

Flee Temptation

by Anton Bosch

This sermon delves into the model prayer in Luke chapter 11, focusing on the phrase 'lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.' The speaker emphasizes the importance of understanding and avoiding temptation, highlighting that God does not lead us into temptation and that we must take responsibility for our actions. The sermon discusses the process of temptation, the role of desires in leading to sin, and the need to flee from temptation. Practical advice is given on avoiding temptation by being accountable, pursuing righteousness, and depending on God to help us overcome temptations.

Scripture: Luke 11:1, James 1:13, Proverbs 6:27, 2 Timothy 2:22, Matthew 6:13, Galatians 5:16, Psalm 119:11, James 4:7, 1 Corinthians 10:13, Genesis 4:7

Topics: "Temptation", "Accountability in Faith"

Description

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Transcript

And now we're in Luke chapter 11. We're concluding on the model prayer in Luke chapter 11 this morning, and so let's read together the first four verses of Luke chapter 11. Luke 11 verse 1. Now it came to pass, as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, that one of his disciples said to him, Lord teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples.

And so he said to them, when you pray, say, Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us day by day our daily bread, and forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who is indebted to us. And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.

And so we're at the end of verse 4 this morning. Do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. This is a difficult verse again.

I think that you've gathered by now that the Lord's prayer, the model prayer, is not that easy. It's something that we say glibly, and yet to understand what it says is a little bit more difficult. And so, do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.

These two ideas are obviously connected. Not being in temptation, and being delivered from the evil one, or from evil. Some translations don't include the word one, simply from evil.

The problem here is that God does not lead us into temptation. And that's what makes understanding the verse a little difficult. So I'm going to look at this issue of temptation very, in fact most of this morning.

And I'm going to go to James, which is the proof text on the subject. James chapter 1 and verses 13 through 15. James chapter 1 verse 13.

Let no one say when he is tempted, I am tempted by God. For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he himself tempt anyone. When we are tempted, we can't blame it on God.

There is a doctrine which is very popular today, that says that God is the author of evil. That even when we sin, God causes us to sin. God does not cause us to sin.

James is very clear that God does not tempt us. And James continues to give us the reasons why. So going back then to Luke, the lead us not into temptation, clearly does not mean what it appears to mean.

And I'm not undermining the Scriptures. But we need to understand what he is actually praying. What he is praying is not a theological statement.

What he is praying is a cry from the heart. And the cry is, I don't want to be tempted. That really is, if maybe if I had to write a modern translation, I would use those words.

Please don't let me be tempted. Now we understand temptation is common to man. Temptation is something that every one of us face multiple times a day.

And so can we escape temptation? No, obviously we cannot. But at the same time, I believe that it is good, and it is right for us to call out to the Lord, and say, Lord please spare me the temptation. Now let's talk about temptation then, in James.

So he cannot tempt. He doesn't tempt anyone, and he cannot be tempted. But each one, everyone, is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires, and enticed.

Now we recognize also, and I'm going to go there, because I don't want to use the little time we have to speak about the devil. But let me introduce that very quickly. Obviously the devil is the one who tempts.

You remember that in the garden, in the wilderness, Jesus is tempted by the devil. The problem is in that process, we end up blaming the devil for our own temptations, many times. You see, the point is that if we don't find ourselves in a place where we can be tempted, then we cannot be tempted.

And I'll explain that as we go along. But it's because we expose ourselves, we open our ears to the devil, and that he is able to tempt us. But at the end of the day, the responsibility is still ours.

It becomes an easy out to say, well, it was the devil. I've quoted that old skit many times, and only the older folk will probably remember it, but look it up on YouTube, it's quite funny. The woman comes home,

and she's bought a new dress, and she says, well, you know, it wasn't my fault.

I went to the store, and I was just going to walk past, but the devil made me look in the window. I'm going to come back to this idea in a moment, and I don't like preaching sermons based on stories, but there's a very important lesson, even though this is a very cartoonish thing. The devil made me look in the window, and then the devil made me go inside, and then the devil pulled a gun on me, and he made me buy the dress.

Now I'm telling a long story in a few words. You didn't think I could do that, but I can. See, it's the devil's fault.

It's easy for us to blame the devil. Remember, this is the oldest excuse in the book, literally. Why, Adam, did you eat? Oh, it was the woman that you gave me.

So he's blaming his wife, and he's blaming God. You gave me the woman, and she's the trouble. So God, it's your fault, and those in that doctrine which I made reference to earlier, blame God for their sin.

But the woman says, it wasn't me, it was the serpent. It's his fault, and right in those few verses is the whole picture. Adam did not accept responsibility for his sin.

God had put him in that position, he said. She doesn't accept responsibility. It's the devil's fault.

No, James says, each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires. The old King James says, his own lusts. I think desires is a better word here, because we tend to associate lust only with sexual stuff.

This is not just sexual stuff. This is any sin, and we are drawn away by our own desires, and enticed. You see, while you can blame the devil, if you did not have a appetite for a particular kind of sin, then the devil could not tempt you with it.

If you have no desire for a Bentley, it's just not something that moves you, doesn't do anything for you. A Bentley is just not a temptation. But if you have a desire for a Ferrari, and there's that built-in need for speed, the devil will use those things.

And so it begins with my desires. And so each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires. Verse 15, Then, when desire has conceived, can you see the picture? The seed conceives, so the temptation plants the seed, it conceives, it produces fruit, and it gives birth to sin.

And when it is full-grown, so there's three phases here, conception, birth, adulthood. When it is full-grown, it brings forth death. That is the process of spiritual or of any kind of sin.

Now, I need to address something this morning which is absolutely crucial, and that is that we, and I hesitate to even say this, and yet it is necessary because it is true, and that is that temptation is not sin. Jesus was tempted, and it says that he was tempted in every point, just as we are, yet without sin. So the fact that he was tempted in the wilderness, and he was tempted in the garden, he still went to the cross sinless, because he did not sin.

Temptation is not sin. But here's the problem, here's the problem, because and I haven't told you anything that I don't think you, you, you, you don't know, you know this, because I've said it many times, other preachers say it all the time, temptation is not sin. But here's the problem, because I believe temptation is

not sin, I will expose myself to temptation.

I will play with sin. Remember the story of the woman who bought the dress, she walked past the store, she put herself in a position of being tempted, and from there on it was just downhill. Oh, but there's nothing wrong in looking.

Anyone who has gone to a car showroom and told the salesman, I'm just looking, knows exactly what happens. You drive out with a car that you didn't intend buying. Oh, it's the salesman's fault.

It's the sales manager's fault, because they played this tag-team thing with me. They pressurized me. No, it began the moment you drove onto that lot.

The moment you opened your door and entered the car dealership. That's where it started. Did you buy a car the moment you stopped in the parking lot of the car dealership? No, you didn't.

But from there, the results or the consequences were pretty inevitable. Believe me, I've been there many times, and I don't learn. So temptation is not the problem, but it is when we expose ourselves to temptation that it becomes a problem.

The devil will find enough stuff and occasions to tempt us. We don't have to help him in his work by putting ourselves in compromised positions. And yet we do this all the time.

Those brothers who come out of drugs know that you can't even have a conversation with your homies, because that's where it begins. Oh no, you know, I haven't seen them for a while. I haven't seen my homies for a while.

I just want to go and shoot the breeze with them, see how they're going, see how they're doing. And you know how it goes from there. So here's the heart of what I believe Jesus is saying.

He's saying, Lord, help me to avoid temptation. We can't avoid every form of temptation, but we can avoid probably 90% of the temptation that we expose ourselves to. By the places we go, by the things we think, by the things we watch on the computer and on the devices, on the tablet or the cell phone, that's where it begins.

And folks, there is no man or woman who is strong enough that once you allow the desire to conceive, in other words, you allow the seed to take root, that you can stop the process. Once you allow the temptation to conceive, sin will result. The only way to prevent it, and I don't want to get too graphic, but this is the picture that he is using here, is abstinence.

You understand what I'm saying? That's the only way to prevent sin from conceiving, and that is not to dabble with temptation. You remember the story of Samson, how he played with sin. Oh, you know, I can deal with this.

I can handle it. I'm not going to sin. I'm just going to enjoy the company of these women just a little bit.

Now we're not going to go to bed. We're just going to talk, and we know how that ended. You remember David? Where did that begin? The day he should have gone to war.

I love that scripture. It was war season. I can't imagine such a thing.

It was war season. It was a time to go to war, and David says, no, I'm not going to go to war. I'll send the generals.

They can go and fight the battle. I'll just stay here. That's where it began, and the next step was, instead of doing something constructive with his day, he spends his day sleeping, and he wakes up in the late afternoon, tired of sleeping, and he begins to look around, walking on the roof of his palace, and he sees Bathsheba.

You see, here's the thing. He was leading himself into temptation. You can see in the story that there are a whole bunch of steps at which the process could have stopped, at which he could have walked away.

Even after he sent his generals off to war, he could have repented and said, this is not the right thing for me to do. I need to be in the battle, and he could have saddled up his horse or his chariot, and he could have gone out to war, and even if he stayed home, he could have kept himself busy with the affairs of state and done a job, but instead he sleeps all day, and then he wakes up, and again, instead of praying, instead of singing a psalm, remember he wrote all these wonderful psalms, he goes and he has a look around, and he's looking for something to do, and he sees her. It could have stopped at that point, but he says, no, call her.

It's not in the Bible, but I imagine that David's intentions were good, saying, well, I just want to have dinner with her. We'll just talk, and we know where the next step goes, and then he murders her husband. Can you see the process of desire conceiving and giving birth? All along the way, he could have stopped the process multiple times, I've never counted, but probably six times in this whole sequence of events, he could have walked away, but he goes to the next step, the next step, the next step, until eventually it ends up in murder and adultery, obviously.

See, the scripture promises that he will not test us beyond what we are able, but with the temptation provide a way of escape. It doesn't mean that he's going to take the temptation away, but he provides for David a way of escape. The way of escape for David would have been to go to war.

The way of escape would have been the moment he looked over the wall, and he saw the woman to turn away, and to go back into the palace and go and do something else, but he continues to look, and I believe that what Jesus is saying is, Father, help me, and of course it doesn't apply to Jesus as much as it does to us, but help me to not be in temptation, specifically when it is my own cause, my own fault that I'm in temptation, when I've created my own environment. And folk, I don't know how to impress this upon you, that this is absolutely critical. We have seen in these last months the sordid story of Ravi Zacharias play out before our eyes.

I'm not going to get into the story. If you don't know it, then it's better you don't know the story, but it's a terrible story. It's one of the saddest and darkest days in all of Christian history, and it began when he exposed himself to temptation, when he set himself up with telephones, with cell phones, and with computers that no one else had access to, when he closed the door behind him and a woman who was not his wife, not just one, but 200 or more.

Folk, we must learn, and not one of us is beyond what he has done. In the same week, in the same week, there's been an expose of one of the other international preachers that is well known to all of us, who preaches against many preachers, and yet he's been exposed for his own greed, earning millions upon millions. Folk, there is not one of us who is beyond temptation.

There is not one of us who can stand once we find ourselves in that position where we are compromised. Father, don't lead me in that position. Father, help me to turn around before it's too late.

And folk, these are practical, real things, and I want to urge you to examine your life. Examine the things that you do, and look to what degree those things expose you to temptation. Many of you know, I never go to the beach.

I go to the mountains, and there's a reason for that, because when I go to the beach, I see things I ought not to see. And so all my life, I've avoided the beach as far as I possibly can. And you say, there's nothing wrong with going to the beach.

Then how can I pray, Father, don't lead me into temptation, when I put myself in a position where I see things I ought not to be looking upon, whether it's sex, or whether it's money, or whether it's power, or whatever it is. Anger, greed. If you have a problem with greed, stop watching Home Shopping Network.

Stop going to amazon.com. Oh, I'm just going to look. Yeah, right, and I'm sure your intentions are good just to look. But when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin.

The wages of sin is death. When sin has matured, it brings forth death. Father, don't lead me into temptation.

I'm concerned that many of us pray, and we say, Lord, please help me not to sin. Lord, please help me to live a holy life. I'm sure that many of us pray that.

But do we pray and say, Lord, help me not to put myself in a position where I am tempted. And I believe we should be praying this every day, and say, Lord, help me, lead me in the paths of righteousness. Lead me away from temptation.

But more than just lead me, help me to hear your voice. I am absolutely positive that when David stood on the parapets of his palace, and he looked down, that there was a voice deep down in his heart saying, David, don't do it. God's Spirit was within him.

He was a man who had a relationship with God, and God's Spirit told him, don't go there. But David ignored the voice of the Spirit, and listened to the voice of the flesh. Father, don't lead me.

Father, lead me into righteousness. But more than that, Lord, give me the grace to hear your voice, and to obey your voice. Just by the way, this is not theological.

This needs to be real, practical living. As I said a little earlier, you need to go back and look at how you order your life. What programs do you watch on television? What websites do you visit on your computer, or on your cell phone? Who are your friends? Where do you go? Where do you spend your time? And I believe that every one of us will find areas where we expose ourselves to temptation by those things.

And from a practical point of view, those who are married, there is no way you should have a device, whether it's a cell phone, or a tablet, or a computer, that your husband or your wife does not have all of your passwords to. Now I know this is shocking, but that is our protection. If you have secrets from your husband or your wife, you're exposing yourself to temptation.

If there are things that you are watching on your computer or your phone that you don't want your husband or your wife to know about, you're in trouble, not with her, but with the Lord, because you're leading

yourself into temptation. And I know that you say, well, that's invasive. No, it's not.

And I'm not a legalist. I don't make rules and laws. But folks, this is necessary for us, if we're going to protect ourselves.

And incidentally, this applies to your children also. We know about the young boy this last week who died, because his parents weren't watching what he was doing on his computer. They thought they were watching, but they weren't.

If you're paying for the cell phone or the computer of your child, you need to have access to that device, and you need to be watching what they're doing and where they're going. Oh, this is an invasion of privacy. No, it's not an invasion of privacy.

It is protection. And that mother and father who are grieving for their boy that they have to bury, are very liberal people. But they're saying, we failed, because we didn't watch.

We thought the problem was out there, when in fact the problem is on the computer. And the drug dealer came to the door. So we are our brother's keeper.

And one of the things that is common to all of these preachers and here's the problem with the preachers, is because they do it. Every Christian says, well if they do it, I can do it also. No, you cannot.

But the problem is that they are not accountable. They're accountable to no one. Yes, they have boards, but the boards are filled with their own family members and their own employees, who are beholden to them.

And who will not speak the truth to them, because their paycheck is dependent. Every one of us needs to be holding ourselves accountable to someone. And it's not so that they can pry into our business.

But if you know that somebody is going to look at what you've looked at, on your device, you won't go there. It's as simple as that. I know there are ways around it.

If you want to be devious, you'll be devious and you'll find a way to beat the system. But that's on you. But if your prayer is, Father, don't lead me into temptation, you will be an open book on your computers and your devices and every area of your life.

Accountable, because we are our brother's keeper. We are there to protect one another. We are there to help one another to not be led into temptation.

In fact, the reality is, as a pastor, I cannot keep you from doing what you want to do. There are people who do stuff that I'm deeply grieved over, and that I know that this will come to pass, that in the end, their sin will produce fruit, and it will be terrible fruit. But I can't force them.

I cannot force you. I cannot force anyone to do the right thing. You must make the decisions.

You must say, Father, I don't want to be led astray. I want to live a holy life. I want to please you.

I want to stand before you on that day and hear those words, well done, good and faithful servant. Lead us not into temptation, and deliver us from the evil one. He cannot deliver you if you willfully sold yourself to the devil.

If you willfully entered into a deal with the devil, to eat the fruit that is forbidden, he can't help you, because you've exercised your free will. Proverbs chapter 6 verse 27, quoted this many times, Can a man take fire into his bosom, and his clothes not be burnt? There are people here this morning, there are others watching, who are playing with fire. This is real, and you think you can put fire inside of your, open your shirt and put fire in there, and it's going to be fine.

You cannot take fire into your bosom. You cannot play with sin. You cannot play with temptation and think you're going to not be burnt.

You will be burnt, and I've had brothers and sisters come to me and say, Brother, why didn't you warn me? I warned you, but you didn't want to listen, and I'm warning you again this morning, and I'm pleading with you. Don't set yourself up for the fall. Don't set yourself up for temptation.

Flee temptation. 2 Timothy 2 22, easy to remember. Flee youthful lusts.

The problem is, while he's writing to a young man, youthful lusts is not just a problem for young men and young women. It's a problem for everyone. Those things never go away.

Flee them, but pursue righteousness. So the answer is not just not to be led into temptation. The answer is, like David had to do, is go back and do what you were called to do.

Pursue right, chase after righteousness. Pursue righteousness, don't pursue youthful lusts. You remember the story of Joseph as his boss's wife tried to ensnare him.

I believe the young man was upright. I don't believe that he put himself in a in a compromised position, and when the temptation came, he ran for his life. He ran for his life.

And this is the problem, is I'm not seeing Christians, I'm not seeing pastors and preachers running for their lives, fleeing from temptation, fleeing from youthful lusts. But we play with it, and we think that we'll not be burnt. Let me emphasize, the answer is not just staying out of trouble.

The answer is doing what you ought to be doing. Because if you don't do what you should be doing, the temptation will come again. Do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.

Can this be our prayer? Father, help me not to lead myself into temptation. Father, help me to not expose myself to temptation. Set me free.

Folks, there's only one way this can be done, and that is walking dependent on Him day by day, moment by moment, recognizing the weakness of our flesh, recognizing that within every one of us, there is nothing good, except what Christ has put in there, recognizing that unless He keeps us, unless the Lord keep the house, they that keep watch, keep watch in vain. But as we walk dependent upon Him, and I don't want to introduce a whole other subject, but we've spoken about walking in the Spirit and not in the flesh, listening to what the Spirit is saying, listening to what God is saying, doing and obeying Him, and not listening to what the flesh has to say. That is the answer.

Father, we pray that you'd help us. Lord, we are weak. Lord, there is not one of us, and Lord, we've seen in these last weeks, we've seen in these last years, men who we esteem to be great men of God fall in the most terrible ways.

And Lord, none of us are beyond that. So I pray, Lord, that you'd help us, that we may pray this prayer on a daily basis. Father, don't lead me into temptation, but more, Lord, help me not to put myself into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.

Create within us, Lord, a desire and a hunger and a thirst for righteousness, for being right before you. And Lord, even though we may be able to hide things from even our spouses and our families, we cannot hide things from you. So Lord, help us to be upright before you in everything that we think, in everything that we do, that we might please you.

Lord, that we may overcome, even as Jesus overcame. Lord, I know there are folk here this morning, and there are those who are watching who are struggling in areas of their lives. And Lord, I pray for them.

I pray that you would give them victory. Pray, Lord, that you would help them to recognize the way in which they put themselves in harm's way. And Lord, that in that process they may find in you their sufficiency.

I pray, Lord, that this may be real. Lord, that you would help us. Father, above all, help us to not just go away and to get busy with the rest of our life for the rest of today, but Lord, that your word may penetrate into our hearts.

And Lord, that unlike sin that conceives and produces death, we pray, Lord, that your word would be conceived in our hearts and produce eternal life. And so, Lord, help us to cherish your word. And Lord, as a seed is taken and as we protect it and nourish it until it is grown and it becomes a strong tree, we pray, Lord, that we may protect and guard your word, lest we sin against you.

We ask this in Jesus' name. I pray that you'd go with us now, Lord. Keep us, protect us, bring us together again safely on Thursday and Sunday, Lord.

We pray for those who can't be here because they're working. We pray that you would minister to them and strengthen them where they are. We ask these things in Jesus' name.

Amen. you

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