

## 08 - Temptation

Over the past few sessions we have been walking through the themes of the Lord's Prayer. We come now to the petition 'Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil'.

God's strength is powerful enough to stop the weakest things of the world that tempt you. The one who defeated Satan on the cross is more than capable of breaking the snare of temptation in your life. You will never know the all sufficiency of God's grace or experience the perfection of God's power until you have experienced the strength of temptation.

James tells us in James 1:2-4 to *Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.*

Jesus knows your weaknesses. Come to the one who orders all things on earth and heaven and solicit his help to restrain you from the temptations that would injure your soul. When God meets you in your need your life and character is transformed.

### **What is temptation?**

So what is temptation? Temptation is anything that seduces you or draws your mind and heart from obedience, which God requires of you, into any sin in any degree whatsoever.

Temptation darkens your mind so that you can't make right judgment of things. Temptation diverts your mind from Christ, the one who can deliver you. Temptation entangles your affections. Temptation gives fuel to your lusts. Temptation whispers lies in your head about your value and self-worth. Temptation disquiets your soul. Temptation weakens your obedience. Temptation clouds the face of God.

Since you have tasted and seen that God is good do you really want this temptation to prevail over you to abandon Jesus?

### **Temptation is dangerous**

Temptation isn't dangerous when it knocks at your door. Meet temptation at its entrance by faithfully trusting in the promises concerning Christ on the cross who died for such as sins as these. No temptation can stand before the cross! Hallelujah!

Temptation becomes dangerous when you open the door, and let it reason with your mind, or entice your affections, or whisper in your heart even if only for a brief moment. Left to yourself, you often won't realize that temptation has ensnared you until the bonds of sin are too strong, or sin has rooted itself in your heart.

Solomon warns us that the one who trusts in himself is a fool (Prov 28:26). Jeremiah reminds us that the heart is deceitful above all things (Jer 17:9).

### **Temptation is stronger than you think**

Temptation is never proportionate to the strength you have in yourself.

Don't kid yourself ... Your heart can't withstand temptation on its own or deliver you from temptation. There are traitors in your mind ready to side with temptation. There are secret lusts in your heart lying dormant, waiting for temptation to stir them up, and then they will cry and seduce you never giving up until they are killed or satisfied.

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The ways of entering into temptation are innumerable and imperceptible; effective and powerful. Satan sneaks around the petty religious activities that we try to erect to keep us from temptation. Admit your weakness, admit your unwatchfulness, admit your inability to keep or preserve yourself; admit that your power is insufficient and earnestly ask God in prayer to keep you from the evil one.

### **Preserving your soul**

The mighty preservatives against all temptations are the good things of the Gospel. Feast daily on the pardon of sin, the fruits of the spirit, holiness, hope of glory, peace with God, joy in the Holy Spirit. Give yourself wholeheartedly in obedience to God's word – A word of liberty and power which endows you with a large, free and noble spirit to be subject to God alone. A word of consolation to support you in every condition. A priceless treasure!

Rely on God alone for preservation. Always commit your soul and your care to God. Do nothing, entertain no thought about yourself, your self-worth or your abilities without seeking counsel from God first. Bask in the privileges of calling God your Father!

If you don't want to spend much time in the land of temptation, spend much time in the land of prayer. For prayer casts your soul into a frame of opposition to every temptation.

### ***Blessing***

*May our Father who is in heaven preserve your soul and keep your hearts and your ways from being entangled by temptation. May God's good and wise providence order your ways and your affairs so that no temptation befalls you. May God strengthen you through his mighty power so that you would be diligent, careful and watchful over your own ways. May the fruit of the Spirit so satisfy every longing of your heart that you have no appetite for the desires of the flesh or this world. Amen.*