



Good Shepherd
Sermon-Based Study Guide
Matthew 4:1-11| February 22, 2026
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I. Introduction to this Study

We begin our Lenten journey by following Jesus into the wilderness. Lent (from an Old English word meaning “lengthening of days”) became, by the 4th century, a 40-day season of preparation leading up to Easter. It is a time of repentance, fasting, and renewal. Purple reminds us that this is a season of both royalty and repentance.

In Matthew 3:16–17, Jesus is affirmed at His baptism: “This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.” In Matthew 4:12–17, after the wilderness, Jesus begins preaching: “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near.”

Between affirmation and mission comes testing. Lent invites us to walk that same road of preparation before celebration.

II. Connecting with One Another

Have you ever experienced a “wilderness season”? A time of testing or waiting? What did it reveal about your faith?

III. Study the Text

Read Matthew 4:1–11

- What is the difference between temptation that pulls us toward sin and testing that strengthens faith?
- Why do you think significant moments in Scripture are often preceded by seasons of hardship (40 days, 40 years, etc.)?

Read Matthew 4:3–4; Deuteronomy 8:1–3

- What is Satan really challenging when he says, “If you are the Son of God...”?
- Where are you tempted to meet legitimate needs in illegitimate ways?
- What would it look like to trust that we do not live “on bread alone”?



Read *Matthew 4:5–7; Exodus 17:1–7*

- What does it mean to “test” God?
- When are you tempted to demand proof of God’s presence instead of trusting His promises?

Read *Matthew 4:8–10*

- How is this final temptation about worship and allegiance?
- Where are you tempted to pursue success, comfort, or influence without surrender?

IV. Reflect and Respond

- Which of the three temptations feels most familiar in your life right now—provision, proof, or power?
- What “shortcuts” are most tempting for you during this season?
- If Lent is a season of preparation, what might God be preparing in you?

V. Prayer

Spend time in prayer together:

- Thank Jesus for resisting temptation and remaining faithful.
- Confess areas where you’ve sought shortcuts or tested God.
- Ask for a deeper hunger for God’s Word and a stronger allegiance to Him alone.

VI. Digging Deeper

During Lent, we invite you to participate in the **Stations of the Cross** here at Good Shepherd.

This tradition began in the early centuries of the church, when pilgrims retraced Jesus’ final steps along the *Via Dolorosa* (“Way of Suffering”) in Jerusalem. Because not everyone could travel there, churches created local stations to help believers prayerfully walk through Jesus’ journey to the cross.

Our church has created a modified 12-station experience that concludes with the resurrection.

How it works:

- Move at your own pace (about 20–30 minutes).
- Read the Scripture at each station.
- Use the QR code for guided reflection and prayer.
- Come alone, with your family, or with your Life Group.

Jesus’ journey began in the wilderness and ended at the cross.

Lent invites us to walk that road with Him—so that Easter joy will be deeper and more real.

