

# This is Jesus: Testing Times

## Matthew 4:1-11

### Welcome (10 mins)

Where do you go or what do you do when you're feeling pressurized? Does/did it work or have you had to reconsider your "go to"?

### Worship (10 mins)

CONSIDER - Jesus was tempted in the same ways as ordinary men and women (Heb 4:15). In that moment, he reminded himself of God's truth, and what He had in the Father. When we are tempted today, it is often to make us forget the riches and safety of our Lord and succumb to a lie. Worship helps us remind ourselves of God's truths and affirm them. As you listen to this song, remind yourself that you have all you need in Christ.

SING - Christ is Enough

Play the lyric video [here](#).

Download the chord chart [here](#).

### Word (30 mins)

Read Matthew 4:1-11

1. What links these temptations to the baptism of Jesus in the passage before?
2. What is the nature of the temptations and what authority does Jesus use to respond to them?
3. Was there a real potential of Jesus giving in to temptation? (Hebrews 4:14-16 for reference)
4. What human need is at the heart of each temptation?
5. How are these needs evident in our lives? And how does Satan use these to tempt us?

### Wonder (5-10 mins)

In what ways are you usually tempted? What aspects of your identity does this temptation attack? What is the truth that God speaks over you? Dwell on these truths for a moment.

### Witness (5-10 mins)

Discuss together the 'way of wisdom' as we come alongside those going through testing times. What 'Christianese' would we do well to avoid using?

## Jesus' message

### Matthew 4:12-17

### Welcome (10 mins)

Have you ever been in a situation where you reacted instinctively and immediately realized you were in the wrong? What did you do to rectify this?

### Worship (10 mins)

**PRAY** - Before we sing, spend a few moments reading these scriptures out aloud as a prayer. Invite Jesus to shine his light into your life once again, to reveal the truth, to bring revelation and clarity, and to lead you...

*Micah 7:8*

*Do not gloat over me, my enemy! Though I have fallen, I will rise. Though I sit in darkness, the LORD will be my light.*

*Psalms 119:105*

*Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path.*

*John 1:5*

*The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.*

*John 8:12*

*When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."*

*Psalms 27:1*

*The LORD is my light and my salvation — whom shall I fear? The LORD is the stronghold of my life — of whom shall I be afraid?*

1 Peter 2:9

*But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.*

**SING** - Great Are You Lord (All Sons & Daughters)

Play the lyric video [here](#)

Download the chord chart [here](#) (original key) or [here](#) (lower key)

**Word** (30 mins)

Read Matthew 4:12-17

How does Jesus react to John's imprisonment? Where was he at the time and where does he go?

1. What do we learn about the location from which Jesus starts his ministry in v13-16? What is interesting or surprising about this?
2. What does it mean for Jesus to be bringing light in darkness in this context?
3. How have you experienced Jesus bringing light into darkness in your own life?
4. What does it mean to repent? How is Jesus' message similar to John's message (3:1)? What does living out this message mean in practice for you today?

**Wonder** (5-10 mins)

Jesus felt God call him back to Galilee from Judea. Possibly for his own protection, but also to Capernaum, a busy town, where there were many Gentiles. Is God calling you away from something in your own life, or to something new? The message here is "keep turning away from your sins, and keep coming back to God - the kingdom of God is very near, it's close enough to touch." Is 'self' the king of your life, are you living life too independently of God? Are there certain behaviours that trip you up, things that you regret and make you feel guilty or ashamed? In silence for a minute, ponder this question. Ask the Holy Spirit to speak to you. Repent, say sorry to the Lord, in the quietness of your own heart. Receive his forgiveness.

**Witness** (5-10 mins)

What does living out this message mean in practice for you as you seek to be a witness to God's grace? Consider and discuss the quote below from Paul Tournier's book *Guilt and Grace*:

*... (W) hat has most opened my eyes to my own unconscious sin is the witness of friends when they have told me about their own faults. This ... is the complete opposite of judgement. Instead of denouncing my guilt, they spoke to me of their own, and an amazing light flashed into the depths of my heart. An inward voice murmured, 'This is true of myself, but I have never recognised it'. If their testimony is truly humble, spontaneous, living, without ulterior motives, then it draws us also in turn to the grace of God.*

## Jesus' Followers

### Matthew 4:18-22

**Welcome** (10 mins)

Have you ever found yourself following someone at school, in college, a sports team, a social club or workplace? What was enticing about this person that caused you to follow?

**Worship** (10 mins)

**READ** - as we consider the moment Jesus called Simon (Peter) and Andrew to participate in his saving work on earth, read Psalm 67 aloud and invite God to show you how you could do the same...

*"May God be gracious to us and bless us  
and make his face shine on us—  
so that your ways may be known on earth,  
your salvation among all nations.  
May the peoples praise you, God;  
may all the peoples praise you.  
May the nations be glad and sing for joy,  
for you rule the peoples with equity  
and guide the nations of the earth.*

*May the peoples praise you, God;  
may all the peoples praise you.  
The land yields its harvest;  
God, our God, blesses us.  
May God bless us still,  
so that all the ends of the earth will fear him."  
Psalm 67:1-7*

**SING** - I Will Follow (Vertical Worship)

Play the lyric video [here](#)

Download the chord chart [here](#)

### Word (30 mins)

Read Matthew 4:18-22

1. What invitation does Jesus give to these fishermen?
2. Jesus' message in v17 is to repent because the kingdom has come near. How does the invitation of v19 link with this message?
3. What is their response to Jesus' call to follow him and what is the cost to them?
4. How does this link with Jesus' message of repentance in v17?
5. How are you responding to Jesus? Are you still preparing the nets? Leaving the boat? Following hard after Jesus? Or feeling left behind?

### Wonder (5-10 mins)

Share perhaps a time when God called you to do something specific, or possibly even now you are grappling with a particular call of God on your life? Share what it felt like to respond and what you did. Pray for each other to follow Jesus in this season of your life.

### Witness (5-10 mins)

Take a minute to think about someone in your family or a close friend who does not know the Lord.

Share their first names with the group and pray for each one. Perhaps ask the Lord to remind you daily to pray for them.

## Healing is on offer. Matthew 4:23-25

### Welcome (10 mins)

Have you heard of or experienced miraculous healing yourself? Tell each other about your experience, or the story you heard.

### Worship (10 mins)

**CONSIDER** - In this time of worship we are wanting to take on a heart (and possibly body) posture of gratitude and humility before God.

Read Psalm 113:

Praise the LORD.

Praise the LORD, you his servants;

praise the name of the LORD.

Let the name of the LORD be praised,

both now and forevermore.

From the rising of the sun to the place where it sets,

the name of the LORD is to be praised.

The LORD is exalted over all the nations,

his glory above the heavens.

Who is like the LORD our God,

the One who sits enthroned on high,

who stoops down to look

on the heavens and the earth?

He raises the poor from the dust

and lifts the needy from the ash heap;

he seats them with princes,

with the princes of his people.

He settles the childless woman in her home

as a happy mother of children.

Praise the LORD.

Who is like our God? Spend some time thanking Jesus for the testimonies you just heard and spoke about. Honour God for what He

has already done, how he has already healed. No need to rush through this. Let faith build in the room as we remember what God has done.

**SING** - I speak Jesus (Charity Gayle)

Play the lyric video [here](#)

Download the chord chart [here](#) (G) and [here](#) (C)

### Word (30 mins)

Read Matthew 4:23-25

1. What three things is Jesus doing in v23 to demonstrate that the Kingdom of God has come near?
2. What do we see about the place of healing in the kingdom of heaven?
3. What do we learn from Jesus about what sharing the kingdom with others looks like?
4. What experiences have you had of healing?
5. If you were in the crowds, what would you ask Jesus to heal for you?

### Wonder (5-10 mins)

Are you secretly sceptical that God heals today? Possibly because you've never experienced it, or prayed really hard for someone, and nothing happened. In the quiet of your hearts, tell God what you think, and how you feel. Let go your disappointment or scepticism to him. When Jesus healed people, it was a sign or a picture of what happens in the Kingdom where God reigns – there is no illness. Way back in the Old Testament, his Father already said 'I am the God who heals you' Exodus 15:26.

So trusting Jesus, that by his wounds and stripes, we can appropriate healing for ourselves and others, and believing that He can heal today, pray together for someone in your group who has a bad back, or a headache, a sore knee or some other problem. Placing your hands on the sore back or knee (if appropriate) and pray:  
"In the Name of Jesus, we command this back to be healed". Ask the person if there is any change, did they feel anything? Pray again. (Healing can be immediate, but is often progressive, overnight or over a few days or weeks. Keep trusting God and keep praying!)

### Witness (5-10 mins)

Spend some time praying for God's healing touch on those on the current Prayers for the Sick list. You may also want to add unwell friends and family, whether they're suffering with a physical illness or mental or spiritual distress. Consider praying for one or two of these people every day this week.