

## Jesus Gives You a Way Out of Temptations

1 Cor. 10:13

Good morning! We are on the third part of our series on “Jesus Gives”. We’re looking at a few of those things that Jesus blesses us with like his peace in the midst of trouble and eternal security for our souls. And those were the two things that we looked at the first two weeks. Today, we’re going to look at a topic that concerns all of us. Because it is something that everyone of us experiences. I’m talking about temptation and how Jesus helps us to overcome temptations in our lives. So, I’ve entitled this message, “Jesus Gives You a Way Out of Temptations.” Let me read from 1 Cor. 10:13, “No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.”

Let me ask you. Is there anyone here who hasn’t been tempted? Some of you are tempted to raise your hand but, suddenly, you remember the time you were tempted to tell a lie and you actually gave in to that temptation! I guess let me ask you a different question, what are the three greatest temptations in your life? Can you type them in the chat box? Just kidding. But I’m sure we can think of at least one, right? And I’m sure many of us have been struggling with that one temptation, right? Is it the temptation to eat chocolate or cake? Or to go shopping? Nothing wrong with chocolates or shopping unless your enemy is sugar or your credit is maxed out. Well, in our lockdown situation, eating the forbidden chocolate is a temptation that’s hard to resist and shopping is impossible to do. But, there’s the internet and so the temptation is still there. But there are far more serious temptations whose consequences are far more serious as well, like the temptation to cheat – on your income tax, on your spouse, or the temptation to gossip,

or the temptation to lose your patience, or the temptation to visit porn sites and I read somewhere that porn sites are making a killing because of the lockdown, or the temptation to lose hope and even blame God in the midst of this pandemic.

What is temptation, btw? How do we define it? The Oxford Dictionary says that it is “The desire to do something, especially something wrong or unwise”. In other words, in religious terms, it is the inclination to sin. Notice, it is a desire, an inclination, a yearning to do something wrong. Thus, it is not a sin to be tempted. What is a sin is when you give in to temptation or to your desire to do wrong.

Temptation is one of the realities that we have to deal with as Christians. Being a Christian does not mean that we will not face temptations. In fact, we may face even greater temptations. The problem of temptation is real and the struggle sometime is overwhelming. Temptation often plays out like the following scenario: We are tempted or enticed, then we fall and give in to the temptation, then we feel the guilt that comes after the fall. We start listening to the enemy who says, "I thought you were a Christian. Christians don't do that." Because we listen to the enemy of our soul, we sometimes find ourselves caught up in a cycle of defeat. We wonder will it ever end. "Can I endure? Is there an escape? Is there a way out?" The truth of our Scripture this week is that, yes, you can endure! There is a way out. There is an escape.

So, this morning, let me share with you **three truths** that we can distill from this passage of Scripture. First.

### **I. It is easy to fall into temptation.**

Why? Because it is common. "No temptation has seized you except what is common to man." Just like the common cold. It is called as such because anyone can easily catch it. All of us experience temptation. And there's no new temptation. As Solomon stated, **"there is nothing new under the sun"** (Ecc. 1:9).

Whatever temptation you have faced, are facing, and will face, others have faced and endured.

One of the challenges of facing temptation is that you often feel as if you are the only one struggling with your particular temptation. You look around and begin to think, "Am I the only one struggling with this? What's wrong with me?" The reality is that there's nothing wrong with you. You are facing what is common to us all. We will see why we face temptation in just a moment, but you would be surprised how many people (in the past and present) are dealing with the same temptation that you are facing right now. This is one reason small groups and fellowship in the church is so valuable. When you interact with other believers you discover that we all share similar struggles. As a result, we are able to encourage one another.

Everyone is capable of not only being tempted but falling to temptation as well. The entire passage of 1 Corinthians 10:1-13 stands as a warning of the temptations that we face (see, vv. 6, 11). Right before our main verse, Paul warns his readers against carelessness and pride. "So if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall!" (1 Cor. 10:12). Galatians 6:1 has some similar advice for us. "Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted." The context of our verse on assurance is that special privilege is no guarantee that you will not face temptation and trials.

In this passage, the Bible mentions four areas of common temptations that we all are prone to face.

### Four Common Temptations

#### 1. Temptation to Idolatry (10:7)

In the larger passage Paul related how the events of the Old Testament served as contemporary examples, not to follow but to avoid.

And what are we to avoid? For one thing, idolatry! Idolatry is allowing someone or something to come before you and your relationship with God. As your English teacher would remind you, a noun is a person, place, or thing. Well, an idol can be a person, place, or anything that comes first in your life before God. If something causes you to not obey God fully, it could be an idol in your life. If something in your life causes your love toward God and the things of God to grow cold, it could be an idol in your life. The temptation to idolatry is not usually presented to us in bold terms. Usually, the temptation comes to us under the guise that this action will fulfill some need that we have. In the Bible, Idolatry was always a sign of relationship trouble. When God's people fell into idolatry, it was because they ceased getting their ultimate needs met by God.

## **2. Temptation to Immorality (10:8)**

Yes, the godly struggle with issues of purity. The temptation of sexual immorality is not a new temptation, although It may even be a greater temptation today because of our sex-crazed culture. Some believers may think that they are not prone to temptations of sexual immorality, but "Be careful" God says (1 Cor. 10:12). As long as you're in your earthly body, you are capable of not only being tempted to immorality, but falling as well. This is true even though you may be advanced in years already. Like the story I read of a seemingly godly man who was 80-years-old and yet revealed that he still struggled with lust! Is there something wrong with him? No, we should expect to be tempted to immorality. It "is common to man." If idolatry says, "this will fulfill you," immorality says, "this will make you feel good."

## **3. Temptation to Test God (10:9)**

The people in Moses' day presumed upon God, and they didn't live very long either. The real problem was that they acted as if it did not matter how they lived. They thought that God would simply overlook their sin and disobedience.

Now, the truth is, God will always be there for you, but that is not a license to test God. The temptation to test God is the temptation that says, "you have to look out for yourself, God is not coming through for you, you cannot trust Him. Therefore, lean on your own understanding."

#### 4. Temptation to Grumble (10:10)

Some of you have a problem with grumbling! How do I know that? Have I been listening in on your conversations? No, I know that you have a problem with grumbling because it "is common to man," and I'm included in that number. There is the constant temptation for us to grumble, to be discontent about our situation in life. We grumble about our home life, our jobs, our country, even our church. However, when we grumble we are really saying, "God, you messed up!" If we really believe that God works all things for our good and according to His purposes, then grumbling is telling a sovereign God, He doesn't know what He's doing, because if He did, he would change my situation.

If temptation is common to all of us, why do we face temptation? There is an unholy trinity at work in your life and in mine. Here is the source of temptation. Here is why every one of us faces temptations.

#### Three Sources of Temptation

##### 1. Internal Enemy - The Flesh

No, not the physical body, but your nature, the five-sense part of you that is easily dominated by desire. Now desire is not a bad thing. If God did not give us the desire for hunger, we would not desire to eat and would eventually shrivel up and die. But our fallen human nature says, "Don't be content with eating to live, live to eat." And so, we are tempted to over-indulge.

Some people say, "You should just follow what comes normal." Now, if we were not fallen creatures, that philosophy of life would work. But here's the problem.

Because we are fallen human beings, our nature is out of sorts and our desires unchecked by God's moral law are going to lead to unhealthy and ungodly behavior. How do we suppress the inner nature that wants to do its own thing? We suppress our sinful desires by filling our lives with Christ. We let God's Spirit control us, so that we do not fulfill the desires of our flesh (See Gal. 5:16-ff.).

## 2. External Enemy - The World

We are not talking about the physical creation because God says His creation is good. What we are talking about here is the philosophy or system of thought in the world that leaves God out. It is anti-Christ. The world says hate your enemies, not love your enemies. The world says look out for yourself, don't place others before you and your needs. The world says let's settle our differences with war, not with peace accords. The world says take what you want out of life, not wait in patience. The world says acquire, accumulate, for a man's possessions and achievements are the evaluation of a successful life, not giving to others and serving in some obscure place giving your life away to others. The world appeals to our sense of pride, lust for power, and desire for pleasure.

How do we resist our external enemy? We have to reprogram our desires. I've noticed that when I go grocery shopping, if I eat before I go, I spend less money and I make better purchasing choices. Why is that? Because all the goodies and junk doesn't look nearly as good on a full stomach. But if you go to the grocery store hungry, your grocery cart will mysteriously fill up with all kinds of stuff you would not normally buy.

When it comes to spiritual matters, we have to change our appetite. If we are full of Christ and His Word, our appetite for the world will be lessened. If we are not full of Christ, we will be empty and prone to being tempted by the attitudes and things of this world.

When I am full of Christ, I find that I am content, I have no need to exert power over others, I'm not nearly as stressed, and my desires begin to reflect what delights God. What's changed? Why the new outlook? My heart has changed which has changed my "wants."

### 3. Infernal Enemy - The Devil

Among his many names, our enemy is called the "Devil" (Matt. 4:1), the "Tempter" (1 Th. 3:5), the "Father of Lies" (Jn. 8:44), and the "Deceiver" (Rev. 20:10). He hurls his "fiery darts" (Eph. 6:16) at us tempting us to disobey God, to grumble, to do that which is wrong. I do not want to give the Devil too much credit but I do not want to neglect him either. I don't want you to think that you can fall back and say, "The Devil made me do it." He can't make you do anything against your will. But you can give him place in your life, but you have to do that of your own free will. The Devil doesn't make you do it, but he sure does make sin attractive. He whispers to you, "You have the right to be angry and bitter." "You deserve this, you need this because you're special and no one appreciates you, even God Himself." "This will solve all your problems." "This will make you feel better." The Devil whispers and sometimes he shouts, "Go ahead!" when God says "Stop!" The Devil tells us the light is green when it's really red.

The first truth from 1 Cor. 10:13 is that it is easy to fall into temptation. The second is

### 2. God will help you when you are tempted.

"And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear."

God is always with you during your times of temptation. He knows what you're going through. He knows how you feel, your inner struggles, or mental struggles. Because he experienced that himself when he came to earth as a man in the person of Jesus.

The Bible tells us that he was tempted just like each of us but he never gave in. He never sinned. Before he started his ministry he fasted for 40 days. After 40 days, he was tempted by the devil three times. He was in a very weak condition physically and that's why the devil took advantage of that. He was wrong, however, because Jesus was strong spiritually and he overcame the devil's temptations. For sure, there were other temptations that Jesus faced because he was like one of us but the thing is he never succumbed to the temptations. And so, you can rest assure that Jesus will help you in your weakest moments. He's been there and he knows how to overcome. He is faithful.

Another thing to remember is that Jesus knows your strength greater than you do. He knows how much you can handle, and how much you cannot.

You know, when you're an athlete and you're training, one of the basic principles you apply is to keep pushing yourself to the limit. I've been watching this series on ESPN called "The Last Dance". It is a documentary on the sixth and last year when the Chicago Bulls won the NBA championship in 1998. Basically, it's also the story of Michael Jordan. You know why he was so successful in leading the Bulls to six championships? It is because of his attitude of pushing himself to the limit game after game even playing after he just recovered from a surgery on his broken foot early in his career.

Temptations are like that. They keep pushing you to the limit. But you need to understand that you can bear it. You don't have to give up. You can hold on because God knows what you are capable of more than you do. And the more you hold on, you discover you become even stronger and that gives you confidence the next time around. That's the benefit of not giving up. And most likely, that's also the reason why God allows this temptation to linger more than it should. So that you might become like Jesus.



You just be patient. Like Jesus and like Job. Here's a guy who suffered unimaginable losses. He lost his children, his livestock, his house, he lost everything except his nagging wife. If you ask me why, I don't know. God has a reason.

Anyway, Job was tempted to give up his faith on God, but he said, "Though he slay me, yet will I hope in him". (Job 13:15) In the end, God rewarded him with more than he could ever imagine.

So, just hang around and be patient like Job when you're under attack by temptation. And do you know why you should hang around while temptation tries to break down your defenses?

### 3. God has an exit plan for you.

He has provided a way out for you. "But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it." With every temptation God provides a way of escape, a way out, an exit, so that we can stand.

What is this way out? Now, we know that God is faithful and he is almighty and he can do miraculous things to help us out of a difficult situation. But more often than not, the way out of temptation largely depends on our dependence on God and his Word and the practical application of biblical principles.

So, I believe the way out is to conquer our desire to do wrong. You see, God has created us with emotions: love, joy, anger, sadness, excitement, etc. Because of Adam's sin which has warped our human nature these same emotions have another side to them: Love is twisted to lust. Joy is twisted to selfish pleasure. Anger over right things becomes anger for the wrong things. Sadness twists into despair. Excitement over good things changes to twisted pleasure over sinful things etc. At this stage sin has not yet expressed itself ... it is here where sin can be avoided by a planned escape.

And now, here's the way out...

The best approach to avoiding "desire" becoming sin when it begins to grow in you is to RESIST it by getting away from it! Run away from it.

Like Joseph who ran away from Potiphar's wife who tried to seduce him.

When improper desires strike, take your eyes off of whatever it is that is creating the desire and get your eyes on Christ. Too often we sit and stare at temptation and try to "intellectualize" the event, thinking we are strong enough to do this! The longer you look at it, the more the temptation level is going to increase. If you're not looking at it, or dwelling on it, you will be able to get away from it!

Like those who train dogs for a living; to discipline a dog into listening to the orders of the master instead of their own desires they will take a piece of meat and place it on the ground near the dog. As soon as the dog realizes the wonderful piece of meat is there, desire will kick in full steam. At this point the trainer will yell, "NO!" As the dog attempts to go toward it the master will repeat over and over again "NO!" What does the dog do? The dog will usually take his eyes off the meat and stare in the eyes of his master ... by doing this they yield to the power of the master because the pull from the meat is no longer in their sight! They will often continue to stare at their master waiting for the ok ... if they take their eyes off the master they are likely to be overcome by desire and ignore their master's commands! Dogs can be smarter than humans when it comes to fighting desires!

Avoid dwelling on the desire, it may just enhance it! I knew a man who traveled extensively for his job. Wherever he stayed, he had the Television in his room disconnected to avoid the temptations he might face after a long day and night. If the internet tempts you, move your computer into the living room. If spending too much is a temptation for you, take someone with you when you go to the mall as an accountability partner. Do whatever is necessary for you to flee temptation.

You see, if desire is nourished it will grow until it is birthed into existence!  
Stop feeding it if you want it to die!

What biblical principle should we apply then to resist temptation? There are so many but let me focus on one and we find that in Galatians 5:16 and following verses:

“So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh. They are in conflict with each other, so that you are not to do whatever you want. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.

The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.” (Gal. 5:16-25)

Are we keeping in step with the Spirit? If you're a Christian, you know that the Holy Spirit is living in you. The question is, do you let the Holy Spirit become active in you? Or are you suppressing him by not giving him control of any or every wrong desire you have in your heart?

If you're not a Christian yet, the way out is actually following Jesus. Because when you surrender your life to Jesus, he will help you to conquer your evil desires through the power of the Holy Spirit. How do you become a Christian?

It is by putting your faith in what Jesus Christ has done for you on the cross. He was crucified on the cross in order to carry your sins on his body. So, instead of you being punished by God, he himself was punished for your sins. Then, he was buried and rose from the dead. He resurrected! He became alive again in order to give you eternal life. And that life starts now. If you turn over your life to Jesus, you have eternal life now and you will have the power to conquer your wrong desires.