

Temptation

by John Murray

The sermon emphasizes the importance of resisting temptation and living a life of endurance, as blessed is the man who endures temptation and receives the crown of life.

Duration: 45:05

Scripture: Genesis 3:1-6, Romans 8:13, James 1:12-15, James 1:24

Topics: "Temptation"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the power of temptation and the importance of resisting it. He emphasizes that temptation is constant and inevitable, and that giving in to it leads to negative consequences. The preacher also highlights the need for relying on God's strength and grace to overcome temptation. He references the story of Eve in the Bible, explaining how she was deceived by the temptation to gain wisdom and disobeyed God's command. The sermon concludes with a reminder to young people to seek God's help in resisting temptation and relying on His strength.

Transcript

The General Epistle of James, the first chapter, beginning at the twelfth verse, "...and that endureth temptation. But when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him." And so on to the end of the fifteenth verse. But in this text, the word tempt, or temptation, is used on several occasions.

Blessed is the man that endureth temptation. Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God, for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempted he any man. But every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust and enticed.

And so it is quite apparent that the leading theme of this passage is that of temptation. The word tempt is used in the scripture in at least three distinct senses. It is used in the sense of trying, or proving.

You remember that we read in Genesis that God did tempt Abraham. That is, he proved, he tried, he tested Abraham. And of course that is a perfectly legitimate use of the word tempt.

It has a perfectly legitimate meaning because God himself does it. And the purpose that God has in view in testing, or trying, or proving a person is confirmation in righteousness and life. But it is also used in two other distinct senses.

And these two senses appear in this particular text. And one of these is the sense of plaguing and inducement before a person to sin. To instigate a person to sin.

And one person is the instrument and the other person is subjected to that inducement to sin on the part of some other person. Or perhaps on the part of his own lustfulness. And the third sense which also appears in this text is that of calling you to sin.

Now you see that that second sense, the sense of being subjected to inducement on the part of someone else to a sin, is the sense in which it is used in verse 12, blessed is the man that endures temptation. But in verse 14, when it says that every man is tempted, then it is used in a different sense. In a sense of falling into sin, of being the victim of temptation.

So these are the two particular senses in which the word temptation is used in this text. The one of placing an inducement to sin and the other that of being the victim of that inducement and that of being the victim of sin. Now it is with these two senses and with the subject that is presented to our attention in this text that we are going to see it.

And there are two subjects because in this text the first is the temptation that has its issue in sin and its rages in death. And the second is the temptation that has its issue in endurance and has its reward in the crown of life. These are the two subjects around which the teaching of this text turns.

The issue of temptation that is unsuccessful and the issue of temptation that is successful and the reward in all things. So first of all we have that temptation which has its issue in sin and its rages in death. And it is with that that we shall begin first of all.

And in connection with that particular subject there are obviously these two parts. First the cause of this issue and then the rages which account for it. And when we are dealing with the cause it is very necessary for us to make very important distinctions.

You know all that it is always necessary when we are dealing with the great subject of life and death whether it is sin or righteousness to make very fine distinctions. And people who do not have an appreciation for fine distinctions don't have an appreciation for truth. Because the line of demarcation between truth and error between right and wrong is not always the right but something that is of kind of the whole thing.

And if we don't appreciate fine distinctions we don't appreciate truth we don't appreciate right and we don't appreciate the distinction between truth and error between right and wrong. So it is necessary to make very fine distinctions in this matter. And the practice is this that when we are dealing with the cause of falling into sin God is not the author of that sin.

He is not the author of our being tempted in that sense. It is perfectly true that God has no aim whatsoever towards the past that even sin itself falls within his ordination and it comes to pass in his providence. There is certainly the embrace of all that comes to pass in the decree and the providence of God.

And if anything that comes to pass were outside the decree and the providence of God then God would not be God because then there would be an area that would be a square that would be outside of God's dilectrical control. And bear that in mind that this is not an issue of our simply hair flipping. It's an issue that touches upon the very integrity to which God has brought us up.

There is nothing that comes to pass even in the form of sin that is outside the sphere of God's ordination and outside the sphere of his providence. So we have the greatest sentiment left in the great hard time of history. What was the great hard time of history? It was not the fall of the first king however serious that king was.

The great hard time of history was the crucifixion of the Lord of Glory because that was the most remissness and the most miserly of a thought for God upon his kingdom because it was the crucifixion of the Lord of Glory himself. And with respect to that event we meet him being delivered by the eternal counsel and foreknowledge of God he has taken and by which his hands have crucified and slain. God is not however the author of sin and it is the actions of the entirety to make God responsible for the sin that we commit.

It's a very simple error. It is not simply an error that appears in what we might call the theological emphasis or theological disposition. It is an error that appears every time in our thoughts and in our practice that we blame the providence of God for the sin that we commit and that's the very essence of incarceration.

However, we must realize that the sin that we commit occurs within the decree and it's the ordination and the power of the Lord the evidence of piety is not to implicate God who is responsible for sin. I thought God did not get perfect in all his ways of justice and God did righteously put the first iniquity just to unrighteously and he is not contaminated in the least degree by that sin that we commit. So we cannot say we ought to go on the path of that sin to the decree and the providence of God.

We're trying to convert the cause with signs and words. In the second, again, in the second place we must not attribute that sin by falling into temptation to the temptation itself. So very often that is what we do practically.

We try to make another way for ourselves an excuse for ourselves by saying why does it allow this to be a temptation and I couldn't resist it. I just couldn't. It was such a, it was such a severe situation that I couldn't, I couldn't overcome it.

I was struggling in a situation that made it necessary for me to sin. The end is in piety of the deepest God. It is not sin born to be subjected to temptation but it is God's sin born out to be subjected to solicitation to sin on the part of another.

Our Lord himself was subjected to temptation by the great arch-enemy particularly of course the ruler of Venice that appeared at the beginning of his public ministry but also on other occasions. Our Lord was subjected to temptation but he committed no sin. There was no sin in it and there was no sin in the human body.

He was born out of undefiled acceptance of sin. And our first parents were subjected to temptation by our first parents. And it was God's sin born on their part to be subjected to that temptation.

Or it was sin of course on the part of the tempted to solicit sin on their part. But it was the sin born of our first parents to be subjected to that temptation. Well then what does the cause of sin in Christ? When we fall into temptation when we are tempted in that sense of falling into temptation of succumbing to temptation that's the reason when the text tells us that it's well for us to take to heart every man intended when he is drawn away by his own lust and then Christ.

That's the saving of human form by his own lust and he is saved by the device of the temptation that's the meaning. He has drawn his human form by his own lust and he is saved by the device of the temptation device. So you see the cause.

Beside and aside in the lust of our own hearts. In this time we have to be left in that temptation. When we have a desire in the direction of that which is for all the sinful people.

When we have an inclination towards that then you see we have succumbed to the temptation. You have a very fruitful lesson for that at the very beginning of our whole history. Our first friends were subjected to the temptation on the part of the serpent who was the instrument of the great archenemy who was the instrument of the great archenemy on that particular occasion.

What do you find particularly in the case of Eve? Well she gives a sympathetic ear to the allegation of the great. We cannot tell exactly when since when does that reaction when does consent appear or took place in the heart or the mind of Eve. But we cannot postpone later than this point that she saw that the plea was one to be desired to make one wise.

How did she know that it was a plea to be desired to make one wise just because she had given her consent to the allegation of the temptation which was ye shall not surely die. But God does know that in the day if there are your eyes will be open and ye shall hear God knowing good and evil. She believed that she had the answer in that allegation and there not any later than that is the ideal thing in the heart and mind of Eve.

That's the way with us. That's the way with us always. The moment that we have yet that we give willing consent in that very moment we have already poured the tempest into us.

We are caught on the hook because we have been demoted by our master that is by our own sin of desire. And like that it's always of the essence of the tempest by our it's always of the essence of desire to recognize that fact to lay all the blame at our feet. You don't lay the blame on the door of God's palaces.

You don't lay the blame on the door of evil Satan in hell. You lay the blame at the door of your own heart's lust. Every man tempted from his drawing room away knew it was caught by his own lust.

That's the cause. That's the explanation. And it's always the same.

It was the same at the beginning when our first enemies had accidents which are not really accidents but which we call accidents sometimes occur and there is no fruitful issue but normally that is what happens. When there is conception that there is no law which God has established or which God has ordained then there is the process of family development and in due time there is a birth. And it's that nature that he inspired my refusing in this particular occasion.

When God has conceived to bring us all to sin and where sin and sin when it is finished bring us all death. You see there is no power under heaven. Mark it my friends.

There is no power under heaven. There is no power of human disorder that can interrupt that power. You can interrupt it by your means in connection with the human generation but I tell you my friends that there is no power under heaven and there is no power of human disorder that can interrupt that power because it proceeds according to an inevitable law.

God can interrupt it of course but does no one know what it is for? It never happens. He has forged a plan so after the destruction of the earth he has forged a plan can course but there is no under heaven and there is no power of human disorder You know people will say sometimes about certain people who are addicted to certain grievous lusts that annoy the very vitals of life, like the debauchee and the sexual addict and so forth. And the very vitals of life, as the prayer being said, and he knows it very well.

The doctor tells you, if you get once again drunk, if you practice illicit sexual intercourse once more, your being will grow within a week. He's told that. He knows it.

Then he goes off and he gets drunk, and he goes off to his sexual lusts, and people say, I can't understand it. I can't understand why that man, after all that long, didn't take the lesson. And I understand it perfectly well.

It's just as it was when a man was born without doing anything. You may torment that person with the pain of hell, and it will not turn into lust. It will not cure his desires.

When work hath completed, bring forth sin, and sin, when it is finished, bring forth death. And that's the seriousness my friend has said. It has its gradual in death, and it has its final vision in everlasting destruction.

From the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, it is death, unmitigated death, everlasting death. That's the issue of a non-successful encounter with God. And you know this is true, even in connection with the people of God themselves.

For they were not finally perished. For they were not yet cast down from heaven. Nevertheless, to the very extent that they know the rest, that they give way to the lust of their own heart, to that very extent, their weakness wages.

If we live after the flesh, we shall die. He that sought to the flesh, shall of the flesh be crushed. And even the people of God hath to be warned against the awful tendency that follows upon their killing God with temptation.

The only thing for temptation is that with which we are going to deal now with Christ. The only way to deal that ends temptation is that has its reward in the crown of life. And that ends is the man that endures temptation.

For when he is tried, he shall receive a crown of life which the Lord hath promised to them that love him. And we have to see two aspects again. The cause and the result.

The cause and the reward. Not this time, the way it happened. Well, not the way it happened, but nevertheless, it's the reward that's the issue of the crown of life.

Now it appears that the cause of this successful encounter was temptation. You will notice that the inspired writer does not say at all that it is the man who is tempted. The Lord told that it is not sinful to be tempted.

Adam and Eve were tempted in the state of innocence. Our Lord himself was tempted by the devil. He was subjected to temptation.

But the text doesn't say that it is the man who is tempted. Now, from there again we have a very important distinction. There are certain people that they think that the way to be strong is to go to the very grave.

And they think that that's good pedagogy, too. That's a good method of moral discipline. But it's not the way it's meant.

It was temptation to go to the same grave. But the Lord just made it. Oh, what a problem.

Well, it's not at all blessed is the man who is tempted. There's no actual temptation as such. None whatsoever.

There's no temptation simply from temptation as such. And the person who thinks that the way to be strong is to go to the grave. And every guy in the town experiments with all sorts of temptation.

This is a killer temptation. It's not because he wants to be strong, but because he wants to indulge his lust, after all. There's no way of indulging lust.

To give a guy the temptation. That's what Eve did. That's what we do oftentimes.

No, no. If we experiment with temptation, we're living through the temptation. Because we experiment with it, because we like it.

But it troubles us. Jesus taught us. But we do nevertheless indulge in a supple temptation.

And what is it? That is the perfect thing. What is the successful issue with this encounter? Blessed is the man who has been blessed. Blessed is the man who endures.

What does that mean? Blessed is the man who endures temptation. Although I complain some of these things, but there are two things I'm going to mention. And the first is this.

That the blessed man who has the successful encounter with temptation is the man who is entirely passive as far as the temptation is concerned. He's simply subjected to it. He's the victim of it.

He's a great fan. But he's just passive. And the second thing is that he's more active.

Active engagement. Or active pride. With that which is proposed in the temptation.

There's no happy end. There's no constant. It's separate and tightly constant.

No, no. That's what is blessed. It is the resistance.

It's the resistance. It's the repulsion. It's the heart.

It's the mind. It's the will. It has to be from all things and things.

That's the blessed issue. That's the blessed man. But what our Lord said just on the eve of his crucifixion.

The rest of this world shall live nothing in me. He has nothing in me. That is to say, the rest of this world will come when he's busy with temptation.

And he was subjected to temptation, remember, my friends, with an intensity that no one else ever knew or did know. The rest of this world shall come, but he has nothing in me. The rest of this world will have

nothing in me.

There was no, there was no, there was no in-and-out. There was no failure in our Lord for the sympathetic and forgiveness of that which the great arch-enemy was to propose. Oh, you see how different it was.

How different in the case of Eve. Don't read that chapter again, the third chapter of Genesis. I'm not going to get into that.

The one holy conference between Christ and our Lord himself. What was our Lord's reaction? Get behind the section. Tell our Lord, send us away.

But our Savior is not the things that be of flesh, but the things that be of man. That's instant recoil. Instant revulsion.

Instant rejection. Not any information towards the solicitation. But in the case of Eve, you have this healing, darling.

This purging, if it were. Experimenting, shall we say, with the temptations. Then there was the catastrophe.

The great original catastrophe of human history. If you have not thought of it before, if you have not read the book of Job with a good deal of discrimination, I would advise you to read the 23rd chapter very carefully. The 23rd chapter of the book of Job, which I think points at the resistance which Job offered to the temptations.

Job was an upright man. And it is said of him that he really endured the temptations. He inherited the patience of Job.

That is the endurance of Job. And we have seen the end of the Lord. But the Lord is very pitiful and of tenderness to sheep, and repentant to Eve.

Job did endure, notwithstanding all his complaining. Notwithstanding all of our state of temptation, he did not have his mouth. He did not have his lips.

He had his lips with him. But he endured. He inherited the endurance of Job.

Look at the 23rd chapter. And the 10th verse. I'll read from the earlier verses.

Behold, I go forward, but he is not there. And backward, but I cannot perceive him. On the left hand, where he doth work, but I cannot behold him.

He hideth himself on the right hand, but I cannot see him. Woe is me! But he doth pray that I take. When he has cried me, I shall come forth and go.

My feet put up healthy steps. His way have I kept, and not declined. I have not gone back.

Neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips. I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food. That's it.

My feet have healthy steps. His way have I kept, and not declined. And that's the secret of a successful issue with temptation.

With that very thing which began in the human race with the temptation of the serpent as the instrument of the green gods. That's the successful issue in Europe. That's the subject to it.

But no one can call us to go on down the avenue. No one can contest for this history. We've got to.

That is the secret. I speak constantly. I do not.

As long as we do not give it our consent. We have the essence. We have our heart.

We have our mind. And now what is the reward? Blessed is the man that endures the temptation, for he is tried. No, that word tried means approved.

He has what he has endured. He has what he has given his consent. He has brought all the victims to the temptation.

He's not approved. He's tried. He receives his reward.

What is the reward? The crown of life. And that is the crown that consists in life. Oh, see.

Every athlete, if he completes his course to success, receives his reward. He receives, perhaps it may be a crown. And, no doubt, in the Orient that was frequently the case, but at least in many areas that was frequently the case.

How does the reward of his success become? That's the figure that the inspired writer used. He shall receive the crown, but it is a crown that consists in life. And, you know, here again we have an immeasurable combination that is established by divine law.

But where there is righteousness, there is the reward of life. Just as there is sin, there is the wages of death. So where there is righteousness, where there is integrity, there is the immeasurable consequence of life.

And if it is pursued to the end, it is life everlasting. It is the crown of life. Just as the apostle Paul called life worth the crown of righteousness, because wherever there is righteousness, there is life.

That's the reward. Now, in conclusion, what is our attitude to temptation? We're all familiar with it. Oh, even the little children.

I've been naming children that have grown two or three years. They know perfectly well, following life and seeking whom he may be bound. He's going about sometimes, even at the very end of his life, so that he might deceive, if it were possible, even the elect.

Yes. Temptation from all forces. Temptation from your own.

Temptation from your companions, from your associates in the world. Temptations from the practices that are conducted in the business world. Temptations arising from political influence.

Temptations from all sorts that are engineered, that are devised in heaven. And we all know one way or another what temptation is. What is our attitude to it? Is our attitude that of brinkmanship, to apply a word which has become so familiar in the international world? Is your attitude brinkmanship? Oh, my friends, if it's that of brinkmanship, you don't know what temptation, what sort of power there is in temptation.

You don't know that of your own heart. It's not brinkmanship. No.

Can a man make fire in his prison when his clothes can't be burned? Can a man lock up a hot dog stall when his feet can't be burned? Can evil publications cause the grass to expire? No. It's not because we've died with temptation. But it persists in the grace of the Lord.

And the more we know our temptation, the more we shall appreciate the sufficiency, the almightiness of the Lord God King who entered into that great, unique conduct of the archbishop who came out victorious. Because he resisted, you know. He resisted temptation.

The Prince of Israel came and found nothing in him. And, my friends, the more we know of the power of temptation, and the deceitfulness of lust, the more we understand that to give will be the almighty honor of the Redeemer. The almighty honor of him who himself, while he has a thousand powers, who made us all so mortally triumphant over the many deaths, and who tried to replace our enemies with the triumphant chariots of his cross.

That's the great blessing. My grace is sufficient for me. My strength is made perfect for me.

Oh, my dear young friends, I speak to you, not exclusively, but it is. My dear young friends, remember that you need us in your life. You need the almighty honor of him who destroyed them at the power of death.

And that is what I need. The older I grow, the more I grow. And must rely upon the almighty honor of him who himself withdrew the tide of temptation of all those who couldn't have trusted him.

God is our refuge and strength, our best and our helpful support. Therefore do not be feared from the earth, dear boys, for the harvest will carry you to the midst of the sea. My dear young friends, put your hands into the hands of the Redeemer, for as weak you may be, he will make you powerless if you give in.

He will make you weak if you give in. He will make you sane with his righteousness. And he will make you sane with his almighty intercession.

Put your hands into the hands of the Redeemer, however weak your hands may be, however weak the response of your faith may be. Remember, it is not upon the strength of your faith that you will rise, but upon the almighty strength, the almighty honor of him into whose hand you put your weak hand and your weak and sinful heart. My little children, give me thy heart, and if you give it to Christ, give it to him who has the custody of the soul, who has the security, that belongs to him, because he hath ascended up from the fire, he has shed captivity captive, he has received witness of faith.

And young and old and middle-aged, all let us realize in you the preciousness of an almighty Savior as we enter into the fires of temptation, that we may also have your blessed vision, who blessed is the man of temptation. And when ye strive, ye shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to men of love. Let us pray.

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