Sermon-based Small Groups

_____ of _____

1stPresDowntown

Temptation in the Desert

Matthew 4:1-11

Week of October 25, 2026

This week's scripture:

Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. He fasted forty days and forty nights, and afterwards he was famished. The tempter came and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread." But he answered, "It is written, 'One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"

Then the devil took him to the holy city and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, saying to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down, for it is written, 'He will command his angels concerning you,' and 'On their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.'" Jesus said to him, "Again it is written, 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'"

Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor, and he said to him, "All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me." Jesus said to him, "Away with you, Satan! For it is written, 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him.'" Then the devil left him, and suddenly angels came and waited on him.

Scripture Reflection Questions: Read this week's scripture together and discuss the following:

- What do we learn about God (e.g., traits, personality, what matters, priorities) in this passage?
- What do we learn about people, and ourselves in particular, this week?

Sermon Reflection Questions: Reflecting on this week's sermon, discuss the following:

1. The Shape of Temptation
The sermon made the point that the tempter never invents desires — he redirects them. Each of the three temptations begins with a real need: hunger, security, the redemption of the world. How does it change the way you think about temptation to understand it as a legitimate need pointed toward a false provider? Does that make it feel more understandable — or more dangerous?

The sermon noted that we live in a "starving culture" — one that is unusually good at offering immediate provision for every hunger. Where do you most feel that pressure in your own life? What are the shortcuts most readily available to you, and what makes them hard to refuse?

2. Bread from Stones
God fed Israel in the wilderness with manna — daily, sufficient, uncontrollable. Jesus quotes that very passage when he refuses to manufacture bread on his own terms. What would it look like practically to trust God's provision in a hunger you're carrying right now, rather than moving to self-provision? What makes waiting feel risky?

3. Prove It at the Pinnacle
The sermon said: "Security does not come from certainty. It comes from trust." The sermon also noted that we need to become comfortable not having all the answers. Where is that hardest for you? Is there a place in your life right now where you are waiting for God to demonstrate something before you can rest?

4. All the Kingdoms
The sermon closed this section with a statement about idolatry: "We do not worship what we hate — we worship what we love too much to wait for, too much to trust God to give." Sit with that for a moment. What is something you love that you may be holding too tightly to wait for? What would open hands look like in that particular place?

5. What the Desert Forms

The sermon's central claim about formation is that how we respond to need shapes who we are becoming. Jesus doesn't emerge from the desert with a credential — he emerges with a posture: every need held before the Father, every provision waited for, every act of worship directed to God alone. Looking at your own patterns — when you are hungry, afraid, or deeply wanting something — what posture are you being formed into?

6. Living It Out

The closing invitation was simple: "Name the hunger. Bring it to God rather than around him." As a group, take a few minutes to do exactly that — name, honestly, a hunger you are carrying right now. It doesn't have to be dramatic. What would it mean to bring that specific need to God this week rather than reaching for the nearest substitute?