

# HOW IT STARTED, HOW IT ENDED

Matthew 4:1-11  
Pastor Alan Dionson  
January 5, 2025

INTRO:

How it started, how it ended...

## A. WE NEED TO HAVE A SEASON OF SEPARATION (v. 1)

1. The **agent** of separation (v. 1a)
2. The **area** of separation (v. 1b)

## B. WE HAVE TO EXPECT OPPOSITION

1. Opposition to our source of **provision** (v. 3-4)
2. Opposition to our intended **plans** (v. 5-7)
3. Opposition to our glory and **pride** (v. 8-11)

## C. WE ARE CALLED TO HAVE INTENTIONAL PREPARATION

1. The significance of prayer and **fasting** (v. 2a)
2. The significance of **forty** days (v. 2b)

CONCLUSION:

Three things I need to do during this season of prayer and fasting:

1. **Slow** down (Psalm 46:10; Mark 6:31:32)
2. **Trim** down (Proverbs 15:16; Luke 12:15)
3. **Write** down (Psalms 1:1; Habakkuk 2:2)

## LIFE GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

### Opening Discussion (Warm-Up)

1. What are some of your personal goals or hopes for the new year?
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### Digging into the Passage

2. Read Matthew 4:1-2. Why do you think Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness before beginning His public ministry? How can we embrace "wilderness seasons" in our own lives as opportunities for growth and preparation?
  3. In verses 3-4, Satan tempts Jesus to turn stones into bread. Why is relying on God's Word more important than satisfying physical needs? How can we prioritize God's Word in our daily lives, especially at the start of this year?
  4. In verse 5-7, it describes Satan tempting Jesus to test God's protection. What does Jesus' response teach us about trusting God without demanding signs? Are there areas in your life where you need to trust God more fully this year?
  5. In verses 8-10, Satan offers Jesus worldly power in exchange for worship. What does this temptation reveal about the dangers of ambition and misplaced priorities? How can we ensure our goals and priorities for the year align with God's purposes?
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### Closing Reflection and Prayer

6. How can you apply the principles of "Slow down, Trim Down and Write Down" during the season of Prayer and Fasting for the next forty days?
7. End the Life Group by praying for God's guidance in navigating challenges and opportunities.
8. Reminder of "First Love: A Night of Prayer and Worship" on January 17, 2025, Friday at 7 PM in the main sanctuary.