

Ministers:
the congregation

Kenny Chumbley
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Sunday:
8:00 AM: WGCY
9:00 AM: Worship

Wednesday:
7:00 PM: Bible Study

[gibsoncitychurchof
Christ.com](http://gibsoncitychurchofchrist.com)

This Past Week:
Worship—
Wednesday—
Contribution—\$

For meditation:
Ecclesiastes 3.1–8
From your own life,
can you identify
times when it was a
time to kill? Refrain
from embracing?
Lose? Keep silent?
Hate? Declare war?

Radio program:
WGCY FM, 106.3
Sundays at 8 AM

The temptation of privilege

The second temptation in Matthew 4.1–10 is noteworthy for being the third and final time in the Bible the devil speaks and being the only time that he quotes the Bible. After Christ resists the first temptation by quoting Scripture, it's as if Satan says, "If it's Scripture you want, I'll give you Scripture," and he quotes Psalm 91.11,12. Satan always has a book, chapter, verse to "authorize" whatever it is he is suggesting.

But despite the unique aspects of the second temptation, in many ways, it is one of the devil's most common tactics.

Leaving the wilderness, the devil takes Jesus to a pinnacle of the Temple. (The southeast corner of the Temple towered 500 feet above the rocks at its base.) There he tempted Christ by telling him to jump off—after all, according to the Bible, God has ordered His angels to catch you when you fall. "If you really believe God's promise to protect you from stubbing your toe, put your money where your mouth is and jump."

The second temptation is illustrated by the arrogance of the adolescent who doesn't worry about getting speeding ticket because his dad's the sheriff. How many politicians, officials, bureaucrats, and employees have misused public or company credit cards, vehicles, equipment, etc. for private use, believing the rules that apply to others don't apply to them? Jumping off a temple is no act trust but a betrayal of trust. Good sons don't act like spoiled brats or take advantage of their father's position. Good sons don't dare their father to throw the book at them.

The wilderness's isolation and deprivation offered opportunities for temptation, but so too do positions/privileges at the top.

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Gibson City church of Christ

Highway 47 South, Gibson City, IL

A prayer for my past

Satan is a relentless accuser (Rev. 12.10). Though we've begged forgiveness for things we've said, done, and repented of, he constantly tells us we're not fit to be a Christian and God wants nothing to do with us. The shame, guilt, and remorse of his unending indictments can be debilitating.

If you, like me, have to fight against being done in by sins, misdeeds, and failures confessed and forgiven, maybe these lines from Matheson will be of help.

"O Love unspeakable and full of glory, whose majesty is not to destroy but to save, save me from myself. My past relentlessly pursues me. Days that I thought dead live over again, deeds that I deemed buried meet me on the way.

O my God, undo that which my life has done amiss. Repair the places I have wasted, bind the hearts I have wounded, dry the eyes I have flooded. Make the evil I have done work for good. Weave it into Thy Divine mosaic, that my very wrath may be made to praise Thee. Take up my yesterdays in Thine own golden light, and transfigure them there, that I may learn with joyful surprise how even against my will I was laboring together with Thee; so shall my former self find me no more. Amen."

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Sermon: James 4.5–10

How to stop a war

16 March 2025

Books worth reading, part 7

AUTHORS, 1

When I find an author I really like, I tend to read everything I can by him. Here are some writers who are among my favorites.

Gilbert Keith (GK) Chesterton. I consider Chesterton the most brilliant English writer of the twentieth century. He wrote on a universe of topics that included religion, biography (e.g., *A Handful of Authors*, *Charles Dickens: The Last of the Great Men*) history, mysteries (Father Brown), fantasy, fiction, poetry (English Tommies marched off to WW I reading his epic, *The Ballad of the White Horse*), and more. He was the master of the paradox and of making an ordinary saying memorable (“Christianity has not been tried and found wanting, it has been found difficult and left untried”). At the very least, a young preacher should read *The Everlasting Man* and *Orthodoxy*.

Clives Staples (C. S.) Lewis. Helped to faith by his Oxford colleague J. R. R. Tolkien, this English don is still well know, primarily due to his fantasy books *The Chronicles of Narnia*. Lewis displays great insight into some of the most challenging areas of human existence, such as the nature of temptation (*The Screwtape Letters*), *The Problem of Pain*, modernism, grief and death (*A Grief Observed*), and many others. One of my favorite of his books is from his space trilogy, *That Hideous Strength*. Written during WW II, not long after Huxley’s *Brave New World* and Orwell’s *1984*, it is a thoroughly Biblical view of dystopian societies, such as have occurred in my lifetime. Every Bible teacher should have *The C. S. Lewis Index* by Janine Goffar and also read the exceptional biography *Jack, C. S. Lewis and His Times* by George Segal.

James Warwick Montgomery. Montgomery—who died last September at age of 92—was the preeminent writer in the field of Christian apologetics (defending the Christian faith). Forty years ago, I had public debates with two atheists (one at the University of Illinois, the other at Iowa State University), and I relied heavily on Montgomery’s articulation of the empirical argument for God, which is the argument made by for God in the Gospels. His booklet on abortion is outstanding (*Slaughter of the Innocents*), and his apologetical essay, “The Search for Ultimates: A Sherlockian Inquiry” proves Sherlock Holmes was a believer! 😊

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We give man too much credit

Have you ever thought you get a better break in life from men than God? Do men treat us less harshly or show us more consideration than God? There are those who think this, mainly due to God’s sinlessness—how can someone who’s never sinned understand the temptations, weariness, pressures, etc. faced by we who live in the human predicament?

Don’t ever underestimate the depth of man’s inhumanity to man. The ability of man to hate—which is murder (1 Jn. 3.10–15—his brother is constantly on display.

Nineveh’s evil was so great that it drew the attention of God, but Nineveh stood a better chance with God than with God’s prophet (Jon. 4.2).

A rich man who took his poor neighbor’s only lamb to feed his guests found more mercy with God than with God’s king (2 Sam. 12.5).

If you want to read a litany of the cruelties, inhumanities, barbarities, brutalities, and ruthlessness of men, read Amos 1–2.

Maybe God’s king learned his lesson, because when he later did evil in the eyes of the Lord, the Lord offered him three options: three years of famine, three months of defeat, or three days of plague. The king chose to “fall in to the hand of the Lord, for His mercies are very great; but do not let me fall into the hand of man” (2 Chron. 21.13).

And if you think you love your child more than God, forget it, you don’t (Matt. 7.11).

No one’s mercy exceeds God’s. No one’s ability to see a sinner’s potential is greater than His. No one’s sensitivity to another’s sigh surpasses our Father’s. No one’s awareness of the power and awfulness of sin transcends our Savior’s.

“He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?” (Rom. 8.32).

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News about us

- Colby and Karen are both recovering from successful foot surgery and could use our prayers.