word on Monday morning in our daily spheres of life in marriage, in family, at church, at work, in the world, that this is precisely the place where we need to submit ourselves to the word of God and render him obedience. I wonder sometimes if SDG is the most abused phrase in our circles. It's one thing to attach it to works of accomplishment and as I said, that's well and good, but if we really want to glorify God, then other questions come like how faithful am I being to my wife? How am I enjoying and delighting in the Sabbath day? You see, our obedience in our mundane spheres of life, this, friends, is what renders God glory above and beyond anything that we can accomplish for his name. Through his Spirit, Jesus Christ purposes to brand SDG on our mundane everyday lives. The house mom on Tuesday morning feeding her children and training them up glorifies God more than anyone winning a Super Bowl who bows down and gives a little prayer.

Friends, this is what it means to glorify God, simple, comprehensive obedience to the word of God in our daily callings, in our daily lives, in our daily spheres. We know of many Christian artists and singers and painters who have God's name strewn about all of their works but you peer into their lives and there's an utter disregard for the word of God, for the day of the Lord, for all the things that God tells us pleases him. And so friends, if I may give a brief word to the pastors among us, if this is true anywhere, this is true in the public worship of God. The regulative principle is meant to put away all human reasoning, wisdom and innovation and with simple faith believing that God says what pleases him pleases him, and rendering unto God simple obedience.

Well, at the end of the Bible in Revelation 21, we read about the kings of all the earth bringing the glories and splendors of their nations into the new Jerusalem unto God. Walking in the light of Jesus Christ, the nations stream into the new Jerusalem to praise, worship, glorify and honor God's name, God's reputation, God's fame, and friends, it was for that day that Jesus denied himself all the kingdoms and their glory. It was for that day that Jesus embraced the cross of suffering, and it was for that day that Jesus at the end of Matthew's gospel sends out the apostles to go into all the world and make disciples of the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey. May God speed that day for the sake of Christ and his church, for God's own glory, "For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen."

Our blessed God and Father, how we praise You for the Lord Jesus Christ and, oh, how He loved You every moment of His life. And we pray, God, that by Your Holy Spirit we

would know this love. We pray, God, that by Your Spirit You would conform us to Christ, that You would renew our zeal to honor You through obedience to Your word. We depend upon You, Holy Spirit, to bring the increase but we pray trusting Your promise, heavenly Father, that Your word will not return to You void but that it will come back to You with bountiful fruit to Your glory, to Your name. In Jesus' name. Amen.