

CHAPEL, JANUARY 10, 1934

-- President Wright

Scripture Lesson: Fourth Chapter Matthew, 11 verses

We have in our Bible lesson this morning what is usually spoken of as the temptation that came to Jesus, and many of us have been led to believe that these are the only temptations that came to Jesus. Jesus was human as well as divine and that means that He was constantly being tempted, and found it necessary to go aside and be with God in prayer, many, many times during His ministry, and that He might hold to the mission He had come to earth to fulfill. After His baptism, according to Matthew, He went out into the wilderness and fasted for forty days. We do not have very much in the Bible about what He did those forty days. One can draw on his imagination, and reach a multitude of conclusions. Jesus had come to John the Baptist and been baptized, and received His commission, as He interpreted it, to show the world the right way to live, that He was the long-looked-for Messiah of the Jews. We often forget, however, that Jesus was human, just as human as you and I. We also forget quite often that you and I are divine and that it behooves us as it behooved Jesus to follow the direction of the divine that is within us. But in this lesson we are to see the human side of Jesus. There come several periods in every life that mark changes. The period of adolescence is sometimes spoken of as the critical period in life. It is the time when human beings change from childhood to manhood or womanhood. There is that period in the life of Jesus when the Jewish boy became a Jewish citizen. (An American boy or girl is a citizen from the time he is born.) That was when Jesus was about twelve years old. We have a record of him at that time. Another critical period that comes to every thoughtful, serious person is the time when he is trying to make up his mind definitely what he is going to do in this world. If you have never had that serious decision to make it would be well for you to give some thought to it; you are at the right age. When you think of the various things in this world to be done, and when you look into your own soul and find out what talent lies there, then apply it in the field of human activity where you are best fitted to labor. That is the period

when these temptations came to Christ. After spending forty days meditating--and I am sure that is how Jesus spent the time--looking over the whole field of human activity, He definitely decided within His heart and soul to carry on as the Son of God. Then He became hungry; His physical body needed food. If you will worship me, said the Devil, I will feed you. This is the first temptation that came to Him, a temptation with reference to His physical and temporal existence. I sometimes think that is the first temptation that comes to all of us, a temptation to give our lives to the devil, if necessary, in order that we may make the greatest possible advancement in things temporal, the meat-and-bread side of life, bank account--things we cannot take with us, things we can use only in the few years we have our temporal existence on earth.

This is the first temptation Matthew records. It is a universal temptation. Jesus answered it.