

“SAVE US FROM TEMPTATION AND EVIL”

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LORD’S PRAYER PART 7

TEXT: JAMES 1:12-18

GOD’S WORD: MATTHEW 4:1-11

I – TEMPTATION:

You’re out for your afternoon stroll one day, just having fun and enjoying the afternoon. It’s sunny and about 68 degrees out, the wind is gently blowing, and you are reflecting on the wonderful sermon you heard the preacher give that morning. The birds are singing and you think you’re as close to heaven at this moment as you’re ever going to get in this life. Just as you think it couldn’t get any better you look down and there’s a wallet lying on the sidewalk. As you stoop down and pick it up you notice it’s made of fine leather and take note that it’s bulging at the seams. You open it and rifle through all the green bills stuffed inside and come up with a rough count of at least \$3,500.00. The day just got better, if you were close to heaven before, now you’re in it! The gas won’t be shut off after all, the kids won’t have to eat hotdogs for the third week in a row and you can finally fill that prescription so your spouse will start to get better finally. It’s when you start jumping up and down with joy that the owner’s driver’s license falls out and you now know whom the wallet belongs to a few doors down. What are you going to do?

You have just fallen into temptation haven’t you? You would be tempted to take the money...I mean it answers your prayers, but is it wrong? Considering that pesky commandment about coveting things that aren’t ours, I’d guess it was. Thou shalt not steal. To take it would be giving in to evil desires.

Your choice is this...follow God or follow evil. Do what God wants you to do, or do what God’s enemy would want you to do. Be a disciple of Jesus, or disciple of the enemy.

II - AWAY FROM GOD:

The whole purpose of temptation is to draw us away from God. The definition of temptation is: A CRAVING OR DESIRE FOR SOMETHING, ESPECIALLY SOMETHING WRONG.” If it’s wrong, then it is against the will of God. The last request we find in the Lord’s Prayer is, “Lead us not into temptation, “but” deliver us from evil. Evidently these two things, temptation and evil, must go hand in hand.

The story about the temptation of Jesus you heard read this morning from Matthew 4 makes all of this very clear. Jesus has just been baptized; he's proclaiming the start of his public ministry. Immediately after his baptism the Holy Spirit leads him into the desert where he is tempted. While there for 40 days and nights he is tempted three times. Each and every temptation Jesus goes through is an attempt to turn him away from God. He is tempted to put his trust and faith in himself and his tempter, rather than in God, as he should. Jesus chooses God instead and went on to be our Savior. THANK YOU JESUS!

There are two very important things we need to take note of in this passage to understand this prayer. God did not tempt Jesus, God's chief enemy, the devil did. The main purpose for Satan is to lure us away from God. He does this through temptation. In the Garden of Eden it was he who tempted Adam and Eve to disobey God. It was he who entered into Judas and turned him against the Savior. It is he we are told that sets traps for us trying to steal our faith and trust in God. One of the names he's known by is the "tempter." But notice how he does it; he doesn't force himself on anyone. He doesn't force you to abandon God he tempts you to abandon God. He puts the temptation in front of you, but you have to choose to let it happen or not. When we make the right choice, then God steps in as he did for Jesus when he sent his angels to care for him when he successfully overcame the temptations.

III – TEXT:

In the book of James we find this all explained by the brother of Jesus, who is the James believed to have written this book to the early Christians. I want to break this text down for you this morning so you grasp it clearly...

James 1:12 - 18 (NLT)

¹²God blesses those who patiently endure testing and temptation. Afterward they will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him.

The first thing we discover is that testing and temptation are synonymous. The Greek word from the original manuscripts is the same for both temptation and trial. A temptation is a trial, a test, to see if we keep our faith and do what's right in God's eyes. If we make it through the tests and don't lose God, we are rewarded with our eternal life.

¹³And remember, when you are being tempted, do not say, "God is tempting me." God is never tempted to do wrong, and he never tempts anyone else.

Temptation does not come from God. God is Holy and isn't subject to temptation. He is never tempted and he is never the one who tempts us. The next line tells us where our temptations

come from...

¹⁴Temptation comes from our own desires, which entice us and drag us away.

Temptation comes because of who we are. We are human; we are descendants of the ones who were overcome by temptation in the Garden of Eden. Inside each of us lurks evil. We are tempted because some of the things around us appeal to those desires inside of us. No evil, no temptation.

¹⁵These desires give birth to sinful actions. And when sin is allowed to grow, it gives birth to death.

When we give in to these temptations we take actions, evil temptations result in evil actions. When we give in and take these actions we are drawn away from God and thus our promise of eternal life.

¹⁶So don't be misled, my dear brothers and sisters. ¹⁷Whatever is good and perfect comes down to us from God our Father, who created all the lights in the heavens. He never changes or casts a shifting shadow. ¹⁸He chose to give birth to us by giving us his true word. And we, out of all creation, became his prized possession.

So don't let temptation lead you away from God and towards his evil enemy. God is the maker of all things good and all things perfect. He is the God of light and he has chosen us to be his children, his loved and prized creations if we are not led astray by the darkness which surrounds us and tries to take us away from the light.

IV – THE GREAT BATTLE:

To pray this line of the Lord's Prayer, "And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil," is to recognize that there is a battle being waged. We get all hung up on the book of Revelation and the coming battle between good and evil at the end of the world but what about the battle that's taking place right now? There is a battle going on between good and evil that started at the very beginning of creation, and goes on to this very day.

It started in the Garden of Eden when the evil one showed Eve how pretty the apple was. It continued in the desert when a starving Jesus was tempted to turn stones into bread. It was waged in the upper room where Judas left to betray Jesus, and followed Peter into the courtyard where it was easier to deny Jesus than to stand up for what he believed. It follows those of us who are overweight when we give in to that piece of cheese cake knowing it will

not benefit our bodies which is the temple of God, or when we buy that lottery ticket knowing how God feels about gambling. We lose ground when we meet over coffee to gossip about a brother or sister and evil gets a point when we hear and then repeat that little off colored joke. Evil triumphs when we give into lusts or addictions. We are tempted each and every day of our lives and the choice to let evil win or stay with God is ours and ours alone.

To pray this line means that we admit to the existence of evil in this world and that we take it seriously, but not too seriously because we are also saying that God is greater than any foe of God. We are acknowledging that evil exists but recognizing that we have the resources to defeat it. That resource is God! Praying this line says that we don't know what the future holds, but we do know who holds the future...God! To pray this line is to state that God isn't the cause of temptation, he's the deliverer from it. A good translation of this line would be: "OH, LORD, SAVE US."

V – HOW'S YOUR BATTLE GOING?:

So the question today is: how's the battle going for you? When it comes to temptation how are you doing with resisting it? We all have it you know. There's no escaping it, we are surrounded by it. Remember that being tempted isn't the sin, giving into it is the sin.

What sin is it you keep giving in to? How is it you're being tempted by the evil one? How is it you're trying to be pulled away from God? I don't need to know because it doesn't matter. One sin is as good as another in God's eyes. They all stand in our way to a deep and complete Faith and relationship to the heavenly Father.

From this day forward pray this line with renewed vigor, with renewed meaning. Pray this line knowing that God loves you, God saves you, and God protects you when you seek him first in all things. God is faithful, even when we're not. Look to him for deliverance from your temptations. Take with you this promise as recorded by Paul in:

1 Corinthians 10:13 (NLT)

¹³But remember that the temptations that come into your life are no different from what others experience. And God is faithful. He will keep the temptation from becoming so strong that you can't stand up against it. When you are tempted, he will show you a way out so that you will not give in to it.

Oh, Lord, save us.....AMEN