



Dear heavenly Father, we worship You this morning with our tithe and offerings. We pray for the courage to put You first in our lives. In the name of Jesus, amen.

JANUARY 2, 2021

When Jesus put God First

Putting God first can be difficult. What can we learn from Jesus that will help us put God first in our lives today?

At the start of every new year, there is an expectation that it will be better than the previous year. The thought of something new is exciting. When Jesus was 30 years old, He started a new phase of His life. After being baptised in the Jordan River, His ministry had officially begun. But what happened next was very strange—and it will help us in this new year of 2021.

Matthew 4:1 says: “Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit to be tempted by the devil.” Isn’t that strange? Since the garden of Eden, Satan had been waiting for the moment he would try to deceive Jesus, as he had done with Adam and Eve. If Satan could have led Jesus to put Himself first, the whole war would have been lost. So Satan started with food. Yes, food.

For thousands of years, the enemy had observed how humans would do anything to meet their physical needs. Matthew writes: “And when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, afterward He was hungry.” Isn’t that obvious? Well, Matthew writes the obvious because he wants us to know that Jesus is fully human and, therefore, totally af-

fectured by physical needs.

So the first temptation is for Jesus to doubt His identity and to put His physical needs first. You will be tempted throughout this year to put your own physical needs first. God has called you His child, but at every moment you can choose who should come first—God or your own physical needs. Jesus put God first.

Then the devil took Him to the temple. Jesus was now tempted, through a passage of scripture, to test God’s faithfulness. The second temptation was about putting His senses first. In other words, are you going to take God at His word? Or do you constantly need physical evidence of God’s love for you? Jesus decided to put God first.

Finally, the devil presented the very mission Jesus came to fulfill—and offered a shortcut. This third temptation is to take shortcuts instead of putting God first.

This is the first time in 2021 when tithes and offerings will be collected. Jesus put God first. His example compels us to do the same. As the deacons collect the tithe and offerings, we are challenged to put God first.