

The Four Voices: How to Think Like a Christian

The Pressures of Flesh

Rough Transcript

Khayree Pender

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Good morning, men, if you could turn with me in your Bibles to Matthew, the fourth chapter verses one through four and it reads, "Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the Devil. And when he had fasted 40 days and 40 nights, afterward, he was hungry. Now, when the tempter came to him, he said, 'If you are the son of God command that these stones become bread,' but he answered and said, 'It is written, man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.'" We know that we've been in a teaching talking about the voices of the flesh, and we know that there's four forces of the world, the flesh, the Devil, and the Holy Spirit. Here, we're talking about the flesh. And just to start off, I'm going to tell you something that I've dealt with in my own personal life.

When it dealt with flesh, flesh can come in any type of way. Well, before I moved to my new home, I stayed in central Florida area, but one of the main roads always was heavy with traffic and just like myself, trying to get home after a long day at work and every other car, if you knew this route, you can go the back route, which we like to call shortcuts. We all know that shortcuts sometimes don't really give us the thing that we really need. So I would go this way, which is a back road that will take you to eliminate all the traffic and get you to your destination a little bit faster. But during this destination or this back road shortcut, if we call it, it had one light. Now the culture of this back road was that the light would stay red for a long time.

And when it turns green, only about a few cars can get through it, but that was the caveat of taking this shortcut. Do I want to go through the traffic or deal with this light? And the culture of that light was people will look both ways and take the red light because it was just that long. So it happened to be that I was going to do to shortcut and got caught by the red light. So I was at the red light and all the cars that normally take this shortcut were looking and tooting their horn, wondering why I wasn't taking that red light. I'm going to be honest with you, flesh rose up because it was a long day and it told me, and I looked both ways I'm thinking, "I really want to take this light to just keep going." But I was sitting there at the light and it probably took a little bit more time than usual with what the other cars would do if they were ahead of me.

So a car from behind me didn't like the timeframe and decided to go around me. And as they went around me to go through the red light, they got T-boned by another car. I was contemplating with flesh thinking, "Should I do it?" Another car behind me was contemplating as well and we see the outcome that happened. I could have been impatient, took the light or just waited and know that I would be one of the three cars that would make it through. But those are certain types of things that we deal with on a daily basis when we deal with flesh. Here it is in this story, it's a familiar story. Jesus went up to go fast. He was led up to the mountains and he was led up to the wilderness to go fast for 40 days and 40 nights. And after he came off his sabbatical, his fast, he was hungry.

You think about that. He was weak, his spirit was weak, his body was weak, and his flesh, you can imagine, was weak. When you think about 40 days and 40 nights of fasting and no food, no anything, you can give me three hours and I'll be ready to eat again after I just finished eating a huge meal. So imagine 40 days and 40 nights. So as he's there 40 days and 40 nights, the tempter, who was the enemy, comes up and tries to speak to them and let them know, "You know what, if you are the man, God, how about you turn these stones into bread."

Now, could you imagine you talking about food after fasting 40 days and 40 nights, and then to mention knowing who you are, Jesus like, "I know who I am. I know I can do this. I know that I can change these things into bread." And what weak person at that point of time says, "You know what? I'm really hungry. And to show you that I can do it," ego can come in sometimes when we deal with flesh, "and to show you that I can do it. And then to satisfy my hunger, I can do it as well." But that at point of time, his response was so genuine and just told him, "Man shall not live by bread alone." When we're dealing with the flesh we'll be, we look at flesh, I look at flesh is like a spoiled person or spoiled brat.

Flesh will holler, it will scream, it will whine until it gets the attention or the satisfaction that it desires. There's been so many times I can tell you that I fell into flesh or the decision of flesh, just to keep it quiet. You're annoyed by it. You hear it, it's constantly nagging at you trying to get you or pull you to a way. And I can tell you, there's been several times that I told myself, "You know what, I'll limit myself from eating chocolate," or, "I'm going to start this diet," and I can hear a flesh screaming and hollering at me, "Hey, get that piece of chocolate, get this piece of candy eat it." And it's just as simple as that when we deal with it. Though, that flesh can be on the higher grand scale of things as well but these are just some of the little things that we may deal with.

God only knows some of the huge things that some of us may deal with that we have to calm and control our flesh with. When you think about it, because sometimes we'll be able to act when flesh calls on us and then finally end up with a result, how did I get here? Not knowing that we let flesh take control of our thoughts, take control of our abilities, our mindset, and our will as well. But he was strong in this place. And we look at it as we begin to center ourselves when we look at these things, and there's a few things that I looked at when I've said, "You know what? Dealing with flesh, there's some things that we have to do." There's some things that we really have to look at and some things that we have to do, and it says this, "The first thing that we have to do when we're dealing with flesh," because if we don't do these things, we'll be left into a situation, not knowing how to handle it and we may end up with a result that we didn't ultimately want. Why not take flesh by the horns and deal with it the way that we want. So the first thing we have to do is to acknowledge it.

ACKNOWLEDGE: ACKNOWLEDGE WHEN WE ARE DEALING WITH THE FLESH

And we will look at that acknowledge when we're dealing with situations and dealing with flesh, it says this, "To accept or to admit the existence of the truth." I will not in this situation when we look at it, what Jesus did, he acknowledged it, "Okay, I just finished fasting. You asked me to turn the stones into bread, which I could, and then I will turn it into something that I need that will satisfy my hunger. I'm hungry right now. I've been fasting for 40 days. This is what I would do. I can do it." So he acknowledged it. See, sometimes we fall into the pitfall of flesh when we don't acknowledge that it's there.

Because when we look at it in the acknowledgment, it gives us time to really make a decision, it gives us time to look at the whole broad aspect of things, and it gives us time to look at our pros and cons of really dealing with the situation. When you don't acknowledge it, you're left to what's there and falling right into the pitfall of what flesh is really presenting to you. Flesh is going to cry, flesh is going to whine, and it's going to scream and holler until it gets your attention. And we understand that. We know when we have things that's out of place, that's constantly nagging at us. We'll do what we need to do to get it to be quiet, to stop hearing from it again. So we have technology, he did a great job of doing it. He did a great job of doing it when he heard the words come from the tempter and said, "You know what? This is

what I'll do, but I'll respond within the let you know that, 'Hey, we understand that man cannot live by bread alone.'" We'll do it.

So if we go to the next part, when I said that we were doing that Matthew chapter four, there was the first one, but in these whole 10 verses, there was one through 10, there was some times that he was tempted by the flesh, his own flesh and with certain things that he can do. So if you go to Matthew chapter four, verses five through seven, it says this, it says, "Then the Devil took him up into the Holy city and setteth him on the pinnacle of the temple and said to him, 'If that will be the Son of God, cast yourself down for it is written that the angels will charge in concerning and that their hands, and they shall bear thee up less the time that thou should that foot against a stone.'"

So he's telling them, "You know what, I'll take you up to the top of a pinnacle. You being God at this weak moment this weak, time after fasting and cast yourself down and let's see the angels catch you before you even touch the ground." Once again, he's there, he's dealing with the situation, flesh weak, mind weak, body weak, soul weak. And you're tempting me at a point. And I just want to get you quiet to show you, you know what? I could do this. I could do this. I could cast myself down. My flesh will want to speak and say, "You know what, I'll do this and show you what I can do." My flesh will speak out and say, "You know what? I'll cast myself down and allow the angels to do it." But he responded and said, "It is written again that, 'Thou shall not tempt the Lord, thy God. You shall not.'"

When we deal with flesh and we look at this, we understand that we see, and we know that we would like to act on it and keep our flesh together, our flesh to show and say, "You know what? Stand up, show that you can do it. You don't want to be looked at at the bad place or outcome." So the first thing we had to do was we had to acknowledge, we had to acknowledge, and the second part as well, he acknowledged. He accepted the existence and the truth in both parts. I can see that your word is going forth asking me to do something, and then my existence as well. I can do it too. I can show you. So the next thing we're left with when we're dealing with the flesh, the voice you hear constantly going and talking is, "Am I going to act on this situation?"

ACT: AM I GOING TO ACT ON THIS SITUATION?

When we look at the word act, it tells us this, it says, "It's the action to do something, the urge to do something or taking action according to, or in the light of." At this position, I can take action in this situation. When you're dealing with flesh, flesh wants to lean more onto that action part to get the fulfillment and to also show, even if there's a challenge. I know one thing about myself growing up, flesh would always get in the way, because growing up as a young man, you hang around your friends, there's nothing but challenges. And then you'll go from challenge, to challenge, to challenge. And it'll never end. It'll start off about, "Hey, I bet you can't throw the ball from here to across the street." Okay, I threw it from here across the street. "Hey, I bet you can't throw the ball from here to two streets over."

Okay. "I bet you can't throw the ball from here..." Next thing I know. We're trying to throw the ball from the sidewalk over the house, into the backyard. So when you begin to entertain your flesh, it won't just stop there because it'll never be satisfied. So the next thing we have to do after we begin to acknowledge it, we have to note that the existence is there. The second thing is this, you have to really depend on yourself and find out am I going to act on this? Is this really worth it? What could happen if I acted out this flesh? If I act out what's being presented to me? What could my outcomes be? So that's the great thing about acknowledging it. And then you understand about, "Okay. If I line my actions up with my acknowledgement, where would it be? Would it lead me? Will I be in an ongoing cycle of fulfilling flesh because it's never satisfied? Or do I just act on it in a different way? How do I act on these things? What should I do? What outlets are there for me?"

And then what will be the enteral outcome from it? After all, we understand that know that flesh will never be satisfied. It will never be satisfied. And it tells us it's bringing a light. It's me taking an action

according to the light of something really certain or it's the urge of something. The more you hear people say certain things, as in your flesh, the more you want to kill that urge of, "You know what? You're not going to talk to me this way, leaning to me, but let me just do it so I can get it over with and it'll be done." Here again also in the same passages, three times within 10 verses, Jesus was tempted.

And this is where he was tempted, but where his flesh was the ultimate person to have the outcome. You could be tempted, but what is your flesh going to ask for you to do? How can your flesh begin to pan you out to make sure that you're making the right decision? And the last thing that came up with him on those verses, when we begin to look at it, it says this, it says, "Again, the Devil took him up to an exceeded high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. And he said to him, 'All of these things, I will give you if you fall down and worship me,'" You mean to tell me that you're tempting someone that already has everything that you would give them, something that they already own? See, certain times when we're dealing with flesh, it can cause us to act out of character. You already know what you can do. You already know how you can handle it, and you already know what you cannot do. So being tempted by your flesh that's constantly pulling on you, and calling on you, and asking you to do certain things you're left with the ultimate decision. You're left with a decision on I'm acknowledging it. Do I act on it? Or is my last thing, do I abort what my flesh is telling me to do?

ABORT: DO I ABORT WHAT MY FLESH IS TELLING ME TO DO?

When we look at abort, it just means to bring a premature end to something. It needs to bring a premature end. Meaning the times that we'll sit there with flesh and go back and forth, battling, questioning, trying to figure out what could happen, I'm going to abort the mission that flesh is trying to deploy me to, because I know what the outcome could ultimately be. And furthermore, I will not sit here and hold a conversation about what the benefits will come out of if I was to appease you, which you are flesh. Jesus, in that instance, responded this and here's the great abortion, "Then Jesus said to him, 'Away with you, Satan, for it is written you shall worship the Lord, your guy and him, and you should only serve him.'"

The greater abort, get thee behind. Sometimes we got to talk to our flesh and the reason why our flesh feels that it can lie dormant with those decisions and those things with us, because we're not giving it a location to go to. I urge you that the next time that flesh begins to rise up and you're stuck with a situation, let's just be honest men. We know some of the situations that we may even come against things that may urge us, that may push us. Whether it be financial, it could be with our eyes, it could be without words, it could be with our thoughts it could be with our physical abilities. We have to make sure that during the process of we dealing with flesh, we have to have a place to send it.

You think about it, when you don't want certain people or things around you tell it to go, go somewhere, get away. Or we begin to move away from it as well. We have to have a place for it to go, the ultimate abort. So we acknowledge it. We have to know that the existence is there. I'm not going to act like I don't deal with these things. Now I'm done with the... I'm stuck in a tangle of fighting back and forth. Do I act on it? I gave us some time. We have some things that we faced with right now that as we get ready after this, before work, during work, some things that's been laying right there before us, do I act on it? Do I act on it? Some of us already had a predetermined mindset already. This is what I'm going to do, but it's that you speak it from the spirit or is that your flesh saying, "I know this is what I need to do. I know this is what's going to happen. I know this is my outcome."

Or did you face it and sit back and really take the time and say, "I have somewhere for it to go. And I'm really going abort this. I will not allow my flesh to deploy me to certain areas in life that can ultimately cause me everything that I worked hard for, or even ultimately my life. My flesh does not have enough strength to push me to a place. I have enough power over it because I can send it somewhere and I can move on to what I need to do. I can move on. And I know that it'll be done." So we have to acknowledge

his existence, we have to find out how we're going to act on it, and then ultimately, is it just worth for me to abort the whole thing, because it's not worth me risking everything.

As hungry as Jesus was, as much power that he knew he possessed, he did not fall into the trap of his flesh taken over and being the responder or the speaker for him in that situation, he knew what he had to do to make sure that the outcome was the outcome that was needed to be successful in that area and that point of life at that time. So men on today, as we're dealing with flesh, I just want to prepare you and let you know you're going to be tempted. It may be at that stop sign. Do I stop fully? It may be something with my eyes that are locked into something that doesn't belong to me.

It may be something dealing with financial. Anything that flesh can squeeze into, it'll be into it. You're left with the ultimate decision. What do I do? Jesus shoulders that he has the strength to do it and he did it. He abides in us and we lean on him. He can give us the same strip that we need to pull through and makes sure that the outcome is successful as it is. So, men, I just want to encourage you today, before we make a decision, before we tend to hush flesh up because it's crying and needs attention. Take that time for those three As, make sure that you acknowledge, you decide how to act, and it's worth it to abort on those things.

God bless you. And I'll pray out on today. Dear Lord, our heavenly Father, we thank you for these mighty men that you allow to gather. We ask right now, God, that you just blessed us. We don't have all the answers. We don't have all the strength. God, we know that you placed us into this world to do great things. And we know that we can't do it without you. So we ask on today, God, that as we begin to fight something that we can't physically or tangibly touch, that you begin to help us arrest the flesh God, as we're dealt with situations that may be fought before us. God, we know that you can do it. We know that you're our leader and we ask that you got us. We won't go before you, God, and we won't lag far behind you, God, we'll stay so close to hear your voice and decisions and things that we need to make. And do we thank you, God, for all the things that you have already brought us past. And we thank you for the word that you're giving us today for the things that we're going to face in the future. And we ask that you allow us to apply it to our lives. We thank you and we love you, in your name we pray, Jesus. Amen. God bless you.