

The Temptations of the Righteous

by David Wilkerson

The righteous are tempted in a more profound and mysterious way, and must learn to trust in God's power and sovereignty rather than their own.

Duration: 57:38

Scripture: Matthew 3:16

Topics: "Temptation", "Righteous Living"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the temptations that the righteous face. He starts by emphasizing that even though believers are righteous in Christ, they will still be tempted. The preacher refers to Matthew 4, where Jesus is tempted by Satan after being baptized. He highlights the importance of standing on God's word and not trying to prove God through our own reasoning. The sermon concludes with the reminder that God is with us in our struggles and tribulations, and we should praise and thank Him even in difficult times.

Transcript

...pulpit series. It was recorded in the sanctuary of Times Square Church in Manhattan, New York City. Other tapes are available by writing World Challenge, P.O. Box 260, Lindale, TX 75771, or calling 903-963-8626.

None of these messages are copyrighted, and you are welcome to make copies for free distribution to friends. I want to talk to you this afternoon about the temptations of the righteous. Are you righteous? In Christ, you can say, yes, I am in Christ Jesus, I am righteous.

Then you're going to be tempted. Matthew 4, please, Matthew 4. Let's start in Matthew, the third chapter, verse 16 and 17, and then we'll go on to chapter 4, verse 1. And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water. And, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting upon him.

And, lo, a voice from heaven sang, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Then was Jesus led of, what, the Spirit, say it, the Spirit, into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. Let's go on.

And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward hungered. The tempter came to him and said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread. Now, this is very familiar,

but let's just acquaint ourselves with it again.

And he answered and said, It's written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. Then the devil took him up to the holy city and set him on the pinnacle of the temple. He said to him, If you be the Son of God, cast yourself down.

It's written, He will give his angels charge concerning thee. In their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against the stone. Jesus said to him, It's written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.

Then the devil, taking him up into exceeding high mountains, showed him all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them. He said to him, All these things will I give you, if you just fall down and worship me. Then says Jesus unto him, Get hence, Satan, for it's written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve.

Then the devil left him, and behold, angels came and ministered to him. Heavenly Father, we thank you for your living word. I acknowledge before this people now that I must have you.

I must have your touch on my hand, on my heart, my lips, my mouth. I've got to have unction from heaven, or these words fall right in front of me to the ground. Holy Spirit, lay hold of my body.

Take control of my mind. I yield to thee, you Lord. You have sanctified me.

Now sanctify your word. Give us ears to hear what the Spirit is wanting to say to us. Lord, you spoke to us this past week very powerfully.

And Lord, this is along those very same lines. But you begin to open this, Lord, ever increasing as we go in the days ahead until we see it fully and understand it, and we lay hold of it as truth that changes our lives. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Now in Matthew 16, 17 here, we see Jesus being baptized. He comes out of the water, and the dove descends upon Him. And then we hear these words, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

And then the very next scene, Jesus is taken into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. Bible says that Jesus said, As he is in the world, so are we. The Bible says also that he was tempted in all points, just as we are.

So if he was tempted in all points, these temptations of Christ have to do with us. They were all tempted in different ways. They've fallen somehow.

You will get the kernel of every one of these temptations and every temptation that you and I face today. Who are these that go into temptation? Cold, lukewarm, Christians living in gross sin? No, no, no. The Bible says this one who goes into temptation is the beloved.

This is the one who hears the Holy, walking in the Spirit. The Spirit has come upon us, and you hear, This is well done. This is my beloved one, in whom I am well pleased.

If God is so well pleased, and the Holy Spirit has come and manifested Himself to the whole world, that this is my beloved, this servant of mine has been chosen and blessed. Why then directly into a wilderness experience to be tempted of the devil? The more spiritual you become, the more intense your battles will

become. I was going to call this the temptations of the spiritual man.

The same thing, the righteous man. The more intense it will be. It will be the Spirit of God who leads you into your dry wilderness.

But it's only the devil who does the tempting. The Scripture makes it very clear. Let no man say when he's tempted, I'm tempted of God.

For God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth He any man. I picture Jesus, when He's led to the mountaintop, looking down at all of those masses in Jerusalem, and thinking of their temptation, and looking at their temptations, and they're all on a gross level. Adultery, fornication, gambling, stealing, rape, murder.

See, they're living on a lower plane. The Lord is not going to be tempted on that plane. He's not going to be tempted by the lower nature.

He's not going to be tempted by lust. Because of his spirituality, because of the plane that he is on, because he is righteous and beloved and chosen, his temptation is going to be far more profound, far more mysterious. They're going to be far more intense than all of those who are tempted in the grosser sins of life.

Those who are spiritual, you're not going to find a spiritual man going to a nearest bar and going in and getting drunk. He's not tempted by that gross sin. A spiritual man will not go to a motel and get a key and take a harlot into a room to fornicate.

It's not a temptation to him. That's gross. You could not even suggest to him in any way to curse.

He would think it insanity to take a drug like cocaine or anything else. Those are the gross sins of the world. Those are not the temptations that come upon the spiritual man or woman.

When I say man, I mean woman too. I'm talking about manhood. You draw close to the Lord.

You put aside all your fleshly desires and you make him the Lord of your life. You begin to seek him. You begin to call on his name.

Lord, I want to go deeper. I want to know you. I want to walk closer than I've ever walked before in your life.

And you're going to be led by the spirit of God into a dry wilderness. It comes all the time. Every time I've made a new commitment, I end up in a wilderness.

You say, well, you're scaring me about making a new commitment. Oh, no, no, no. Because of the benefits and the glory that comes out of this experience.

No, no, no. Your temptations are going to come to you in a more profound, mysterious way. You're not going to experience that.

You're going to experience temptations that the lukewarm Christian doesn't even know about. Has never experienced. Your temptations are going to replicate the kind that Jesus endured.

It's going to be Satan trying to do everything in his power to get you away from God's call, God's anointing, and God's eternal purposes for your life. It has to do with eternal things. It doesn't have to do with the flesh.

It has to do with the spirit and your purpose, your call, the reason you're here serving the Lord and the very reason that you're seeking God with all your heart. That is the area in which you will be tried. So after 40 days and 40 nights, Jesus got hungry.

Now, there's no sin in getting hungry. He's a human. He's a man as well as God.

But he's being tempted now as a man. God's not under trial. God's not being tempted.

God can't be tempted. It is the manhood of Christ being tempted. He's being tempted in the same nature as you and I, the human nature.

Keep that in mind. Otherwise, this testimony or these trials don't relate to me. I couldn't relate to it if it's God being going through it because he has all power.

He has all authority. He can say the word and it's over. I relate to it because he entered this temptation as a man.

And that's why he can be touched with the feelings of our infirmities. That's why he knows exactly what you're going through. He's been there, done that.

If you're the son of man, command that these stones be made bread. Now, folks, what's the issue here and how in the world does that relate to you and me in our struggles? The challenge from Satan is this. If you really are of God, you have power.

You've got the power of your father in you. Now, you know your father is divine love. He doesn't want his children to suffer.

Now, you didn't do anything to get into this mess. You're here and the father has allowed me to get to you. Now, wouldn't you believe Jesus? This is the devil speaking.

Wouldn't you believe that he's a good God? If I were your father, I wouldn't let you go hungry. I wouldn't let these pains grip you. Use your power and turn this bread into this stone into bread.

In other words, meet your own need first. There's nothing wrong with that. If you use this power, this is what God wants you to do.

He's given you this power to use it when you're suffering. That's the only reason God gives you power so that you can speak the word and command yourself out of your problem. And what he's saying, command yourself out of this.

This is a profound insidious temptation to all truly spiritual people who walk with God. When God leads us into wilderness experiences and you're allowed to go through bouts of despair, such as David described. You come out of the waters of coldness and lukewarmness and you've set your heart to seek God.

And then you find yourself in this place. Suddenly you're in the midst of an unexplainable thing that's come upon you where David said, I have sorrow daily in my heart. It's unexplainable folks.

When you come into the kind of thing we're talking about, this spiritual despair, you can't explain it to anybody. You don't know where it came from. We know it comes that God has allowed this.

God has led us into the place and God has a tremendous purpose in it all. We'll see that we've heard it preached well this week and we'll see a little glimpse of more of what he's saying here. Suddenly you're in the midst of this bout of despair.

You see, the Holy Spirit led David into the wilderness experience and he became so discouraged. He thought the whole world had gone mad. You see, when you get down, you think everything's falling apart.

Everybody feels like I feel. David said, all godly men have ceased. All the faithful have failed.

And he's so down, he thinks the world's gone mad. He said, everybody speaks vanity now. Everybody's double-minded.

That's his attitude. And folks, it can cloud your vision of the whole world and the eternal purposes of God. David's in the midst of a long period of distress.

I've always believed if it goes away in one or two days, it's just something you ate. It's flesh. It's not a spiritual battle at all.

Spiritual battle is going to linger. It's going to be there. This was 40 days and 40 nights.

David, in this long time of testing, in Psalm 131, he cries out, How long will you forget me? Forever? How long? Four times in one verse. How long are you going to hide your face from me, Lord? How long shall I take counsel in my soul? How long shall my enemy be exalted over me? How long? How long? How long? How long? Why should I take counsel in my soul? Lord, I can't figure this out. Are you going to let me alone and try to figure this out? Take counsel in my own soul? Psalm 35, David prays, Let them be turned back and brought to confusion that devised my hurt.

And let the angel of the Lord persecute them. He's talking about the powers of darkness. For without a cause, they've hid from me their net in a pit.

He's in a pit and he said, there's a net here. There's a hidden trap and the devil has set it. For without cause, they, the powers of darkness, have digged from my soul.

A net, a trap in a pit of despair. Now, what is this trap? Folks, I want you to listen very closely because if you bite on this, if you're not aware of this, I want the Holy Ghost to make you aware that when you're in despair, be very, very careful. Be very careful that you don't accuse God of abandoning you.

David even accused God of not hearing his prayers anymore. You see, the enemy is going to come to you and say, You don't have to go through this. This is not of God.

Of course, the devil tries to destroy the saints of God. He's being tempted by the devil, the scripture says. But he was led by the spirit into the battlefield.

You see, the devil is trying to get him to act independent of his father. Jesus said, I do nothing except what my father commands me to do. And he's asking him to break off from that dependency in his heavenly father because if he can get him to break this now, he can get him to command himself off the cross.

The second design of Satan here is that he hoped that God would not honor his cry for bread if he did use the power. He was hoping for a power failure. God was not going to answer this kind of prayer because that would have aborted the whole eternal plan of God.

But you see, the enemy is saying, Command yourself out of this situation now. Speak the word. Speak the word.

And there are multitudes of Christians today who at one time were real God seekers. They were anointed, they prayed, they fasted, they were drawn close to the Lord, and they were led into this wilderness of need and despair, and there was suffering and there was pain. And they're tempted at this point to try to get themselves out by their own power.

They're saying, Look, I'm tired of financial problems. I'm tired of the pain that I'm going through. I'm tired of my prayers not being answered.

And if God has given me power, and I have his word in my heart, I'm going to exert that power, and I'm going to speak my way out of this now. I can't go on any further. I can't endure it anymore.

They're trying to abort God's design to use that trial to produce total dependence on him and also to produce a compassion for other people who are going through the same things so that you come out of this with compassion, and you come out of it without legalism, without judgment, and you come through and say, Well, I've been through it. I can help somebody now. But you see, when you say, I'm going to command myself out of this, I'm going to take the word of God, and I'm just going to get myself out of this mess.

And you see people today in financial problems, they hear evangelists come and say, Just speak your way out. Say a word. Money, come to me.

Folks, that's the message everywhere now. There's a song. Money, come to me.

And you go like this. Money, come to me. Come to me.

And you see, many of these people once had the true power of God. They were anointed. They were hungry.

But somewhere along the line, they got tired of the battle. They got tired of seeking God. They got tired of what they thought were unanswered prayer.

And they said, I'm going to speak my way out of this. I'm going to lay hold of a promise, and I'm going to end this. So they say, Money.

No more bills. Now listen to me closely. When God does not validate that promise, when God doesn't validate that perverted power, misused power, then they start maxing out their credit cards.

They get in debt. They buy that new car. They'll put money down on a house that they know they don't have a chance in Iceland to pay for it.

Whatever that means. And then they say, Look how God's blessing me. Look what came to me.

Didn't come to them at all. It came to the bank. It's on their credit cards.

And folks, that stuff crashes. In a little while, it all piles up, and there's a payday. And they can't pay the bills, and suddenly bankruptcy.

And then they turn against God, and they get bitter. And now you see power breakdowns all over the nation, around the world today. Their power didn't work.

Because God will not validate covetousness. Jesus said, It's written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. In other words, devil, my coming to earth is not about my needs, not my physical comfort, not my own hurts.

The full revelation of why I am here is to give and not save myself. Jesus says, It's written that I am his Son, and I'm going to learn obedience by the things which I suffer. And I will suffer temptation to be able to comfort and succor those who are going to need help.

That's Hebrews 5.8 and Hebrews 2.18. If you're in a hard place now, the Lord has you there to teach your submission and full dependence on him that he's trying to achieve a purpose in your life so that you're not trusting any man. You're not trusting your own power or ability. We've said that over and over again.

But more than that, that you can come down out of this temptation, down to meet human need with the compassion that you've never had before. That out of your hurt, God will create in you a compassion for hurting lost people. And the only people I know that have the true compassion of Jesus Christ are those who've suffered.

Those who've been through the battle. They've been battle scarred. Like Paul said, I have the marks of the Lord Jesus Christ on my body.

I've been marked. Then Satan takes Jesus to the roof of the temple, the highest point, and says, at the pinnacle he says, Jump! Jump. In other words, if you're really the Son of God, he's going to send an angel and give you a soft landing.

Because the scripture says, he's giving the Lord a promise. He said, the Bible promises you, Jesus. Your word promises you that the angel of the Lord is going to camp around about you.

And no danger can befall you because you're not even going to dash your foot against the stone. Now I want you to see how devious this is. He's asking Jesus to cast his whole life and jump in, listen to it, to one specific promise.

Take one promise like the woman did in this church who came to me and said, Brother Dave, I am so disappointed. I hear what you're preaching from the pulpit, but I've had such great financial need for so long and I put my whole trust and confidence in Malachi 3.10. Will a man rob God? You know that scripture. Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in my house.

And prove me now in this way, said the Lord of hosts. If I will not open the windows of heaven, pour you out a blessing that there shall not be room enough to receive it. She cast herself down from the temple.

She cast herself on one specific promise. This is what the devil was trying to do. Ignore the whole word of God.

Ignore all the commandments of God. Ignore all of those things that God desires of us in knowing and understand the whole counsel of God. And cast yourself on one specific promise.

She did that. She said, I paid my tithes regularly and I gave offerings and I'm still in need and my need hasn't been met and she was angry. You see, she didn't understand that there is a heart condition that goes with that promise.

That God has commanded we not covet. There was a spirit of covetousness in here and the Bible said, if they are disobedient. The Bible says in 2 Chronicles 6.26, because they sinned against me and were disobedient, I shut the windows of heaven.

I shut them up. Because you see, there's a commandment that goes with it. And some of you right now, when you're in it, you say, God has made me a promise and you try to lay hold of one promise, but you don't search your heart.

Is there some wicked way in me, Lord? Is there something now that would hinder this promise from being fulfilled in my heart? Psalm 42.10, David cried, my enemies reproach me while they say daily unto me, where is your God? And then David added these words to his cry, lighten my eyes, oh Lord. In other words, give me evidence that you're with me. Lest my enemies say I prevailed against him and those that trouble me rejoice over me.

And here's the taunt from the devil. Listen closely, please. The devil come to you and say, look at you.

And this is what he's trying to say. Did he look at you? One. Let me talk about David first.

The devil taunted David this way. Look, you're a man after God's own heart, according to God's own testimony. You're one who prays three times a day, morning, night and noon.

You're the one that's overcome with thirst and like a deer panting for water. There's no cause whatsoever for what you're going through. You've not sinned.

You've not done anything. There's no cause for this whatsoever. God's let you descend down into a pit of despair.

You're cast down. You don't even know why you've testified the world that God is faithful. And here you are spiritually dry.

You're being tempted. You're in sorrow daily. Where's God in all of this? You've got to have proof.

That God's with you. You've got to have some kind of proof. Now jump off and if God saves you, you'll know that he's with you.

And if he doesn't save you, why live in despair? Might as well die anyhow. You see, the device of the enemy. I know what David, that's speaking Christ, but in David's mind, the battle that he went through.

Because what David went through is common to all men according to Scripture. When you find yourself in a struggle that you don't understand and God seems to be silent. Then this cries, how long? How long? God, are you really with me? Are you with me? Jesus said to the devil, man shall live by every word, not by bread alone, but by every word that proceeded out of the mouth of God.

Do you understand that all false doctrine, all error, all cults come from someone casting themselves upon one simple promise or one simple doctrine. They cast their whole life, everything onto that one doctrine, isolated from the rest of the Scripture completely. And then of course, we come to this second temptation

that I know that I've been through and tested on a number of times very severely.

Ten times Israel provoked and tested and proved God. I don't want to tell you something. God could prove himself to you if you're going to live in the flesh and not in the spirit and trust the Holy Spirit and what he's doing in your life.

God could prove to you ten times you still wouldn't believe him. Because we're just like the children of Israel, we're bent on backsliding. Children of Israel after ten times said, is God among us or not? And God called that tempting him.

Folks, when you're going, some of you came in this church today and you're going through the battle of your life, you're going through a struggle, terrible, terrible struggle. And maybe it's lasted for weeks and maybe even for months. And you're saying, my prayers are not being answered.

And you're saying, where is God? And the enemy is going to come to you and you're going to say, you have got to have proof. In fact, I heard somebody who was in a form of ministry in so many words was saying, look, I have been faithful to the Lord. I paid my tithes, I've done all of these things and my prayers are not being answered and I can't bear this any longer.

And there's been a challenge to God. God, you do something. You've got to give me a token of good.

You have got to give me a sign. You've got to give me a blessing somewhere just so I know you're with me. You've got to give me something.

You've got you just give me something now. Now, folks, the Lord said, bring forth your strong reasons. He's a patient God.

He understands that. But if you're just trying to prove God and not stand on his word and ignore all the testimony of history, your own testimony, the whole Bible full of promises of his faithfulness and overlook all God's past faithfulness to you. Ignore the times that he's proven himself to you over and over again that he was with you.

Here you are after all these years or months and God has proven himself faithful to you. He's proven himself over and over and over again. He said there comes a time after 10 times he told Israel no more.

He said, you're tempting me now. This whole body of evidence is the only proof we need. Called standing on the word and believing what he said.

Then finally, Jesus is taken to an exceeding high mountain. He's shown the kingdoms of this world. Satan makes this offer all this.

I'm going to give you if you just fall down and worship me. A single act of worship. Now, at first glance, this this offer seems so outlandish, so ridiculous.

How could it be considered a temptation? Not even a coldest sinner in America. The world would take up this offer. Nobody going to take this.

What is this all about? Because these temptations relate to us. He's going through temptations that are common to all flesh. Did Satan really believe in the slightest that Jesus would be tempted by this offer? Now, believe it or not, this is a very powerful, enticing offer.

Folks, we've got to understand what the devil is saying to Jesus at this point. He's challenging the Lord. He said, you've been called to lay your life down for a lost world.

You've come to save prisoners that I have captivated. It's written of you that you've come to undo heavy burdens that I've placed upon people. And you've come to heal those that I've possessed.

You've come to deliver by your spirit those that are going through my temptations. Here's the incredible, insidious offer from hell. It says, you're going to die anyhow.

Folks, I want you to see this. You're going to die anyhow. You're going to go to a cross.

You're going to die. If you'll bow down to me in a single act of worship, I'll quit the fight. I won't tempt anybody else.

I'll not possess anybody else. You see, he said, I'm going to give you my power, my glory. You've come to save the world.

Now, he's a man. He's not being tempted as God. And all of his lifetime, up to this point, he knows he's going to die.

He's preparing. His heart has been set on redeeming the world. Do you remember what Paul said? I would even be accursed from Christ for the salvation of my kinsmen, my brethren.

And this is what the devil is saying to Jesus. I'll give up my power. I'll quit fighting.

There'll be no more slavery to sin, no more demonic possession, no more enticing by my principalities and powers. I'll call off my hounds from hell. I'll give up my reign, all my glory.

If you will just do one thing, bow down, one act, the world will be free. And if you're going to be a sacrifice, why don't you make the supreme sacrifice? Why don't you take hell for the sake of all others on earth to be delivered from it? You die and go to hell. You'll be accursed from your father.

Let yourself be the accursed one for the sake of the church. And my glory, I'll surrender to you. You say, well, how could that possibly relate to us today? None of this seems common to us.

But it is. Yes, it is. You see, Satan's out to save his own skin.

Because he knows. You see, he knows the father knows his tricks. He knows the father knows this strategy.

He knows the father's on to the devil. He knows it. But Jesus is being tempted as a man now.

Not in his omniscience or omnipotence. As a man. A man of compassion.

And he's playing on that compassion. Folks, if Jesus didn't have to be tested, if he didn't have thoughts, if this didn't come as an enticement, then it was not a temptation that relates to humankind at all. It had to be a battle.

When Jesus hears this, in his compassion, no more demonics cutting their bodies and crying over the mountains. No more alcoholics laying on the streets. A world free from demonic oppression.

For one act. Of course, you know the devil's a liar. And if the Lord ever did that, he'd just laugh at him.

He's a liar. But you see, he's so frightened of the shed blood, he was trying to save his own existence. Because he knows the moment Jesus denies this, he's gone.

He's finished. Even before the cross, it's all over. He knows his destiny has been sealed.

You see, if you don't understand that Jesus endured all of this as a man, just like you and me, with our feelings, yet without sin, you can't understand the depths of it. Now you say, where do I fit in as a Christian? Where do we fit in? Well, first of all, Satan is intelligent enough to know that we're not going to bite on that. He knows you and I will never fall down and worship him.

Not for a moment. But he comes to us, the Bible said, with accusations and threats. He accuses us.

Not only to heaven and the Father, but he accuses you at your lowest point in the pits of despair. He comes, that's where the trap is. And he'll say, look, you don't have to worship me because I already have a foothold in your life.

I already have your Adamic nature and I'm going to control that Adamic nature. That's called indwelling sin. But I'm going to control that.

And just when you think you have the victory, he said, I don't care how many scriptures you read. I don't care what you claim about the power of the blood. I don't care how many covenant promises you claim.

You can claim that you're delivered, but when you least expect it, even when you have been free for a year or two from your lust, he says, you know, I know all about you from childhood. I know your evil tendencies. I know your inherited nature.

I know your weaknesses. And for your lifetime, I've been nurturing those weaknesses. And I know where your point of weakness is.

And I'm going to come at you and I'm going to surprise you time and time again. You don't have to worship me. I already have my foothold in your nature.

And just when you think you have arrived, just when you think I am free. Surprise. I'm going to bring it up again.

I'm going to bring the temptation right back up again. I've talked to ministers of the gospel who were free for years. And in a moment of great blessing and anointing, an old thought, an old lust, evil thoughts, fear of man, things that they were delivered from, the enemy would try to bring up and scare.

It's all smoke and mirrors, but trying to bring up fear and condemnation in the hearts of God's people. And some of you listening now know exactly what I'm talking about. He's going to say to you, I'll entice you with the most powerful enticements and tell you despair of ever being free.

I'll let you look good. I'll let you act free. But deep inside, you're going to be calling yourself a phony.

But my Bible says you resist the devil and he will flee from you. Resist this. These are lies.

These are fears sent from the very pits of hell. Folks, after I wrote the book on the covenant, I was hounded with evil thoughts for a period of time. I was hounded by every demonic force of hell to say the

covenant is a lie.

The blood really doesn't cleanse you. It'll always come up again. Those are lies.

And the Bible makes it very clear. These are the accusations that the devil will use when you're down and you're out and you're hurting because he wants you to make you feel dirty and filthy and unworthy to talk about Jesus or to witness or to preach the gospel. He wants you to have a cloud of fear come over you to be afraid of that thing in your past.

Folks, I want you to know you don't have to be afraid of anything in your past. I don't care how many temptations the devil tells you or throws at you. The Bible said you resist by the word of God.

You take the whole counsel of God. You cry out, Lord, you know my heart. You know that's not what I'm like.

You know that that's under the blood. You know and you stand on those covenant promises of God. You stand on the whole counsel of God.

The Bible said he'll flee from you. Most Christians don't know it. But when that comes, they really don't know that they're free.

They are free. But that fear, I plead with you in the name of Jesus. Don't let that fear come upon you.

You have nothing to be afraid of. You have nothing to fear whatsoever. Even if he brings you to the brink of an act.

And I'm going to tell you something else. There is absolutely nothing that he can do to keep you from the Lord's presence with you in and through your battle. He is there.

And now I don't ask God for proof anymore. I just begin to worship him. And the real proof is suddenly the presence of the Lord that comes assuring and the peace.

And then getting the Bible out and reading and re-reading the covenant promises of God. And that's when strength begins to flow. Hallelujah.

That's when the devil begins to flee. And the Bible says the devil left him. The devil left him.

And angels came and ministered to him. Now before I close, I want to talk to you. Had you met Jesus the 41st day? You see he's come through the battle.

And all his face is shining. His humanity. In his humanity he's rejoicing.

There's been a victory in his human flesh. He is sinless. He has overcome the temptations of the enemy.

And there's joy in his step. And he's going to the cities of the north. Some Gentile cities.

He's beginning to preach. And he's ministering and healing the sick. And there's joy.

There's exuberance. You could look at Jesus at that time and say, Oh man, here I am in a struggle. And he doesn't have to go through anything like that.

Look how strong he is. And look how beautiful his life is. He came and was born in a manger.

And he's just going to drift right through life without a trial. No temptations in Jesus' life. If you only knew.

If you only knew. You see, you come to church. And the pastors stand up here.

In our suits. And boy, we yell. And cry.

And smile. And preach with authority. And there you sit in your struggle.

Hurting. You say, Oh, I wish I was a pastor. I wish God would call me.

I wouldn't have to go through any of this. What sweet men they are. My goodness, they don't go through any of the problems that we go through.

If you only knew. If you only knew. See, you weren't there.

You weren't there when the Lord called me or one of the other pastors. You weren't there. When the Spirit led us into wilderness to experience these kind of temptations.

You weren't there when we cried until there were no tears left. And groanings. Questioning God at times.

You know nothing of weeks and days and nights harassed by knowing hunger for God that was not met. A hunger for God. And things deep inside trying to get release.

Things that want to come out and you don't know what it is. But you know it's a hunger for God. You know you want more of Him and you can't get it out.

It's all bottled up inside. You weren't there. You see, we stand here, we've already come through it.

Well, many times we're in it when we're preaching. I've preached my best sometimes from the bottom of the pit. Because I knew how weak I was.

Oh, but you see, we're not to measure ourselves. The scripture says, we dare not, Paul said, make ourselves of that number who measure themselves by themselves. And comparing themselves among themselves.

Which is not wise. Not wise. Because you see, you can't read people.

You think you're a mind reader? You're so far off. You know, my wife likes to imagine, she knows, she can look at people and imagine what kind of work they do. And so, you know, we'll sit in the restaurant and occasionally, you know, he's a doctor.

She has this idea, she can pretty well tell. She's been wrong every time. You say, how do you know? Because it's usually by those near us, you can hear by the way they talk.

They're not talking like a doctor. They're talking like a nurse. Folks, the people around you, sitting right next to you with a smile.

And you think everything is so fine. If you only knew. If you only knew.

See, you don't compare yourself with those who seem so holy and so righteous. And you feel so down, so insignificant, so unwanted, so unloved. And you feel that everybody is passing you by.

Or if you can have an hour with that person that you've been looking at. And they can unload on you and just tell you what they've been through. You say, oh man, I've got it easy.

Come on now. When I was a young preacher, I would go to hear Brother Ravenhill. Great prophet of God, holy, holy man.

I said, oh God, I don't have a chance. I'll never be like that man. Years later, God allowed him to come into my life.

I supported him. He was on my staff for a number of years. He was my associate.

And when I listened to that man talk about his battles and what he'd been through. How the devil tried to destroy him time and time again. A righteous, godly man.

I said, well I can be like that. I can be tested and I can be tried. So there was no more comparison.

I never after that compared. Because I saw he was just like me. Facing the same battles as everybody else.

All but the wonderful victory there is in Christ. When you quit comparing yourself with others. And say what's happened to me is common to all flesh.

And God said he'll not allow anything in my life. But what he'll make a way of escape. That way of escape is hanging on this.

Not only the promises, but the commandments of God. Searching your heart saying, Lord, see if there be any wicked way in me. When I see something not answered, I say, God, search my heart.

See if there's anything hindering. And the Holy Ghost is faithful. He'll show you and then he'll give you the power to deal with it.

Amen. God is good. He is faithful.

And he's going to bring his people out. Will you stand? Hallelujah. In the annex and here in the auditorium.

Let me tell you what the Holy Ghost has been doing here. Especially recently. Prophetically, profoundly.

What the Holy Spirit's doing. None of the pastors are consulting with one another in what they're delivering. But God is preparing us.

Pastor Carter put it well this morning. God is preparing his people. He is.

He's preparing you. We're all going to face. The nation is going into a pit of despair.

There's going to be a national despair. The next president of the United States is going to be in power over the crash. There's no question about it.

In my mind. And we're all going to be tested. We're all going to be tried.

And as we said, the more spiritual you become, the more you seek God, the more you can be ready. It's nothing to be afraid of. Because that is in those times that God proves himself so faithful.

And it's those times that you learn how to love others. And God is trying to produce a church full of compassion for this city. And we're going to need that compassion.

But that compassion has to be molded and instilled in us through our struggles and our suffering and pain. Now, you may be one that's not going through that right now. You may be.

You may have just come out of it. God bless you. Enjoy it.

Praise the Lord. It's wonderful. I'm in one of those times right now.

And it feels good, Pastor Carter. It feels good. But I know as I seek him and put my heart out to him more and more, it'll come.

But you see, I'm not afraid of it anymore. And no fear whatsoever. Because I know God has his hand.

Once you know God's led you into it, you're in no trouble. You have no problem. You're going to come out.

If God leads you in, he's going to lead you out. It's that simple. He's going to lead you out.

You'll either accept it or you'll get bitter. That's what God's saying. He's going to bring a church out.

He's going to bring a victorious church. You know, when it hits New York City and when the economy begins to crumble, we're going to be helping each other physically, financially, prayer. It's going to be a sweet time.

It's going to be the most glorious revelations of Jesus we've ever had. The Lord's going to be more precious to you than you've ever known. So it's nothing to be afraid of.

If you're here, though, this is my altar call. I'm going to make it short, very quickly. If you're here and you say, Pastor David, I had to hear this today.

I came to church. And I've been going through one of those times that you talked about. I have a bout of despair.

I don't know where it came from. I don't know what it's all about. The best I know, I'm serving the Lord with all my heart.

We're going to take authority over that in Jesus' name. We're going to ask the Lord. We're not going to try to just deliver.

We're going to ask God right now to take the fear out of your heart. He said that you may endure it, that you may endure it. And as you endure it, he's teaching.

If you'll just open your ears and your eyes, he's going to give you an understanding. And then when you come out of it, you're going to come out stronger than you've ever been before. Heavenly Father, I pray for those who have slipped away from you, those who are backslidden, and those who... This message was just prepared for them, I pray.

Lord, take the fear out of our hearts. We don't have to be afraid of this. It's something, Lord, we can anticipate with faith and confidence that God is going to see us through.

Wherever you're at, up in the balcony, here on the main floor, you want me to pray with you? I'm going to come against any fear that's in your life. If you're backslidden, if your heart's grown cold, I want you to come with them. But you say, Brother Dave, I'm going through it.

I really need God's help today. I need his touch. We'll pray for you.

We'll stand with you right now. You're among friends, you're among family. Nobody's going to ask you what it is, only that's between you and the Lord.

Up in the balcony, go to the stairs on either side, and come down any aisle. I want to tell you, all of you that came forward, all in this church, all who are going through this bout of despair or temptation, trial, whatever it may be, persuade yourself through the power of the Holy Spirit that the Lord is with you. I want you to say it, God is with me.

God is with me. God is with me. He's not forsaken me.

Standing right here now. Tell that to your heart. God is not forsaken me.

God is with me. God's led me into this. The devil is trying to do what he can, but greater is he that is in me than he that is in the world.

Greater is my God. Greater is my God. Hallelujah.

And I'm not going to tempt God. I'm not going to tempt God. I'm just trying to challenge him with one of his scripture verses, or one of his promises, without asking him to give me a new heart, without asking him to cleanse me and prepare me to receive everything he has for me.

Pray this with me. Jesus, I thank you that you persuaded me, that you love me, you're leading me. I'm not out of your sight.

Every step has been led of the Lord because the steps of a righteous person are led by the Lord. Thank you for leading me, Jesus. Even in hard times, I know you're with me.

Forgive my unbelief. Touch me. Let me rest now and ride out this storm.

Holy Ghost, you promised a way of escape that I could bear it. That I'm going to hold up. I'm not going to fall.

And you did not let me fail because he's with me. Now let me pray for you. Father, in Jesus' name, I pray for everyone in this place.

Lord, this is probably about the third message we've heard in the last 10 days, or the last week even, along these lines. Certainly, you're trying to say something to all of us. Don't be afraid of the hard times.

Don't be afraid. Keep yearning. Keep thirsting.

Keep reaching out to me. And I'm going to deliver you in my time, in my way. And when I deliver you, you're going to come out of it a giant.

Hallelujah. Glory to Jesus. Glory to Jesus.

Let's sing just the chorus again before we close. Oh, God. My God.

Help us to know that we can praise you and thank you even for our tribulations. That's what Paul said. I will praise you.

I will thank you even in my tribulations. I will thank you. In fact, Lord, he thanked you for his tribulations.

For what it wrought in him. Amen. Take that as from the Lord now.

God bless you and love you. The next service is at 6 o'clock with Pastor Clodude preaching. Turn around and encourage somebody.

Just say, God's with you. Just say it. God's with you.

God is with you. God's with you. That's it.

Amen. God is with you. This is the conclusion of the message.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/4/SID4216.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/david-wilkerson/the-temptations-of-the-righteous/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net