

Mt. Lebanon Church

Adult Sunday School Lesson

3.12.2023

Please look up and read all verses in their entirety. I have only written partial verses.

Make your own notes, write down other scriptures that you run across while studying, write down questions that you may have or comments as well. Allow the Holy Spirit to reveal to you that he would have you to see through the study of God's word.

Overcoming Temptation with The Word

Matthew 4: 1 – 14

As Christians, how do we respond when worldly desires are presented before us. Everyone is tempted, especially those who's claim is to be of a most godly character. God's word is our best defense against the temptations of worldly desires. Our desire for the word of God should far exceed our desire for worldly possessions. Remember, God does not abandon us when we are faced with the temptations of the desires of this world, but he uses these circumstances of life, which we encounter, God uses them to fulfill his purpose and his plan for us. For it is God, through the work of the Holy Spirit, that compels us to endure the temptations that God has intended to prepare us for his service of earthly ministry.

1 Corinthians 10: 13,....there hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man, but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able, but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it....

God does not promise to keep our lives free from life's difficulties and temptations, nor even to prevent persecution, but he did provide a way of escape so that we may be able to bear it. Contrary to what some may think, there is nothing unique about our temptations. Let us not contend that no one else has ever gone through what we are going through, for Christ went through it all, and more. Daily, there will be temptation, and daily these temptations will cause us to stray away from the promises of God, one of which is that he will not allow our temptations to be more than we can bear. And even though we may stray away from these promises, he still holds his promises true, and his grace will help us to endure. Now, let us never assume that salvation will bring us immunity from the consequences of our sinful actions. Although temptation is a routine part of our life, it is possible to overcome any and all temptations. It is those experiences that make our relationship with Christ, one of grace and hope. God is not just sitting around waiting for us to fall to temptation and fail, but through the Holy Spirit, he actively wants to work in our lives, so that he may keep us from ever being tempted beyond what we can resist. We may not always believe that we can ever overcome temptation, but God promises that we can, if we allow him to help us in looking for a way to resist temptation. Ultimately, temptation leads to sin, which is a willful choice to do something other than God's will.

Matthew 4: 1 – 10,....then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil....when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungred....

So how does temptation fit into God's plan for us? Even though Satan and his angels administer temptation, he is not the one in control.

James 1: 13 – 14,....let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God. For God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man, but every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed....

Remember, God does not tempt any person to sin, but he will use the motives of that temptation to further his purpose and plan. Those things that Satan will try and use to destroy our faith, if we will allow God to do so, he will use those things to develop, and strengthen our faith in him. It is up to us to make the decision, whether to remain in obedience to God's will and his word, or to follow after temptation, and become disobedient to God's instruction and direction for our life.

1 John 2: 16,....for all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world....

These three types of sinful lusts cover the different aspects of the fallen nature of humanity. It was these three worldly desires that was offered to Eve in the garden of Eden, and it was these three worldly desires that was offered to Christ, by Satan, at the beginning of his ministry here on earth. Mankind fell prey to these desires in the garden of Eden, but Christ showed unto us, by his example, that the desires in which man fell prey to, can be overcome, and he gave unto us the power to do so, through his crucifixion and resurrection, all we must do is accept.

Matthew 4: 3 – 4,....when the tempter came, he said, if then thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread....but he answered and said, it is written, man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God....

The first temptation of Christ represents the lust of the flesh. Just as Satan knew and acknowledged that Christ was the Son of God, he also knows and acknowledges that we, as Christians, are part of the family of God. Therefore, we are enticed with the very things that is causing our weaknesses at the time. Satan uses our weaknesses to try and drive a wedge between us and God. When we allow our fleshly desires to rule over us, then we also allow those desires to take priority over Gods will in our life. We have now fallen prey to our lust of the flesh.

If we are not to allow our fleshly desires to overcome our spiritual values, and if we want to obey God, rather than use his divine power, that indwells within us, to satisfy our worldly desires, then we must respond to temptation through the power of the word of God. Christ overcame his first temptation by quoting the word of God.

Deuteronomy 8: 3,....he humbled thee, and suffered thee....that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only....but by every word....out of the mouth of the Lord....

Dwelling upon Gods word can save us from the lust of the flesh....

Matthew 4: 5 – 7,....the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple, and saith unto him, if thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down....he shall give his angels charge over thee....Jesus saith unto him....thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God....

The second temptation of Christ represents the pride of life. Here Satan challenged Christ to prove that he was truly the Son of God. Daily in our life in Christ, Satan challenges us, by trying to entice us to sin, by encouraging us to be careless with God's mercy and grace, when it comes to using God's promises for our own personal satisfaction. This means attaining our wants, not for the glory of God, but for our own glory.

In this instance, Satan, just as Paul predicts concerning false prophets today, Satan uses scripture in his scheme of deception.

Psalm 91: 11 – 12,....he shall give his angels charge over thee....they shall bear thee up in thine hands....

Deliberate misuse, and misinterpretation of the scripture has caused many believers to be enticed and led astray. For this reason it is most important, not to only have wisdom and knowledge of God's word, but also spiritual understanding. Christ once again overcame Satan's temptations with the word of God.

Deuteronomy 6: 16,....ye shall not tempt the Lord your God....

Matthew 4: 8 – 10,....the Devil taketh him up into an exceedingly high mountain, and showeth him all the kingdoms of the world....and saith unto him, all these things will I give thee....Jesus saith unto him, get thee hence Satan, for it is written thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve....

The third temptation of Christ represents the lusts of the eyes. Christ knew that all things rightfully belonged to him, just as we know that all things belong to Christ, and we are heirs of Christ. Christ also knew that in order for this transformation to take place and become complete that he would have to be crucified. Satan's temptation was not that Christ could possess what was already rightfully his, but his temptation was to try and deceive Christ into the deception that all that he possessed could be so without having to go to the cross.

In the same manner, Satan's temptation to us is one that we can possess eternal life without salvation, without suffering through trials and tribulations, all we have to do is follow after the works of the world.

Christ once again shows us by example that the way to overcome temptation is through the word of God.

Deuteronomy 6: 13,....thou shalt fear the Lord thy God, and serve him....

Standing in the obedience and will of God is a most important aspect of our spiritual life in Christ, it is through this, by the leadership and guidance of the Holy Spirit, which allows us to endure temptations, and stand firm in the power of our salvation.

Matthew 4: 11 – 14,....then the Devil leaveth him....behold angels came and ministered unto him....

Let us Pray.

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