

Temptations? Don't Face Them Alone.

1 Corinthians 10:6-13

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

Paul warns, *let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall. No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man.*

That's some good advice. We need to be on guard at all times. Sin is waiting right around the corner - waiting to take hold of us. Satan like to trip us up, tempting us to fall into sin. Yeah, we know about the huge grievous sins. There are those big ones out there.

But even more, Satan tempts us with common sins, little things - things we hardly even take notice of. We stumble into these sins daily because they have become almost a habit to us. Sinning a first time, our conscience bothers us, questioning whether we should do what we are considering or not. It becomes easier the more we do it, and before long, we no longer realize it is happening.

Working at home, something slips and falls to the floor breaking and before we know it we have used God's name in vain, exclaiming, "Oh my God!" It happens because we hear God's name used that way everywhere we turn, we've become numb to it, and so we fall into it. We grumble against God because we don't understand our lot in life, why He doesn't do something about the things that are happening to us. We grumble against the boss, after all, he's such an idiot. And, disobedience to parents happens daily. Without thinking, we have trashed Hertha Herpolsheimer's good name, passing on that rumor we heard about her.

Sinfulness is our daily habit, we commit most sins without even thinking about them. As they just happen, without our thinking about them, we often do not consider them later. When we do realize them, we like to think that they are not all that bad because there are worse thing we could be doing. We like to think that we are doing pretty well. That is exactly why Paul warns us, *let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall. No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man.*

It is in our confidence that we are vulnerable, for without even thinking about it we fall again in that simple everyday sin that we've done before. And Satan loves it when we fall, when we stumble into that same old sin we've committed before. He especially likes it if it is a sin we have considered and have tried to stop doing. Why? Because then Satan can tempt us to an even greater sin - unbelief.

After we have committed that same old sin again is when Satan comes to us, whispering in our ears, talking in our heads, "You know that is forbidden, yet you've done it again. What part of God's law, what part of *NO* don't you understand? You can do that and seriously call yourself a Pastor?? You can do that, and still think you are really a Christian?"

That is a kick in the head isn't it? Satan screams at us, and uses our conscience, and pushes us so hard so that we begin to doubt. Satan tempts us to run away from God and hide from Him, he tempts us to believe we are beyond God's ability for forgive.

Remember those words of Paul from our text? *No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man.* He continues, *God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.*

Dearly beloved of God, yes, you are a Christian. No, you are not a Christian because of how well you live your life. As a Christian, you confess boldly that are a sinner, just like your pastor is. But you are more than just a sinner, and you are more than just a sinner for some very simple reasons.

You are a Christian because God called you by name and made you His own. God chose you to be His dear child. He called you by the Gospel. He enlightens you with His gifts. It is God who sanctifies you, that is, makes you holy. And it is He who keeps you in the true faith.

You are a Christian because it has nothing to do with you and everything to do with God that makes you a Christian. Or, as Paul says it, He provides the way of escape.

Do you think, that Jesus didn't understand what He was doing as He trudged that lonely hill carrying that cross on His shoulder? When He stumbled and looked over his shoulder, do you think He didn't see across time and our sins being laid upon His back. Yes, He did! Knowing what was coming, He could have allowed the cross to lay there and slip through the crowd unnoticed, just as He had done before. But Jesus didn't do that. Knowing He was bearing our sins - yours and mine, even the sins of the whole world - He picked up that cross and continued. He gave His innocent life unto bitter suffering and death to pay for our sins.

In Hebrews, we are reminded that Jesus is the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, scorning its shame. (Hebrews 12:2) Did you hear that? For the *joy* set before Him, He endured the cross. The *joy*? For the joy that was set before Him is you. You are the joy of God that He set before Himself, to endure the shame of the cross. It was His joy to die that He might purchase your forgiveness from sins. He was delighted to buy your way into heaven with His own precious blood and His innocent suffering and death. That is your way of escape - the forgiveness of your sins.

Did you hear what the Old Testament lesson said? It also talks about how you don't face things alone. *You are my lamp, O Lord, and my God lightens my darkness. For by you I can run against a troop, and by my God I can leap over a wall... This God is my strong refuge and (He) has made my way blameless.*

Who is doing the work? God is! To be a Christian isn't to live a perfect life. To be a Christian is nothing else than to trust the grace of God in Christ Jesus, for it is in Christ that we are perfect.

That is why you do not face temptation alone. You were baptized into Christ Jesus – into Christ's death and His resurrection – and by daily contrition and repentance you live in that baptismal grace, God's baptismal grace. By daily contrition and repentance, you take your sins and place them upon Christ, and trust that in Him, you are forgiven and the He dwells within you.

That is what repentance means. It is not simply sorrow over sin, being sorry for them. Repentance also entails faith, trusting that in Christ not a trace of sinfulness remains. That is what it means to be a Christian.

That is why you are gathered in this place. You have come today for this is God's hospital for those afflicted with the sickness of sin. You see others as you are - sinners - all coming here for healing. For here is where Christ forgives sins, where we escape by God in Christ Jesus.

Here, He serves you the medicine of immortality, the cure that removes sin and grants to you life eternal and salvation, and further strengthens your faith so that you are in Christ Jesus. And, as you are in Christ Jesus, you do not face temptation alone.

Dear friends in Christ, if you would like to, I suppose you can choose to live in the Law. You can live worried about your every action, your every move. You can live with Satan hanging on your back whispering in your ear, listening to him, and feeling guilty about your daily dalliance with sin.

Or, you can take a flood of water and shove Satan's head in it - you can tell him - No, I am baptized into Christ. I am God's. He called me by name. He made me His own. I will live in His grace whereby He chose me, for that is who I am - a Christian. So you live in your baptism, bearing Christ's name for He dwells in you each and every day, and He keeps you as His blessed children. And in Christ, dear friends, you never face temptation

alone. Amen.