



## Week 1: Tested

*Rev. Dr. Dirk Rodgers, Executive Pastor*

*Bethany Church*

## **Sermon Notes: Week 1 — Tested**

### **1. His TEST**

*“Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.” Matthew 4:1 (NIV 2011)*

### **2. Our Test**

#### **The THREAT**

*“Sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must rule over it.” (Genesis 4:7)*

*“Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.” (1 Peter 5:8)*

#### **The OPPORTUNITY**

*“No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it.” (1 Corinthians 10:13)*

*“Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.” (James 1:2-4)*

*“Blessed is the one who perseveres under trial because, having stood the test, that person will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love him.” (James 1:12)*

### 3. His **EXAMPLE**

*“After **fasting** forty days and forty nights, he was hungry.” (Matthew 4:2)*

### 4. Our **CHALLENGE**

#### The **CALL**

*“Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand **against the devil’s schemes**” Ephesians 6:10-11*

*“For our struggle is not against **flesh and blood** but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.” Ephesians 6:12*

*“Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to **stand your ground**, and after you have done everything, to stand.” Ephesians 6:13*

#### A **FAST**

Fasting is a spiritual exercise in which we voluntarily **control** our physical desires in order to **strengthen** our Godly passions and commitments.

- Pick 1 day this week
- If medically able, try to go without food for 24 hours (check with your doctor)
- Drink plenty of water
- When the hunger pains come, reflect on the Scriptures provided
- Share the journey with someone

## **Connect Group Discussion Guide: Week 1 — Tested**

### **OPENNING**

- What are your fondest Easter memories?
- Did anyone in the group participate in “giving up something for Lent”? Was that practice meaningful to you?

### **GOING DEEPER**

- Read Matthew 3:13 – 4:1. Why was it necessary for Jesus to go into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil?
- Paul tells believers to “Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes.” (Ephesians 6:11) Read Ephesians 6:12 – 20 together, and then discuss each part of the armor of God as Paul describes it. How will this armor keep us from falling prey to the devil’s schemes?
- How did Jesus’ fast prepare Him for his mission? How can this same discipline help prepare us for our mission?

### **CHALLENGE**

- Review the fasting challenge on the previous page that we put out for the entire church.
- Discuss with your group each person’s fasting experience? Did they find it meaningful?