

## **Our Escape In Temptation**

### **1 Corinthians 10:6-13**

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

Today's sermon could speak to a multitude of things, all of them sins; desiring evil, idolatry, eating and drinking and playing - without thankfulness to God, sexual immorality, testing God, and grumbling against God. Our text tells us that these were examples, written down for our instruction. They are a warning to us so that we might avoid these sins.

Today I'd rather not dwell on these things. I'd like us to look at the last two verses of our text. *Therefore let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall. No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. 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.*

In good Lutheran fashion, we note that there is both Law and Gospel here. From the list of sins Paul instructs us from God to avoid, we can boldly affirm, "As God has given witness to His displeasure of these things, it is obvious that they are sins, and I do not want to do them."

Some may even go so far as to say, "I do not desire evil, I do not have any idols, I always give thanks to God when I eat, drink, or play, I am faithful to my spouse, I do not test Christ, and I do not grumble against God."

God's response to your attitude, through the pen of Paul, is, "Therefore let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall." In other words, "Yeah, right! You do not do these things? Repent! Repent of your greater sin, your pride, your thinking that you are standing. Then repent of your sinfulness of committing these other sins."

My friends, as much as we would like to believe that we do not do these things, we must be careful. "Therefore let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall." It is a false pride which believes that our lives are somehow pleasing to God and are earning us some sort of reward from Him. That is simply not the case.

Here is a quote for you, "I think I can! I think I can!" Everybody knows where that phrase came from. It is the famous line from the story about the little engine that could. In the movie Dumbo, Casey Junior puffs out that line as he's pulling the circus train. You must listen very closely, but there it is - "I think I can! I think I can!"

This last week on vacation, I watched two sons repeating my words - or at least the ideas from them - as they were trying to get much younger cousins to do to do something they were struggling with. They encouraged them with words similar to that, "Focus, concentrate, you can do it," or as I overheard my boys put it in today's vernacular, "You got this!"

These are words of encouragement to give us confidence to accomplish things. In much that we do in the world, we need to think in this manner. We need a certain amount of pride to accomplish things in this life. And my friends, in regard to the accomplishing of earthly tasks, we this self-confidence is a positive thing. But, we cannot, in any way, shape, or form, apply this type of thinking to our eternal salvation.

Paul explains this. *No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. 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.* This sounds like purest Gospel. It is Gospel, but it contains a warning - do not try to take credit of yourself for overcoming temptation - it is ALL God's gift to you.

Our flesh is prone to sinfulness, it is the inherited affliction passed down from Adam. On our own, we cannot overcome temptation, any temptation. And temptation comes upon us every day in many guises - through the devil, the world, and our own sinful flesh.

The clerk at the grocery store gave you an extra \$5 bill in change – you’re tempted to keep it – after all, you did not “steal” it, it was given to you, it was the cashier’s mistake. You could try to justify it in this way. But in your trying to justify it, the fact that you looked around to see if anybody noticed you had it, all points to the fact that you already know it is stealing.

Temptation comes upon you in your pain, your suffering, and your grief. You often want to doubt God and grumble against Him, thinking that He isn’t taking care of you as you feel you deserve that He should.

Sharing copies of music you had to purchase with others isn’t really stealing. Except it really is! There’s even a law about it. But hey, you’ll never get caught.

Whatever the temptation, we cannot overcome and live perfectly sinless lives as God desires us to live. But it is plainly obvious by looking at what is going on out there in the world that we come awfully close. Compared to so much else that is going on we are doing a pretty decent job of it. So, wanting to keep us repentant and trusting Christ alone, Paul warns us not to become too proud in our seeming achievements over sin.

Did you hear what else Paul said? *No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. 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.*

You cannot overcome temptation, but God promises to overcome it in you and for you. Our Introit for today comes from Psalm 54, the first verse. It said, “Save me, O God, by Your name; and vindicate me by Your strength.”

The name of God that saves you is Jesus Christ. You are vindicated from your sin by His strength. Through His perfect life, His innocent suffering and death – all in your stead – your sin is abolished. It is in Christ that you escape the hellish consequences of succumbing to temptation.

This is what we talked about when we looked at Romans 6 a couple weeks ago. You and your sinfulness have been put to death in Christ, they have been buried in Christ.

God has chosen you and made you His in baptism. This is your confidence, to proclaim in the face of sin and temptation, “I am baptized! I am in Christ and Christ is in me.” He has purchased you from sin, death, the power of the devil – and temptation – with His own blood. Through the gift of forgiveness, He speaks to you by the mouth of your pastor, He gives you the way of escape, He gives you salvation.

Not only do we receive the gift of salvation from and through Christ, the way into heaven, God’s promised land, we also receive the power and strength to live in hope in this world. Although we are assailed with temptations and trials on every hand, God’s promise is that He is with us. He is our escape. He is our ability to endure all that comes up against us in this life.

We may ask, “how?” How is He our escape in trial and temptation? How does He make us able to endure it? In Christ! United to Christ in baptism, He is your confidence. Christ is your escape in temptation. In Christ you have already died to sin and been raised to new life.

Christ comes to you and speaks a word of forgiveness into your ear. Freed from you past sins, you have confidence to overcome temptation.

Christ is your escape in temptation, for He gives you His own precious body and blood, hidden under the forms of bread and wine. He feeds you for life in this world. He strengthens you and equips you by giving you Himself. He indwells you that you may be able to endure all that life throws at you.

Dearly beloved of God, you are not alone. God is with you, it is what the name Immanuel means, God with us. It is the Christmas message. It is the promise Jesus gives us with His own mouth as He spoke to His disciples. It is Paul's message. And, it is His Word to you today. That is indeed your confidence.

You know my past. You know the trials that we endured as a family with two members confined either to bed and/or wheelchairs. Through all the troubles of life, this last verse of our text has been a constant source of comfort. Again I will read it to you. *No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. 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.*

Yes, this is talking about temptation, as in temptation to sin. It is referring to temptation as the trials that come into your life, that lead you to desire to give up on and abandon God. It is referring to the temptations also brought on by illness, hardship, and any other trials in life that tempt us to doubt God.

Left on your own, you would fall prey to all these forms of temptation, there could be no pride left in you. But you are not alone.

Be proud of this, you are in Christ and Christ is in you. You are baptized into Christ and united to Him. Christ is with you. You have been raised to new life in Christ. He is your escape in all trials and all temptations. Thanks be to God in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.