

Lessons for the Tempted

by John A. Broadus

God suffers us to be tempted as a condition of existence and as a discipline to help us grow in character, but he also provides a way of escape if we trust in him.

Scripture: Genesis 32:10, Numbers 16:7, Deuteronomy 1:6, 1 Kings 12:28, 1 Chronicles 21:15, Psalm 37:29, Acts 20:32, Romans 6:6, Romans 8:16, 2 Corinthians 3:5-6, 2 Corinthians 5:5, Revelation 5:12

Topics: "Salvation By Faith", "Christ's Righteousness"

Description

The preacher delves into the meaning of 'qualified' in the Bible, emphasizing that believers are made fit and sufficient through the completed act of Jesus' crucifixion, allowing them to enter the Holy of Holies and receive their inheritance. This qualification is a gift from God, highlighting that no amount of human effort or knowledge can achieve salvation. The preacher stresses the importance of humility and gratitude, as our fitness for heaven is solely based on Christ's righteousness bestowed upon us at the moment of salvation.

Transcript

Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall. 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. I Corinthians 10:12, 13

Here is a text which speaks to our need. Though temptation comes, we do not understand it and are often not prepared for it. Through Paul, God is giving us guidance to help us. There are four points suggested by the text as regards temptation.

I. We recognize here that God suffers us to be tempted, "God is faithful; he will not suffer you to be tempted above that you are able." Then God suffers us to be tempted. This is a distinction which does not amount to a great deal, I confess, and yet which is useful and helps us somewhat in relieving the dark mystery of evil in this world, that God permits evils of which he is not the author. We shrink back with horror from the idea of regarding him as the author of evil, we cannot believe it; and it helps us a little to think that God permits evils of which he is not the author. He suffers us to be tempted. The apostle James says that God tempts no man. "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." The word "tempt," as you all know-and the same thing is true of the words in the original language-signifies "to test," "to put to the test"-as when you test a gun.

This testing may be done with a good or an evil design. A man may put a great charge of powder into a gun for the purpose of ascertaining whether it is strong and can stand the test! or he may do it for the purpose of ascertaining whether it is weak, for the purpose of destroying it. So human character may be tested with friendly feelings, to try its strength, or with hostile feelings, in order to show its weakness and to destroy it. In the bad sense of the term God tempts no-body, but he suffers us to be tempted.

Shall we inquire why he does this? We might say that temptation is one of the conditions of existence in this world. We cannot see how it would be possible to live here without being tempted. Jesus Christ himself, who was sinless, who came into this world to live but a little while and to die, endured temptation, not once merely, but many times-tempted to do what was wrong in the desert, tempted in the garden to shrink from what he had undertaken to do. Temptation is a condition of our existence.

Moreover, temptation is a discipline. That is one of the reasons why we may say God permits us to be tempted. Here again we have the example of Jesus. We are told in the Epistle to the Hebrews that Jesus learned from what he suffered. His human nature needed discipline like ours, and it found discipline in temptation as we do. He learned from what he suffered, and thus being made perfect he became the author of eternal salvation. So much for the first point: God suffers us to be tempted.

II Now the second point: We should be afraid of temptation. "Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall." There are two forms of peril against which we need to caution ourselves. It is a perilous thing to question the reality and the power of temptation. Why, my friends, if there be such a being as Satan, if he has such designs against us and against God as the Scriptures plainly declare, then what could please him better than that men should deny his existence? What could help him more?

But I said there were two forms of peril. If it is perilous that we should be heedless about temptation, its reality and its power, it is peculiarly perilous that we should feel a self-confident presumption that we can overcome it. "Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall." Ah! a man who is afraid he will fall may, perhaps, take care, but a man who thinks he stands will seldom take heed.

III. The third point in the text is, that we must not excuse ourselves when we are tempted. We must not excuse ourselves with the idea that it is impossible to resist temptation. We must not imagine that we have nothing to do with it and that temptation comes as a power from without and presses in upon us, and we are helpless. Temptation becomes temptation to us only as something within us rises up to meet the allurements from without. James tells us: "Every man is tempted, when he is drawn away by his own desire, and enticed." He is seduced by his own soul's desire, and only his own soul's desire can really lead him to sin. The power from without may be mighty, and yet the man is a free man and yields to temptation only when something within him goes forth to meet that which comes from without. Yet how common a thing it is to imagine we cannot help yielding to temptation. It is not impossible to resist temptation. At any rate when we do not resist, it is our fault. If we really have not now the power to resist, this may be only a punishment for having failed to resist in other days when we might have done it.

Again, we must not excuse ourselves as we are so often inclined to do, with the idea that our temptations are very peculiar. "There hath no temptation taken you," says the apostle, "but such as is common to man." Yet how very general is the notion that our trials and our temptations are certainly the most peculiar and the hardest to bear that any poor, wretched human being has ever had to face. It seems to be a universal human tendency. You cannot help thinking that people whose character is very different from yours, whose surroundings are different, do not have strong temptations. Of course, particular forms of

temptation are mightier to one person and less mighty to another. But take the sum total, and if we saw things as the high angels see them, if we saw things as God sees them, we should never delude ourselves with that dream.

IV. Now, finally, trusting in God we can conquer temptation. For God will help us, the text implies, both by his providence and by his grace. "God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make the way of escape, that ye may be able to bear it." My friends, God has often done that for us already. If you have advanced far enough in life to see the meaning of your past life, can you not look back and see how, when God's providence brought you into temptation, there has also been provided the way of escape? That is what the text implies that he will do for us if we trust in him, the faithful God. If enlightened by his Word and if seeking his grace to guide us, though we meet with temptation, there will be somewhere, somehow, a door opened that we may escape. Oh, blessed be God that he is controlling all these mighty forces of evil which move around us, so that the temptations themselves sometimes counteract one another. The more we are tempted the more we are safe sometimes. Ah! when we are sorely tempted, God will not fail to open the way of escape, if we have a heart to seek for it, a soul that longs to find it.

Not only by his providence, but by his grace, God will help us in our temptation. If strengthened by God's grace, if filled with a hatred, a mortal hatred of sin, we struggle against it, then we shall trample temptation under foot. We shall know the discipline of character which comes from temptation conquered. "Happy is the man," says the apostle James "that endureth temptation: for when he has stood the test, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him." Therefore, he said, "My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations." If we trust God's providential help and his gracious Spirit, then we can see how temptation may be the means of making us better; and, rising up in grateful joy and trust, we may rejoice with James, "Knowing that the testing of our faith worketh patience. But let patience have a perfect work, that we may be perfect and entire, lacking in nothing. If any man lack wisdom-wisdom to take these wholesome views of temptation, wisdom to find the way out of temptation, wisdom to see the meanings of temptation and gain its lessons-if any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him."

My brethren, I ask not today for you and that we may have a life without trial and temptation. I should be afraid to ask it; for "whom the Lord loveth, he chasteneth"; and it is the law of earthly existence that we shall be tempted. But I humbly ask for myself and for you that we may have grace to help us watch and strive against temptation, grace to trample it under foot, grace to conquer it.

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