

“During that time the devil came and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become loaves of bread.” Matthew 4:3 NLT

## lectio // Matthew 4:1-11

It is so interesting that this passage out of Matthew comes just a couple of weeks after I did a sermon series for our church's 21 day prayer and fasting. So, the thoughts are still fresh in my mind. When I studied these verses, I came to realize that Satan was trying to get Jesus to question his identity. Remember this short, but extraordinary story comes right after Jesus was baptized and God spoke over him, “THIS IS MY BELOVED SON,” (all caps intentional). So Satan beginning the process of eroding Jesus identity starts with a two letter question, “if.” Do we realize the power behind the word “if?” We tend to be quite negative about ourselves and often project those dark possibilities onto our circumstances ahead of us - things that have not even happened yet! A doctor's negative report, an employer's call into see them, a teacher who flashes a disappointing look your way. We take those “if” moments and palpate our hearts and grind our teeth acting like our world is about to end, when it could be exactly the opposite of truth! And, when it comes to Jesus' identity or our own identity in God - it becomes critical to get it right. DON'T believe the lie of Satan when he tries to define who you are or gets you to believe something other than the truth of who you are in Christ! Jesus responded, no, he countered with truth from the Bible, in Deuteronomy of all places. “But Jesus told him, “No! The Scriptures say, ‘People do not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.’” People ask is the Bible true or can I even know real truth? Jesus absolutely settled that question. Yes! You absolutely can believe the Bible and know truth in its pages. Jesus wasn't going to be swindled into some cheap demonstration of his IDENTITY to satisfy himself for the moment, or show off a display of power like a rock star (see vs 5-7). Nor was he going to take a shortcut to accomplish his mission (see vs 8,9) bypassing the necessary suffering and even death to satisfy the law and payment for our sin - ALL of OUR sins. The most important issue to settle as a follower of Jesus IS your identity. And Satan will do anything to sidetrack that.

Dad,

I am and will forever be grateful to know who I am in you and what you have declared as truth about me - I am a son of God, adopted into your family. My sins are forgiven and I am free to be who you have designed me to be and do the things you've called and gifted for me to accomplish. I will not bow or be bothered by any lies of the enemy of my soul for you have said, “it is written!”

## contemplatio

rest in the presence of God, allowing the words revealed to take root