

Temptation

Preached in:

Mecca, Indiana – 11.21.04

I) INTRODUCTION

A) OPENING ILLUSTRATION: "Son," ordered a father, "Don't swim in that canal."

"OK, Dad," he answered. But he came home carrying a wet bathing suit that evening.

"Where have you been?" demanded the father.

"Swimming in the canal," answered the boy.

"Didn't I tell you not to swim there?" asked the father.

"Yes, Sir," answered the boy.

"Why did you?" he asked.

"Well, Dad," he explained, "I had my bathing suit with me and I couldn't resist the temptation."

"Why did you take your bathing suit with you?" he questioned.

"So I'd be prepared to swim, in case I was tempted," he replied.

B) PASSAGE: James 1:12-18, "*Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him. ¹³ When tempted, no one should say, 'God is tempting me.' For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; ¹⁴ but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed. ¹⁵ Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.*

C) The difference between trials and temptations

1) **Trials are allowed by God to:**

- a) Make us stronger.
- b) Reveal who we are.

2) **Temptation is from Satan to:**

- a) Destroy our faith.
- b) Destroy our power.
- c) Destroy our witness.
- d) Destroy our soul.

II) THE NATURE OF TEMPTATION

A) Natural

1) **Physical Needs**

- a) Sex
 - i) Vital for reproduction.
- b) Hunger
 - i) Vital for life.
- c) NOTE: It is interesting how God attached pleasure to things that are vital for our existence.
 - i) There is a reason sex is appealing.
 - ii) There is a reason food tastes good.

- iii) The reason is God intended these things to be a part of our life – but, under **His** conditions.

2) Inner Drives

- a) Significance
 - i) We need to know we matter.
- b) Strength
 - i) We need to know we are able.
- c) Security
 - i) We need to know we are safe.
- d) Success
 - i) We need to know there is victory.

3) Emotions.

- a) Love
- b) Anger
- c) Sadness

4) Thoughts (Originate from three places:)

- a) Revelation.
 - i) Coming from God.
- b) Conditioned responses
 - i) Coming from our own mental patterns.
- c) Sinful lies.
 - i) Coming from the enemy.

B) Transition:

1) None of these things are sin by themselves.

- a) **James 1:16-18**, *“¹⁶ Don't be deceived, my dear brothers. ¹⁷ Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows. ¹⁸ He chose to give us birth through the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of all he created.”*
- b) Satan has caused many people to be bound needlessly.

2) Everything Satan has is a perversion of good.

3) Sin results from fulfilling God given desires in a way God does approve of.

C) Sinful

1) Sinful Actions

- a) Sex - Fornication / Adultery
- b) Hunger - Addiction / Abuse

2) Sinful Motives

- a) Significance - Pride
- b) Strength - Dominion or Control
- c) Security - Materialism
- d) Success - Success at any cost
 - i) cheating
 - ii) stealing
 - iii) lying
 - iv) swindling

3) Sinful Desires

- a) Love - Lust
- b) Anger - Hate / Bitterness / Revenge
- c) Sadness - Despair / Doubt

4) Thoughts

- a) Thoughts pondered long enough become plans.
- b) Two principles of dealing with thoughts
 - i) You can not think two thoughts at the same time.
 - ii) You can't stop the birds from flying over your head, but they don't have to build a nest there.

III) THE PROCESS OF TEMPTATION

A) The Deception

- 1) **Lie #1 "This will make me happy."**
 - a) John Piper says that sin (lust for example) *"gets its power by persuading me to believe that I will be more happy if I follow it. The power of all temptation is the prospect that it will make me happier."*
- 2) **Lie #2 "Just once won't hurt."**
 - a) This lie is based on the premise that it is truly not wrong.
 - b) If we rationalize, we can justify. If we can justify we will follow through.
 - c) **ILLUSTRATION:** The Great Wall of China is a gigantic structure which cost an immense amount of money and labor. When it was finished, it appeared impregnable. But the enemy breached it. Not by breaking it down or going around it. **They did it by bribing the gatekeepers.**
- 3) **Lie #3 "You are of no use to God now that you have failed. You might as well enjoy sinning."**
 - a) This lie is based on the premise that our value to God depends on our actions or behavior.
 - i) God is not a harsh task master waiting for us to fail so He can punish us.
 - ii) God's love for us has nothing to do with our behavior.
 - b) God doesn't tell us "no" to spoil our fun. He tells us "no" to:
 - i) Protect us from what would hurt us.
 - ii) Maximize our joy.

B) The Desire

- 1) The deception makes us consider the sin.
- 2) Consideration of the sin brings the consideration that the lie might be true.
- 3) Consideration of the lie, obscures the reality of the truth.
 - a) No one ever tempted by sin in its true form.
 - b) **EXAMPLE:** Name one cheating husband that ever cheated because he was attracted to broken vows, destroying his marriage and shattering his family.
 - c) **ILLUSTRATION:** Many years ago, Indian youths would go away in solitude to prepare for manhood. One such youth hiked into a beautiful valley, green with trees, bright with flowers. There he fasted. But on the third day, as he looked up at the surrounding mountains, he noticed one tall rugged peak, capped with dazzling snow. I will test myself against that mountain, he thought. He put on his buffalo-hide shirt, threw his blanket over his shoulders and set off to climb the peak. When he reached the top he stood on the rim of the world. He could see forever, and his heart swelled with pride. Then he heard a rustle at his feet, and looking down, he saw a snake. Before he could move, the snake spoke.
 - *"I am about to die," said the snake. "It is too cold for me up here and I am freezing. There is no food and I am starving. Put me under your shirt and take me down to the valley."*

- "No," said the youth. "I am forewarned. I know your kind. You are a rattlesnake. If I pick you up, you will bite, and your bite will kill me."
- "Not so," said the snake. "I will treat you differently. If you do this for me, you will be special. I will not harm you."
- The youth resisted awhile, but this was a very persuasive snake with beautiful markings.
- At last the youth tucked it under his shirt and carried it down to the valley.
- There he laid it gently on the grass, when suddenly the snake coiled, rattled, and leapt, biting him on the leg.
- "But you promised..." cried the youth.
- "You knew what I was when you picked me up." said the snake as it slithered away."

C) The Decision

- 1) Once the desire brings the decision, the act is inevitable.

IV) THE VICTORY OVER TEMPTATION

A) Realize

- 1) The victory is not in you, it is in God.
- 2) There must be a transformation.

B) React

- 1) What settings are you in when you fall? Avoid them.
- 2) What props do you have that support your sin? Eliminate them.
- 3) What people are you usually with? Avoid them.
- 4) **QUOTE:** To his preachers, Charles Spurgeon advised, "Learn to say no. It will be of more use to you than to be able to read Latin."
- 5) **ILLUSTRATION:** On the TV show "Hee Haw," Doc Campbell is confronted by a patient who says he broke his arm in two places. The doc replies, "Well then, stay out of them places!"

C) Recondition

- 1) Allow God to retrain your mind and habits.
 - a) **Romans 12:1-2,** *"¹ Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God--this is your spiritual act of worship. ² Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is--his good, pleasing and perfect will."*
- 2) Fill your mind with His word.
 - a) **Ephesians 6:17-18,** *"¹⁷ Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. ¹⁸ And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints."*

D) Resist

- 1) **ILLUSTRATION:** Reports the DENVER POST: "Like many sheep ranchers in the West, Lexy Fowler has tried just about everything to stop crafty coyotes from killing her sheep. She has used odor sprays, electric fences, and 'scare-coyotes.' She has slept with her lambs during the summer and has placed battery-operated radios near them.

She has corralled them at night, herded them at day. But the southern Montana rancher has lost scores of lambs--fifty last year alone. "Then she discovered the llama--the aggressive, funny-looking, afraid-of-nothing llama... 'Llamas don't appear to be afraid of anything,' she said. 'When they see something, they put their head up and walk straight toward it. That is aggressive behavior as far as the coyote is concerned, and they won't have anything to do with that... Coyotes are opportunists, and llamas take that opportunity away.'"

- a) Apparently llamas know the truth of what James writes: "***Resist the Devil, and he will flee from you***" (4:7). The moment we sense his attack through temptation is the moment we should face it and deal with it for what it is.

E) Remember

- 1) Compromise is where the battle is lost.

V) CONCLUSION

A) Ronald Meredith, in his book, Hurryin' Big for Little Reasons, describes one quiet night in early spring: "Suddenly out of the night came the sound of wild geese flying. I ran to the house and breathlessly announced the excitement I felt. What is to compare with wild geese across the moon? It might have ended there except for the sight of our tame mallards on the pond. They heard the wild call they had once known. The honking out of the night sent little arrows of prompting deep into their wild yesterdays. Their wings fluttered a feeble response. The urge to fly-- to take their place in the sky for which God made them-- was sounding in their feathered breasts, but they never raised from the water. The matter had been settled long ago. The corn of the barnyard was too tempting! Now their desire to fly only made them uncomfortable. Temptation is always enjoyed at the price of losing the capacity for flight."

B) We were made for so much more than the way some have been living.

There is victory!!!