

Text: 1 Corinthians 10:12-13

Title: Temptation

Truth: With humility and help from God, we can overcome temptation to sin.

Date/Location: October 11, 2020 at FBC

Introduction

In our last message on this section, time did not permit us to think about temptation at the kind of depth that we need. Verses 12-13 are extremely important because one of our major battle fronts in the Christian life is against temptation. Maybe we could say it is *the* battle, for if we never succumbed to temptation, would we sin?

[12] Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.

[13a] No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man;

[13b] but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able,

[13c] but with the temptation will also make the way of escape,

[13d] that you may be able to bear it.

I. Temptation Demands Humility, 12

A. As right with God as you think you are, it is necessary, considering what happened to Israel, that we take heed. There is no space for pride, as if we are better than those poor souls in the old days. Our human nature is *exactly* the same as theirs. It is flawed and susceptible to temptation. Because of the plenteous examples of failure, and because God has warned us, and because disqualification and judgment comes to those who reject God, and because the end of the world is far closer now than then, it is essential that give humble attention to this matter.

B. We must watch out for ourselves so that we will not fall. Prov. 16:18 teaches that pride goes before destruction and arrogance before a fall. Many a soul has exhibited that confident pride that is exemplified throughout Scripture: Peter before his betrayal of Christ; Uzziah before his leprosy; Nebuchadnezzar before his insanity; Sennacherib before his army was destroyed; the churches of Sardis and Laodicea before their candlesticks were removed; Haman before his hanging; Belshazzar before the handwriting on the wall; Hezekiah when he showed his treasures to the Babylonians; David before his census and judgment; and Satan before his fall. You might think "I'm strong enough to handle this; I can drink or watch this media or ..." Do not think that way!

- C. Pride brings God’s judgment, which is exactly what happened to the Devil (1 Tim. 3:6). Please notice that the word “fall” does not just mean “fall into temptation.” It is worse than that—falling can mean falling into destruction. It can be fall into disqualification. Remember—whatever it means to be disqualified and fall, *it is bad!*
- D. Humble yourself: Matthew 23:12, like Jesus Philippians 2:8, and as James and Peter teach us (James 4:10, 1 Peter 5:5-6). Do not think you are above sinning like the people of Israel sinned. Think about it—you already have done so in your life, many times.

II. Temptation is Universal to Humanity, 13a

- A. Did you memorize verse 13 last week? As we said before, it contains two facts and two promises applicable in every age of human existence. It is a lifeline for those who are struggling with temptation.
- B. The first fact is that your temptations are not unique. What Israel experienced and what you are experiencing are so similar that the same truth applies to them all. They lusted after evil things—you can too. They became idolaters—you can too. They committed acts of immorality—you can too. They tested Christ, and you can too. They complained, and we do the same far too often. Temptations are unavoidable.
- C. Right now, think of things that tempt you to sin. Then remind yourself that it is a human thing that you face. Trials of sin are everywhere because of our broken nature. Temptation is universal because sin is universal. No one has lived up to God’s standard (Eccl. 7:20).
- D. The book written by James gives us a bit of detail on this process in the first chapter: James 1:14-16 But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by **his own desires** and **enticed**. 15 Then, when desire has conceived, it **gives birth to sin**; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth **death**. Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren.
 - 1. Each person has his or her own desires. Those are built in. The general problem is nature; it can be adapted by nurture. But the basic fact is that these desires are properly *ours*, not the Devil, nor someone else. If we lust after something that is prohibited by God, that is a problem inside of *us*.
 - 2. These desires seduce us to do or be like they wish. This wish can be directed toward any kind of sin, but it boils down to selfishness, self-pleasure, self-autonomy, control, and the like.

3. This enticement has an offspring—sin. It is trying to have a baby, and before it comes to birth, you need to stop the birth process! God empowers you to choose wisely or poorly.
4. Finally, as you hopefully know, if you sin, you will die. This word was spoken to Adam and Eve in the garden, and it is a general truth applicable to all time. Sin always produces the fruit of death (Rom. 6:21, 7:5). It never produces anything better. So, if you want to avoid dying from COVID or any other cause of death, you must not sin for your whole life. And, if you wish to avoid eternal consequences for your sin, you must avoid sin for your whole life. How is that working out so far?

III. Temptation Does Not Nullify God’s Faithfulness, 13b

- A. The second fact is that God is faithful. This means that what God says, He means. What promises God makes, He will carry through with them. When God speaks, it true. He never fails. He never leaves His own, even if you *think* that He has. His faithfulness is backed up by the fact that He ever lives, never dies, and is all powerful to be able to keep His promises.
- B. When we are tempted to be unfaithful to Christ, we need to look to our God, who is never unfaithful. Our God is always faithful, always available to seek for help, always strong to save, and always desirous of holiness in His children. Meditate on this so that it is fixed in your mind. When the moments come when you think, “God it is hard to beat this sin, this tendency, this thing that I do...” then you can remember God is faithful. He has not left you on your own, with no resources to “survive” the temptation.

IV. Temptation is Always Beatable, 13c-d

- A. The route to victory over temptation may not seem evident at first, and it may seem costly, particularly if you have driven yourself far into sin.
- B. The first promise is that God’s faithfulness means that God will not permit you to experience *too* great a temptation. Whatever therefore comes your way, you can endure. The pull of your old life—idolatry and immorality—is not so strong that it will inevitably swallow up the Christian. God can and will help you to pull away.
- C. When temptation seems too hard, there can be several reasons.
 1. Perhaps you are not accustomed to it. You have not faced this difficulty yet.

2. Perhaps the Lord is stretching you, “leveling up” your endurance.
 3. Perhaps you are looking at the temptation from the standpoint of the flesh. Indeed, for the flesh, any temptation seems insurmountable. Instead, we must rely upon the grace of God and the power of the Spirit of God and the truth that we are indeed dead to sin.
 4. Perhaps you have sold yourself into such deep sin that major changes are required to realign yourself with where God wants you to be.
 5. Perhaps you are not spending sufficient time in the Word of God and prayer, so your spiritual strength is sapped.
- D. The second promise is that God will help you escape the temptation. God’s faithfulness means that God provides help in a time of need. There are various ways this can happen. You can flee, like Joseph. You can turn away if it is something you cannot flee. You can pray. You can ask for the assistance of a brother or sister. You can change your behavior, replace the bad with good. Of course, you can repent of the sinful desire or tendency that causes the temptation to be tempting.
1. Suppose your temptation is to complain about a health problem that will lead to your death. Surviving the temptation does not mean beating the disease; it means beating the sin! You can end up dying with a good conscience, even though you will not have perfect health through the process.
 2. Repeated practice through this process develops endurance and holiness. You learn holiness through the temptations that you suffer. This learning is extraordinarily valuable because without holiness, no one sees the Lord (Heb 12:14).

Conclusion

Victory tends to generate more victories, while failure tends to generate more failure. If you are on a generally victorious path, thank God profusely for His help. Keep watch for those temptations that inevitably will come. Engage the battle with the resources of the Word and the faithful God. Do not attempt victory by mere fleshly means!

But if you are on a downward spiral right now, allowing yourself to fall to one temptation after another, then ask God to help you win a victory here, and one there, until those victories become a pattern. Get help from a friend. Get into the Word and replace time wasted in sin with time invested in the things of God.