

A Son Never Forgets (ASNf)

Many of you may not know the name Carl Brashear, but I can assure you, he was the first of his kind. He would enlist in the United States Navy and become the first African American U.S. Navy Master Diver, but be not mistaken, along his road to glory he would face many obstacles including racism, poverty, and injustice. During these times of difficulty he would remember the words of his father. For his father would constantly speak over him his strength, courage, and power, but the greatest gift his father would give him was 4 letters engraved on a wooden box, the letters **“ASNf.”** The acronym stood for **“A Son Never Forgets.”** While Carl Brashear would face pain, fear, and uncertainty, he would revert back to those letters “ASNf” from his father. See the greatest gift this father gave his son was an identity.

It is no secret Summit, we find ourselves in an identity crisis. Our world has been turned upside down; it seems that life has come apart at the seams, that the pandemic of Covid-19 has hit us with an unexpected blow. See when our foundations are shaken, when life is no longer what it used to be, we find ourselves questioning God, doubting who he is. We find ourselves contemplating questions like, “Has God forgotten about us?” “Why would he allow this to happen?” “If God wanted me to trust in him more, then why would he do this?”

Though I may not be able to answer all those questions of uncertainty, what I can say for sure is that, for those of us who believe in God, even when our foundations are shaken, we still know who we are. We still have an identity. Though tomorrow may be uncertain, we are certain that our God will never leave nor forsake us, for we are his children. We know who we are, **“A Son Never Forgets.”**

If this doubt has gripped you like it has gripped me, I want to encourage you to join me in Matthew 4. Here we find Christ in the wilderness, a place of struggle, a place of danger, a place of uncertainty, a place of doubt, much like where we find ourselves today. Not only is he in the

wilderness, but he is also going to be tempted by Satan. Many of you already know this story right, that Christ would overcome Satan by the use of scripture. While that is true, there is one thing that I missed. Though Christ would use scripture to defeat Satan, the confidence that he possessed to do so came from the affirmation of his father's words, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased."

As you turn to Matthew 4:1-11, I must stop by Matthew 3, for it's an amazing scene. I wish we could have been there because the Son of God is about to be baptized, and all of heaven has shown up to witness this event. It was what I call a trinitarian moment, all three members of the Godhead were there, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Spirit were present at the inauguration of Christ's public ministry. As he comes out of the water, the Spirit of God descends upon him and his father makes a speech, "This is my beloved son, with whom I am well pleased." This kodak moment was short lived, for he would be suddenly pushed into the wilderness (like David Psalms 23). It is in this wilderness that Satan would tempt him with 3 things: desire, manipulation and submission, but hear me. Though Satan is crafty, he is not creative because of this Christ defeats him through scripture. He never forgot the words of his father, for "A Son Never Forgets."

Test of Desire (Matt. 4:1- 4)

V1 says "Immediately Christ was led to the wilderness by the spirit of God;" it means that this was God's idea, that God was not on the defensive in this matter but on the offensive. Now be not mistaken (James 1:13 ESV), God does not tempt anyone, but he allows his son to be tempted for the same reason he allows you and I to be tempted - So that he can demonstrate his power and authority over Satan. Hear me, God can allow us to walk through the valley, to walk through this pandemic, because he knows in the end we will be victorious. Christ finds

himself in the wilderness, a barren place, no food, no shelter, a place of uncertainty, unpredictability, and to top it all off he has been fasting for the past 40 days and 40 nights. In this moment it is as if Christ reaches back in time to the Old Testament to connect with his ancestors, for Israel was in the wilderness, not for 40 days, but 40 years. Both Israel and Jesus would be tested in that same wilderness. Israel failed, but this time Christ would succeed. So it is with us. When we failed to live up to God's standards, Christ succeeded.

Satan watches Jesus go without food for 40 days and proceeds to direct his temptation accordingly. In **V3** he says "If you are the Son of God, turn these stones into bread." The first word out of Satan's mouth was the word "if" - meaning to question something, to lack full assurance. What Satan tosses out to our Savior is an ounce of doubt even though just a few verses earlier God told Jesus "You are my beloved son, with whom I am well pleased." Satan takes out the period in God's statement and inserts a question mark, much like he does with us. Just like he did with Adam and Eve. If he can just get you and I to see a question mark instead of a period in God's statements, then that is all he needs. What Satan is really asking is "Are you really who you say you are? You have been fasting and serving God and he lets you go hungry, since you claim to have all power, feed yourself." Does this not jog your memory to Exodus Chapter 16? When Israel would be in the wilderness, sadly they were more concerned about the fear of being hungry than walking with and trusting in God, but even in their rebellion God still provided manna from heaven for them.

With this in mind Christ throws a direct blow back at his opponent from **Deut 8:3** and says "Man shall not live on bread alone." What Christ is saying here is that while our physical needs and desires are important, the most important need is to trust in God. Contradicting the belief that God will not give me what I want, I must take matters into my own hands; being fearful and doubtful that he sees my needs or cares for my desires. We've all done this - "God, I

asked you to take away this fear of the pandemic. I asked you to provide a job for me. I asked you to bring me someone whom I can love and you're late. You are just not coming through and not moving fast enough, so I need to manufacture my next move because you are just not making it happen." I know these are true prayers and concerns, but Christ offers us an alternative by quoting **Deut 8:3. V4** begins with the word "BUT" - it is the diving conjunction changing the whole sentence. Do you not see it in Genesis 50 with Joseph? (did you want to elaborate here?)

"Man shall not live by bread alone **BUT** by every word out of the mouth of God." If we are honest, many of us doubt that God will provide for his people, but let me remind you that he knows what we need before we can even ask (**Matt. 6:8**) because of that we can delight ourselves in the Lord, for he will give us the desires of our hearts **Ps. 37:4.**

In the face of fear and doubt, Christ quotes **Duet. 8:3** with confidence all because he never forgot who his father was and what his father said about him. He never forgot his identity. His faith, hope, and peace were all built on the character of his father, all built on what his father said of him, and that has to be the same for us. The power to defeat Satan is all bound up in our confidence in God's word, in who he says he is and who he says we are. So say this prayer of confession and faith with me...

- **Prayer of confession:** Lord forgive me for doubting that you would provide_____.
- **Prayer of faith:** Lord, give me the confidence that you know and see my needs and desires will fulfill them according to your word.
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Test of Manipulation (Matt. 4:5-7)

Now we are in round two of this three round bout, and in **V6** Satan ups the ante, he raises the stakes, literally. In the last round Christ punched with the Word of God, so Satan says

“Let me return the favor” and quotes Psalm 91. V6 says “If you are the son of God throw yourself down.” He has taken Christ to the pinnacle, the highest peak of the temple and says “If you are the son of God, prove it, jump! Put your God to the test, for surely he would not let your foot strike a stone.” If you have not picked up on it yet, Satan’s main tactic is **doubt**. I told you before he is crafty but not creative; if he can just drip an ounce of doubt in our faith, it will spark the flames of unbelief.

Do you not see the moxie here? He is literally trying to get Christ to twist the arm of God, urging him to manipulate his father. If we can be honest we have all done the same thing - “God, if you are really good then prove it, give me that job.” “God, if you really love me, prove it, give me that relationship.” “God, if you are all powerful, prove it; lift this virus and give me my life back.” I know these are all real concerns but can I be honest? We do not have the right to tell God to tap dance for us, we do not have the right to tell God to jump and expect him to say “how high?” Here is what I want us to be aware of, every question Satan asks Jesus, either starts with or has an **“if” in** it. Hear me, I do not know if Satan desires the world to become atheist, but I do know that he desires every Christian to doubt God! It is a slight of hand trick, if I can just get Summit to stay focused on this pandemic, to worry about what they need or what they don’t have, if I can just keep us preoccupied with fear about tomorrow, then their relationship with God will be disrupted. Hear me, doubt makes it harder to see God for who he is. Is it not funny how **one moment of doubt can erase years of truth**.

In V7, Christ comes back on the scene and, after seeing that Satan has attended some Awana classes lol, he does not object to Satan’s correct quoting of scripture. He responds, “While you memorized the verse correctly, your hermeneutics were off, your application is wrong.” He then quotes Duet. 6:16, the correct passage and says “You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.” If you can remember, this is where the Israelites were complaining of their

thirst to Moses. God told Moses to strike a rock and out flowed water, but what also flowed from that rock was the true heart of Israel. They never trusted God, for they kept wanting him to prove himself to them. In this verse Christ does it again, every scripture that Christ quotes ultimately goes back to reminding him of his security and identity in God. Summit family, the same needs to go for us; when doubt of God's goodness arises, we too should quote scripture that forces us back to our security and identity in Christ (Ps. 43:5) "Why are you downcast oh my soul and why are you turmoil within me? Hope in God." (Ps. 16:2, 5-6, 11) "I have no good thing apart from you, my portion and inheritance. In your presence there is fullness of joy and at your right hand are pleasures forevermore." I need not twist the arm of God to prove his love and care for me, for he has proven that by giving his son to die for me.

But I get it, sometimes life knocks us off our feet, and in those moments it is ok to give those doubts to God our father, much like the father in Mark 9:24 who when asking Jesus to heal his son, said "Lord I believe but help my unbelief."

Test of Submission (Matt 4:8-10)

We are now in the last round. Satan has thrown some great jabs, but each time Christ has countered. Now Satan throws one last Hail Mary in hopes of defeating Christ. Something seems to change, see the last two questions Satan started with "if," but in V9 he says "since you are the son of God let me offer you another way." He took Christ to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms and their glory saying, "All of this I will give you, if you fall down to worship me."

He places before Christ a mighty empire, one that would embrace the whole world. This is a real temptation because, if Christ accepts, he would be able to rule the world with perfect justice erasing all evil. This is huge, is this not what the prophet Isaiah (32:1) said he came for?

To rule the world with righteousness and justice. Be not mistaken, Satan knew the path Christ was destined to walk and offered him a lesser road, one with no pain, no suffering and more importantly no cross. He says “you are a son, so why be a servant? You are a king, why be crucified? Do you really have to die?” It’s the same old trick - doubt. Let us not be fooled, Satan wants you and I to doubt our full submission to God. “Do I really have to give to the needy right now, I mean life is tough enough as it is?” “Do I really have to have that much integrity at my job?” “Do I really need to give God all of my heart, soul, mind and strength?” “Isn’t Sunday morning church enough, why not let me keep the rest of the week to myself?”

Satan always offers an easy way out of God’s commands, but following Satan always comes with a cost. Satan offers Christ comfort, only mountain tops never any valleys, and that is what he offers you and I. That we do not have to fully submit to God’s will, but Christ says something different in [Luke 9:23](#) “If anyone comes after me he must deny himself and take up his cross daily.” Christ hears this offer and with authority he quotes [Deut. 6:13](#), “Be gone Satan! For it is written ‘you shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve.’” Christ says “Satan you got me, you know the road I must take. Yes, it is filled with betrayal, deception, sorrow, injustice, brokenness and pain, but you overlooked one thing.” [Romans 8:28](#) states, “That for those who love God, all things work together for good for those who are called according to his purpose.” Christ says, “I will serve God and submit to the plan he has for me.” Hear me, if we live for God, though the road may not be easy we know that in the end everything will be alright.

I know it’s a scary thought to fully submit to God; I hear the fear, “How do I know that if I submit to God, he is going to protect me, provide for me, care for me?” [Numbers 23:19](#) answers your questions; God can not lie, and since we are his children, he has to provide and care for us. If Matthew 4 was just an example of how we should not doubt God and how we should

respond to temptation then we have failed. We might get it right for a while, but we will eventually doubt again. The beauty of Matthew 4, is that Jesus is not just showing us a good example, he is becoming our substitute, for every time we fail he is going to say, "I will pay for that one." This reminds me of the great jazz player, Miles Davis, one night his band was playing a gig and his famed piano player, Herbie Hancock, mistakenly played the wrong cord. In fear that he would be reprimanded, he looked at Miles Davis. Miles looked back at him and played a note that erased his mistake.

This is the beauty of Matthew 4 and the beauty of the Gospel, where you and I failed to trust God and live up to his standards Christ did not. Christ played the right note to erase our sin. While we have forgotten who we are, Christ never forgot his identity, and just in case you have forgotten who you are let me remind you. - You are co-heirs with Christ, selected before the foundations of the world, you are the sweet aroma of Christ, fearfully and wonderfully made. Though we have trouble in this world, take heart Christ has overcome the world. "We are afflicted but not crushed, perplexed but not driven to despair, persecuted but not forsaken, cast down but not destroyed. For we are a chosen people, royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession. We have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer we who live but Christ who lives in us, for that reason surely goodness and mercy shall follow us all the days of our lives and we shall dwell in the house of the Lord.

I'm not saying that after this sermon you will never doubt again, but when we doubt, we must quote scripture reminding us of who God is and who he says we are. Do me a favor and find six scriptures, three that point you back to who God is and three that tell you who you are. In the wilderness Christ defeated Satan because he never forgot the words of his father "This is my son with whom I am well pleased" and he never forgot who he was. Even when the world is upside down...A Son Never Forgets.

