

Fil-Am Community Church

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Just Say "NO"

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Just say "NO"

Good morning Fil-Am , it is so good to see so many of you here this morning, last week we talked about Tribulation, Peace and Victory where it says in John 16:33, *"These things have I spoken unto you, that in me ye may have peace. In the world ye have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."* Today we are going to talk about overcoming temptation and look at the life of one of the saints to see an example of resisting that same temptation.

Before we get into the sermon first let me tell you a story of when I went home on leave to pick my car up. Abigail and I went to church with my mother and heard a sermon that inspired me. The pastor was a down home southern boy and preached a sermon titled **"Old Time Christianity."**

He talked about how when he grew up they were poor; they all sat at the table for supper and passed the plate around, once the meal was done everyone pitched in and helped clean everything up. They didn't realize they were poor because so was everyone around them was also poor. It was a community and if you ran out of eggs or sugar you just knocked on the

neighbor's door and asked to borrow some until you could get to the store in a few days.

You knew it was time to come home when the street lights came on or the lightning bugs started to light up. The "Web" was something that spiders hung out in. When we talked about downloading it meant you were taking the hay bales off the truck. There are a lot of things that have changed since those very innocent days, but one of the most drastic changes was in the preaching.

Today you have a lot of church's that preach only the feel good sermons on love, how God is love and everything will be alright. No don't get me wrong God is Love but we need some men of God that have a moral backbone that can stand firm and preach the word of God. That have the intestinal fortitude to tell the church that if they don't change from their sinful ways that they are going to hell.

He said that the preacher would preach sermons that hurt some feelings. He preached sermons that would have his congregation wonder if he had been reading their E-Mails. That he had to have been listening in on their phone conversations. He preached a word that cut to the bone; it didn't beat around the bush and side step a controversial issue but hit hard topics head on. They preached with conviction.

He said you can't wear flip flops in this church, you heard me he said you can't wear flip flops in this congregation, you have to wear some boots in here because I am going to step on your toes.

What we need today is some preachers that are not concerned about hurting the congregation's feelings; we need some preachers that are not afraid to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We need some preachers that are not worried about the number of the people showing up but are concerned about the spiritual lives of those that are present.

In the 1980's it was first lady Nancy Reagan who popularized the slogan "**Just say No.**" Remember that? Though simple and straight forward, that little two letter word can still be a difficult choice to make.

You might be on a diet. And you're going through the line at the Hibachi Grill. Or just as you're walking past the bakery, they bring out this huge double chocolate fudge cake. You know you should just say 'no.' But you can't bring yourself to do it.

Or you're just about to walk into class to take an English test. And one of your friends pulls you aside and says, "I have the answer key right here. Bring it into class with you. And you're guaranteed to get an A." You know you should just say no. But you didn't study a whole lot the previous night. And you can use all the help you can get.

Or you're might be a married man down at the plant. And you just happen to be working next to a very pretty girl and she finds you attractive. You've even do a little Harmless flirting with her a little bit. She's made it clear that she wants more and doesn't care if you're married. Deep down, you know that you should just say "NO".....

Sometimes the only thing standing between us and a life altering decision is whether or not we can say 'NO' to temptation.

He that labors is tempted by one Devil and a mind that is idol is tempted by a thousand.

There is a story about a little boy in a grocery store that illustrates the nature of temptation. The boy was standing near an open box of chocolate chip cookies. He stood there looking intently at the open box when the grocer say him and quickly came over and what are you up to young man, the little boy replied, nothing. The grocer said nothing; well it looks to me like you were trying to steal one of them cookies, he quickly replied you're wrong mister I'm trying my best not too." (**That's Temptation**)

Today we're going to look at temptation but specifically at how one person dealt with temptation. We will see how he found a way to say "NO" to temptation. His name is Joseph.

We spent a little time in our IMPACT class looking over his exploits but we are going to dig a little deeper today into his temptations.

Back in Genesis 37, Joseph's brothers were jealous of him because his father favored him more than all the others. So they stripped him of his richly decorated robe. And they threw him in a well and were plotting to kill him. When the Ishmaelites came through, his brothers sold Joseph into a life of slavery for 20 shekels of silver.

For time sake we will skip forward a little and pick up the story in Genesis

39, we discover that Joseph lands on his feet. Verse one says that after he was taken down to Egypt, he was purchased as a slave by an Egyptian official named Potiphar.

Now you need to understand at Egypt during that time there were two kinds of people living in there, the very rich, and the very poor.

Potiphar was rich. He had money. He had power. And He was the captain of the guard.

Which in this country is like being the head of the FBI.

And he saw right away that Joseph was an exceptionally gifted young man. A man who could do just about anything you asked him to do.

And because Potiphar noticed how the Lord was with Joseph, Joseph is quickly promoted through the ranks.

(We need to learn a lesson from this and see that as a Christian even though we may think no one is watching us that we need to continue to do what we know is right because you may never know who is looking at you)

Back to the story...

And we're told in verse five that Potiphar puts him in charge of his entire household. And as a result, the Lord's blessing was on everything Potiphar had. Both in the house and in the field.

And it got to the point where Potiphar trusted Joseph so much, that he didn't have to worry about anything anymore. When he came home from work, the house was clean. The dishes were done. The cows were fed. The record books were balanced. The only thing Potiphar had to worry about was "Should we have pork chops for supper tonight? Or should we have the T-Bone steaks? Should we have corn on the cob roasted over an open fire? Or should we have peas and carrots?"

With Joseph around, Potiphar's life was made in the shade. And he knew it!

Verse six goes on to tell us that "Joseph was well-built and handsome." So not only is Joseph a spiritual man. Not only is he a capable man. He's a good looking guy!

You ask, "Why is Joseph's physical appearance being emphasized?" Because it is the one quality of Joseph that Mrs. Potiphar notices.

She's not interested in his spirituality. She's not interested in his personal development. The only thing she cares about is that he's a lion to be tamed! A man to be conquered!

Verse seven says that "after a while, Potiphar's wife took notice of Joseph and said, "Come to bed with me!"

My friends, that is what you would call the direct approach. I almost decided

to call this sermon "Dealing with Desperate Housewives." Because Mrs. Potiphar is just like one of the women on that show.

You can paint the picture her husband's at work. She's home alone most of the time. And she longs for a little excitement in her life.

But as a Christian, you have to appreciate Joseph's response to her in verses eight and nine. He refuses her advances on two grounds.

First of all: He appeals to her reason. He said, "Look. My master has put me in charge of everything in this house. He has withheld nothing from me except you, because you are his wife. Considering all the trust he has placed in me, how can I stab him in the back? How can I violate the confidence he has placed in me?"

Secondly: He appeals to her conscience. "How could I do such a wicked thing and sin against God? God has been with me every moment of my life. Why would I want to do something that would destroy my relationship with Him?"

To really appreciate how courageous Joseph is, we need to remember a few things.

1. Joseph was red blooded young man in the prime years of his life. He would have had the same feelings toward the opposite sex that you had when you were 19 or 20.

2. You have to understand this was not a onetime temptation. This was happening every day! Mrs. Potiphar wasn't going to give up until she got what she wanted!
3. There was the temptation of flattery: "Joseph could have thought, "Wow, this is one of the highest ranking women of Egyptian society. And she has the hots for me!"
4. There was the temptation for self-pity. Joseph could have said, "You know, I was brought to this country against my will. My family life has been taken from me. Nothing good ever happens to me. I deserve this little bit of pleasure! I deserve a little roll in the hay." "Besides, this might actually help my career! If I sleep with Mrs. Potiphar, she might put in a good word for me to Pharaoh! And I might really start to go places!"
5. Joseph may also have thought the opposite: "If I don't sleep with this woman, she could make my life miserable! If I want things to go well for me, maybe I should give in."

From a worldly perspective, everything was on the side of Joseph to surrender to this temptation. But he said 'NO' because ***his relationship with the Lord*** was more important to him than anything else in the world.

Let me ask you this question: "How important is your relationship with God? Do you see God as a person who can be easily brushed aside so that you can enjoy the pleasures of sin for a little while?"

Or do you see Him as the most Holy and most awesome presence in your life? A proper attitude toward God will go a long way in helping you to say no to temptation.

Verse ten goes on to say that though Mrs. Potiphar spoke to Joseph day after day, he not only refused to go to bed with her. He refused even to be with her!

This would not have been easy. Because in wealthy Egyptian homes, the housing quarters for the women were usually located at the front of the house. So in fulfilling his duties Joseph would have had to pass Mrs. Potiphar's private quarters every day.

You could almost see him walk by her room with his head turned the other direction.

But this is where the plot thickens. We see in verse 11 it says "One day, he went into the house to attend to his duties, and none of the household servants was inside."

I pause to add that the enemy sets a perfect scene for temptation - he'll make sure you have plenty of privacy. Plenty of opportunity. He'll say, "everything is set up - you're a fool not to take advantage of this."

If you are honest and think back you could almost see this play out again and again and every time you would think to yourself that this just does not feel right.

You can feel that tingling at the base of your neck or those butterflies in the pit of your stomach. What do you think that is? (The Holy Spirit convicting you)

Verse 12 says that she caught him by his cloak and said, "Come to bed with me!"

The Hebrew word for 'caught' means ' **to grab with violence.**'

She's no longer simply propositioning Joseph. She's getting physical.

This is big time sexual harassment! But Joseph pulled himself away. He left his cloak in her hand. And he ran out of the house.

(How many times in your life do you wish you would have just run?)

At this point, we expect God himself to show up and say, "Well done, Joseph! You passed the test! You're the man! Now you will be vindicated and rewarded! And Mrs. Potiphar will get what's coming to her!"

But that's not what happens. Not right away. It has been said that nothing enrages a sensual woman like a refusal.

Verse 13 says that when she saw that he had left his cloak in her hand and had run out of the house, she said to her household servants, "Look at what

this Hebrew tried to do to me! He came in here to sleep with me, but I screamed. When he heard me scream for help, he left his cloak beside me and ran."

When her husband came home, she told him the same story. He burned with anger. And he had Joseph thrown into prison.

She made up a story about Joseph to save her face. And her husband believed her.

Or did he? Egyptian law says that if you try to rape a woman, you were put to death. You were guilty before proven innocent. But Potiphar didn't have Joseph executed. In fact, the prison that Joseph was assigned to was the royal prison. That jail wasn't as rough as some of the other ones. All of this may be an indication that Potiphar wasn't totally convinced that Joseph was the only one at fault.

As we reflect on how Joseph said "NO" to this temptation, there are some applications for us.

1. You should be aware of all the reasons why it is not in your best interest to give in. When Joseph resisted Mrs. Potiphar, he didn't just say "NO" He explained to her WHY he was saying no!

Proverbs 14:15 says that "A simple man believes anything. But a prudent man gives thought to his steps." Give some thought to this situation. And write

down all the red flags you can think of.

2. Try to avoid persons or places where you know you might be tempted. Joseph decided to avoid Mrs. Potiphar as much as possible.

Saints You need to identify the Mrs. Potiphar's in your life.

Identify who are the persons or places that might be a stumbling block to your Christian faith. And try not to spend much time with them.

3. When things are getting heated. And the temptation is becoming more than you can bear. Sometimes the best thing you can do is GET OUT!!! Turn around and go the other way!

There's a famous scene in the movie Forrest Gump where these kids are throwing rocks at Forrest. And at first he doesn't know what to do. And then Jenny says, "**Run, Forrest! Run!!!**"

That advice applies to temptation. When the enemy is throwing things at you, and it's more than you can bear, then turn around and run the other way.

1 Corinthians 6:18 says "*Flee sexual immorality.*"

2 Timothy 2:22 says "*Flee the evil desires of youth, and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, along with those who call upon the Lord out of a pure heart.*"

Joseph's story teaches us that you can avoid temptation. You can live pure before God! Just follow what the scripture says. Flee from temptation!

If you're in a work situation like the one Joseph was in, God may be saying

that it's time for you to get out of that situation. Find a different job. Or rearrange your work hours. Or ask the boss to put you on a different shift.

Maybe you're thinking, "Brother Bennett that's not fair! Why should I have to inconvenience myself just because so and so can't control their hormones?"

I agree that changing your schedule is inconvenient. I agree that it's unfair. But if things are in danger of going too far, and your resistance is beginning to melt like butter in the sun, then in the long run, changing your schedule will be worth it.

4. Don't be confused by the immediate results of your resistance. Joseph could have said, "I can't believe this! I go out of my way to obey God. And look I get rewarded? I get thrown in the clink!"

There may be a wrong way to do the right thing but never the right way to do the wrong thing!

(Remember when Pharaoh said to make bricks without straw)

But verses 21-23 tell us that the Lord was with Joseph in that prison. Later on, Joseph interpreted dreams for the king. And by the time you get to Genesis 41:41, Joseph becomes second in command to the Pharaoh. And he is put in charge of the whole land of Egypt.

Guess who he ruled over? Mrs. Potiphar!

So don't allow the immediate results of your moral choices to disillusion you. Eventually, you will be blessed.

(Stay the Course)

And you will be rewarded for saying “NO” to temptation. And “YES” to the will of God.

Maybe I’m speaking to a college student today or any member of this church.

If you have begun to compromise, or entertain lustful thoughts, or flirt with temptation, I urge you to flee the evil desires of youth.

I challenge you to be like Joseph. Take the moral high ground the road less traveled. I encourage you to live a holy and pure life for the Lord. Let’s pray.