

# Covind-19 ■ Overcoming the Special Temptations of This Time

by Zac Poonen

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*This sermon delves into the temptations faced by Jesus in Matthew chapter four and how they can be applied to our lives today. It emphasizes the importance of walking in God's will, being led by the Holy Spirit, and not succumbing to temptations that lead us away from God. The sermon also highlights the need to prioritize God over money, pleasure, power, and honor, and to seek the right things in the right way, avoiding shortcuts and compromising values.*

**Scripture:** Matthew 4:1, Luke 4:1, Hebrews 13:5, Malachi 4:6

**Topics:** "Temptation", "Prioritizing God"

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## Description

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## Transcript

People around the world are on this coronavirus that is spread all over. I thought of looking at the three temptations of Jesus in Matthew chapter four and see how they apply to us for this time. So if you turn with me to Matthew chapter four, where we read that Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by Satan.

It's interesting to see that although temptation is from Satan, trials can be from Satan. It's the Holy Spirit who led Jesus. That must be with a purpose and that's exactly the same with us.

The first thing we need to remember that any trial or temptation that we face, remember if you're walking in the will of God, the Holy Spirit is the one who's led you there. Of course, if you disobey the Holy Spirit, you can land yourself in temptations that God never intended you to face and that's why we pray in the Lord's Prayer, lead us not into trial that's too much for us. Lead us not into temptation.

So if we are seeking to do God's will to the best of our ability, the Holy Spirit will still lead us through trials and it's very interesting to see the parallel passage to this in Luke chapter 4, where the temptation is also

described there. If you turn for a moment there, Jesus, verse 1, chapter of Luke 4, 1, was led by the Spirit in the wilderness and then he was tempted for 40 days and at the end of the temptation, it says in Luke 4, 14, he returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit. Led by the Spirit, tempted by the devil, returns in the power of the Spirit.

That's a good line for us to remember. It's the Holy Spirit who allows us to face trials even at this time. God is in control of this world and when we pray our Father who art in heaven, we are acknowledging there's one up above who is our Father who loves us and who is also running the universe.

So that we must always remember. He will not allow us, 1 Corinthians 10, 13, ever, ever to be tested beyond our ability. For many of you, there may not be a severe test in terms of money or food or things like that, but I think of many poor brothers in CFC churches in the villages in India who are tested even in that area in terms of food and finances when when there is no work, they don't earn, and food is not always readily available.

But I believe in their case also, they are children of God. God will not allow any one of them to be tested beyond their ability, but God will make a way of escape. It's a wonderful thing to believe that in whichever country we live in, whichever time of history we live in, whatever pandemic or tsunami or any other problems, earthquakes or famines, whatever may come, our Father who loves us still runs this universe and he'll never forsake us.

So if Jesus was tempted and tested, so we also have to be because he's our forerunner. And in times like this, it's good to remember that, that the Holy Spirit will be with us as he was with Jesus in throughout that temptation. And then we read after he fasted for 40 days, he was hungry.

So Jesus obeyed God 100% in everything, and yet he was hungry. Is it possible for a person who's obeying God a hundred percent to be hungry sometimes, to lack something, lack food here or could be something else some other time? Yes. So don't think that when you lack something earthly that you need, you're out of the will of God.

No. Jesus lacked food at this time, but he was not out of the will of God. He was in the center of God's perfect will.

It was a trial. And when you, God allows you to go through some situation where you lack something, just see it as a trial. Jesus has gone ahead of you and he will be with you.

He'll never leave you and offer safety. So as we look at these temptations, in each of these three temptations, we see two temptations. So the first one, he was hungry, and the test was one of survival.

Isn't that what a lot of people are thinking of today? So many people are dying around us. Survival. How shall we survive in this time? Well, Jesus faced that temptation also.

And when the devil came to him and said, hey, turn these stones into bread and you can survive. Jesus replied in Matthew 4.4, man does not live on bread alone. We don't survive merely by having our physical needs met.

Very important to understand at this time. We don't survive merely by being healed and protected from disease and sickness. That's not survival.

The fact that when this pandemic is over, to have come through it without getting sick or dying, is that survival? No. Survival is if we have lived in faith and at rest throughout this period. Then we have survived.

Otherwise, we have sort of struggled and scraped our way through. I don't want to struggle and scrape my way through this trial. I want to survive in triumph.

I want to be more than a conqueror by the time this trial is over. And the only way to do that is to listen to what Jesus said. Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.

Proceeds is present continuous tense, not past tense. The Bible is God's Word that proceeded from God's mouth through many servants of His thousands of years ago. But there's a word that proceeds from God's mouth.

As we read the Bible, it must come from God to us. You know, faith does not come by the Word of God. If you read carefully, Romans 10, 17 says, faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of Christ.

So don't jump that hearing part and go straight to faith comes by the Word of Christ. No. Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of Christ.

In other words, when I take the Word of Christ, which is the New Testament, particularly, I must hear in that. Otherwise, I don't get faith. So man is to live by faith.

We are called to live by faith, and that faith comes through hearing the Word of God every day, all the time, continuously. So here was a temptation from the devil to Jesus to move when he had not heard a word from the Lord, to move ahead of God's time. And Jesus said, no, I've not heard a word from my Father to turn stones to bread, or to make bread in this way.

No, and I will not move, even if I'm hungry. I will not move. I'll move in obedience to the Father.

There was another time when bread was needed, when 5,000 people were hungry. Yeah, then he heard the Father and he obeyed. So let me turn you to a verse in Isaiah chapter 50, which tells us how Jesus lived.

Isaiah chapter 50, and verse 4, in the middle of that verse, it says, whenever Jesus woke up in the morning, this is how he responded to that waking up. My Father has woken me up. He awakens me morning by morning, and he awakens my ear to listen.

That's a good way for all of us to wake up every morning, or even if you wake up in the middle of the night, to say, my Father woke me up now. He's got something to say to me, and I want my inner ear to be alert, to listen. To listen as a disciple, it says here, Isaiah 50, verse 4. That means to listen in order to obey what he told me, not just to listen to accumulate knowledge, not just to listen so that I can preach next week on what I heard today, what I studied in the Bible.

All that is seeking honor, but to listen as a disciple. A lot of preachers read the Bible to get something to preach. In my younger days, I did that, but as I grew up, I realized that's not the main thing.

I must listen as a disciple. It's for me to do something to obey God that God speaks to me. Remember that.

And then from all that he speaks to you, he may give you something to share with others too, but it would have been written in your life first, then you would speak it, then you won't be a hypocrite. But if you only listen in order to preach to others or share with others, you'll end up as a hypocrite. I'll tell you that, or to get honor for yourself.

So he awakens me morning by morning to listen, and I want to give you the example of someone else in the Old Testament. In the book of Job, chapter 23, it was not only Jesus who esteemed God's Word more than food. You know, when you're hungry after 40 days of fasting, to say, I still want God's Word, not food, is really something.

Now Job said, in chapter 23 of Job, in verse 12, I have treasured the words of God's mouth more than my necessary food. More than my necessary food. It's quite a word.

And remember, Job didn't have a Bible. No, the book of Job is the first book of the Bible written. So he lived 500 years before Moses wrote Genesis.

So this is the first book of the Bible written, and he didn't have any Bible. So what does he mean by, I've treasured the words of his mouth? Where did he hear the words of God's mouth? His inner ear was open. And probably he heard with the ear also God may have spoken to him like he spoke to Abraham.

But certainly his inner ear was open to hear what God had to say. And his attitude was, that's more important to me than my necessary food. He had that attitude day after day after day.

That's why God said to Satan, there's no one like Job on the face of the earth. You know, God can say that about you and me also. If you have that same attitude every day, he awakens me up to listen and esteem the words of his mouth more than my necessary food.

God's Word is more important to me than my breakfast this morning. God's Word is more important to me than the food I eat today. I'll tell you something, if you have that attitude, you can be pretty sure that when Satan comes and tries you like he tried Job, you'll come out as an overcomer.

And it says God bless Job double at the end, and he'll bless you double too. But that's because of that attitude. It's that attitude that helped him to be an overcomer when he saw all his property gone, all his children dead.

So that's the first thing in these days that we need to recognize, that I must move, I must listen to God all the time. He awakens me morning by morning, not just to read the Bible for 15 minutes, but to have a listening ear all the time, like these police officers have in their police cars, a phone or a walkie-talkie, a phone I think that connects to their headquarters, and all the time it's on, you can't turn it off. Anytime a word may come saying, go to that street.

I believe every Christian should have that attitude, and that's possible because of the gift of the Holy Spirit. And if I take that attitude, Lord I want to listen to your Word all the time, then we will be overcomers, because God's Word helps us to overcome. So that's one thing that we need to see here in this verse, to listen to God.

You remember what the Lord told Martha in Luke chapter 10? That's a word that God spoken to my heart for more than 55 years. In Luke 10 42, when Martha was busy serving God, serving Jesus, cooking for Him, and Mary was sitting at Jesus' feet listening to His Word, and Martha came and complained to Jesus

saying, why is Mary not helping me? Listen to Jesus. Martha, you're worried about many things.

You're worried about serving me, but do you know that serving me and doing things for me is not as important as listening to me? How many people have understood that? A lot of people are busy witnessing, preaching, going here, going there, and the Lord says to them, do you know that listening to me is more important than even serving me? Some of you may feel a bit guilty that you're not serving the Lord enough. You're not witnessing enough. You're not traveling here and there preaching the Word of God.

I'll tell you something that's more important than that. Luke 10 42. One thing is needful, and that is not serving the Lord, because Martha was serving the Lord.

Mary has chosen the good part, Luke 10 42, and that is not serving the Lord Jesus, but listening to the Lord Jesus. Have you understood that? It will deliver you from all the sense of guilt that I'm not doing something for the Lord. Ask yourself, are you listening? That's the thing that will help us to survive.

Survival is not by anything else. Man shall live survival by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God all the time. Now the second temptation that is here is to, it was a subtle temptation to Jesus to use the power God had given him for his own needs.

That's what Satan was saying, hey, 40 days ago you were baptized and the voice from heaven said, you are the beloved Son and the Holy Spirit came upon you. You have power now. Use that power for your own need, which is food.

And Jesus said, no, I will not use it for my own need. God gives us his power to serve others. The gifts of the Spirit are all meant for others, every one of them.

When God gives us the gifts of the Spirit, it is not anything for myself. It's not even to get honor for myself. It is to serve others.

So Jesus never used his power to make bread for himself, but he did use that power later on to feed the 5,000, to produce bread supernaturally. So the devil can tempt us also if God has given you something, some ability, some power, to use it for yourself. Why don't you use that for yourself? Get some honor.

Satisfy your need there. It may not be a need for food, it may be a need for honor. Say, no, I will not do that.

So to sum it all up, we need to keep a good conscience all the time if you want to be able to hear God's voice. You read in the book of Hebrews in chapter 5 of people to whom the apostle writes, whoever wrote Hebrews, Hebrews 5.11 concerning Jesus. He's talking about Jesus who came as a man.

The theme of Hebrews is Jesus as a man whom we can follow. And he talks about his being tempted like us in Hebrews 4.15 and then he goes on to say concerning Jesus as a man and how you can actually follow him. There's so much we have to say in Hebrews 5.11. There's much we have to say, but it's very hard to explain to you.

Why is that? Is it because they lack intelligence? No, they're very intelligent people, but they are dull of hearing in their hearts. Their conscience has become dull. When we don't keep our conscience carefully, we become dull of hearing.

We may be very clever, we may know a lot of the Bible, but we will not hear God's voice. To hear God's voice, to prevent ourselves from ever becoming dull of hearing, there's one thing we need to do. Keep your conscience clear.

And I believe this is very important. In times like this when we have so much time at home, it's good to meditate and see whether there's anything that's making our conscience dull that's making us deaf. Dear brothers and sisters, let me tell you it is God's will that you should be able to hear God's voice every single day and many times during the day.

That is my passion for a long time. And little by little, I come to the place where God speaks to my heart many times during the day, even without reading the Bible. You read the Bible for a little while in the morning, but God wants to speak to you every day.

But keep your conscience clear. Because if I, if God says, if God speaks to me in my conscience and I don't listen, then my hearing becomes dull. John says in Revelation 1 that he heard the Lord's voice like a trumpet.

So it's not that God doesn't speak. God's voice is like a trumpet we read in Revelation 1. But a person who's deaf can't even hear the trumpet. That is unfortunately the condition of so many people.

That's why Paul gave a statement like this which I would encourage all of you to remember and practice. Acts of the Apostles chapter 24 verse 16. He said, I do my best to always maintain a blameless conscience before God and before men.

So because he did that all the time, 24-7, he kept his conscience clear. So God kept on speaking to Paul and that's how Paul could write these wonderful letters. I believe God loves us just like he loved Paul.

But many Christians don't keep their conscience clear. That's why they don't seem to be able to hear what God has to say to them. And you know if you read that Isaiah 50 verse 4, it says the Lord God wakes me up every morning.

That same verse it says, and he gave me a tongue to share that with others. So when God speaks to us, his desire is that we bless others with it. So that's the first thing.

When we think of survival, the world is thinking of survival at this time. Remember survival comes through hearing God's voice continuously. Then we go to the second temptation.

We read here, the devil took him to the holy city, Matthew chapter 4 verse 5, and made him stand on the pinnacle of the temple and said, if you're the son of God, throw yourself down because it is written. You know, because Jesus had quoted the verse from Deuteronomy 8 saying, it is written, man shall not live by bread alone. The devil said, ah, you quote the scripture, here's another scripture.

Jump off from the roof of the temple because it is written, Matthew 4 6, he will command his angels concerning you and they will bear you up on their hands and you will not strike your foot against a stone. So don't be afraid, you won't die if you go jump from this height. What's the temptation here? The temptation is to tempt God, to try shortcuts, tempting God.

If God has provided stairs in the temple, the temptation is don't use the stairs, jump from the roof, take a shortcut. That is tempting God. You know, we spoke earlier about the first thing we need to do is to trust

God.

Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of Christ. So the danger of there is some people can say, okay, I'm going to live by faith. I'm not going to take medicine.

There are Christians who do that. Jesus can heal me. Jesus can ask and you shall receive.

So if I'm sick, I just ask and Jesus will heal me. I don't need to take medicine. That's like saying, I won't use the stairs.

I won't use the stairs. I'll just jump from here and trust the Lord to protect me. And people who have done that have died.

I know a new number of people in India, pastors who believe that Jesus would heal them who died because they wouldn't take medicine. They wouldn't use the stairs. They jumped off the roof.

So we're not, so faith does not mean we do something foolish. Faith and reason go together. Our reason is not contrary to faith.

Reason is not a gift of Satan. Reason is a gift of God. So remember this, the balance that we don't avoid means.

God has always provided means. And where means are provided, we must avail of them. For example, if you're in some jungle where you're sick and no medicine is available, then you can trust God to heal you without medicine.

But where medicines are available, you may make use of that. And the same thing applies to the rules the government makes, for example, at this time, to keep a little distance so that you don't infect one another. It's a matter of consideration.

And there also a lot of people can act stupid, saying, no, no, no, I trust God and God will protect me. It doesn't matter if I go here and there, even if I go near somebody who's sick, I'm not going to get it. That is stupidity.

So we can go to one extreme in these things and go to the other extreme. It's true that God has determined the length of our life. I've often taught that.

Turn to Psalm 139. I never hesitate pointing out this verse to everybody. Psalm 139.

And it says here about the time when God formed us in our mother's womb. Psalm 139, 13. You roll me in my mother's womb.

And then it says in verse 16, while I was in my mother's womb, in your mind, Lord, you had already determined how many days I should live on this earth. All the days. Not that this man should live for so many years, but the exact number of days that he's supposed to live.

I believe that with all my heart, that God determined the exact number of days I should live on this earth before I was born. Psalm 139, verse 16. So does that mean that I cannot tempt God and say, well, if that's determined, nothing's going to happen to me if I take some risks and don't take medicines and I go near people who've got coronavirus and I won't die.

That is stupidity. Faith and reason go together. That is a misquoting of scripture.

So what did Jesus do when Satan quoted this verse saying, it is written. Jesus said, verse 7, on the other hand, it is also written. So Jesus quoted another scripture to balance the other one.

He didn't say what Satan said was wrong, but he said that scripture, but there's another scripture that balances it. And if you don't take both of them together, you'll be imbalanced and you'll go astray. So we become perfect through seeing this script, this verse and that verse.

You know the verse in 2nd Timothy in chapter 3, which says that all scripture is inspired by God. 2nd Timothy 3, 16. All scripture.

And it's profitable to teach us, to reprove us, rebuke us, correct us, train us in righteousness, so that the man of God will be perfect in his own life and equipped for good works to serve others. All scripture. In other words, if I just take my favorite scriptures, I will not be able to fulfill God's purpose.

That's why it's so important, my brothers and sisters, to get to know the Word of God. And when you have time at home and you're not going to work, you have plenty of free time, don't waste it. Use these days to know all scripture.

Ask God to teach you. Listen to messages that explain the Word of God. In the CFC website, we have a number of teaching videos and audios.

Go and listen to them. Discipline yourself to take a little time to get to know the Word of God and make it a habit throughout your life. Because otherwise, the devil can trick you with the scripture.

He tried to tempt Jesus with the scripture. You think he won't tempt you with the scripture? To lead you astray? To make you miss the will of God? Sure. So, we're not to tempt God at this time by saying we'll take risks.

We must use our common sense. And the second temptation involved in this temptation number two, I told you there are two in every temptation. The first is to tempt God.

And the second is, the implication here is, if you jump down from the roof of the temple, you know all those people down at the bottom and the ground level, they will see you descending without getting hurt and they will accept you as the Messiah. It is seeking honor by tempting God. That's the second temptation.

I'm going to do something spectacular now. And that's what some foolish Christians, preachers are doing right now. Even though the government has said, you must not have a gathering of more than five people or ten people in some places, there are a couple of pastors, at least I heard of, who within the last few days said, no, we're going to run our church service.

If the hospital is an essential service, the church is an essential service. Sounds reasonable. But what do they do? They gather people together and then people get sick.

That is tempting God. And why are they doing it? Because that pastor, that preacher, gets his name and photograph come up in the news. He becomes famous around the country.

And there are plenty of foolish Christians to admire him. That's what he wants. So here's the temptation that came to Jesus.

Jump down and get honor for yourself. And that temptation is also there at this time, to do something foolish in order to get some honor for yourself. So we must obey the government's rules.

The Bible says in Romans chapter 13, Romans chapter 13, every person, Romans 13 verse 1, every person, he's talking to Christians, must be subject to the governing authorities. He's written to the Romans. And do you know who was the governing authority in Rome at that time? An evil emperor called Nero, who hated Christians.

But God had allowed him to rule, so he got to obey the laws. Every person must be subject to the governing authorities because there is no authority except from God. And those who exist are established by God.

And therefore, if you resist what the authority tells you to do, you're opposing the commandment of God. How many people realize that when you oppose the government reasonable laws, you're opposing God? That's what those pastors who disobeyed God didn't realize. They're claiming the founding fathers have given us freedom, but not freedom to disobey government laws which are meant to protect people.

Because you may have faith. What about the other people you make sick by calling them all to a church service? And those who oppose God like this, Romans 13, 2, will receive a condemnation upon themselves. And they get sick.

And they deserve it. So rulers, you don't have to fear rulers. They are not a cause for fear for good behavior, but for evil.

Do you want to live without any fear of authority? Then do what is good. For that ruler, that authority, is a servant of God for your good. And if he bears the sword of punishment, he's doing it as a servant of God.

It's an amazing place where it says the authorities that rule our country are servants of God. So therefore, don't do something foolish or stupid at this time just to prove your own faith and get some honor for yourself. A lot of problems are solved when we die to our own honor and seek the glory of God.

Okay, I'll give you the example of Jesus himself. We read of a time in John chapter 7, verse 1. Listen to this. How does it sound? John 7, verse 1. Jesus was walking in Galilee and he did not walk in Judea.

Why? Because the Jews were trying to kill him. He said, Lord, are you scared? Doesn't God control your number of days? Can somebody kill you before God's time? No? Then go. Don't be afraid.

He used his reason. When people are trying to kill me somewhere, why should I go there? If God leads me to go, I'll go. Otherwise, I don't go.

That's common sense. That's the use of reason along with faith. So, Lord, why are you not going to Judea? Because they are seeking to kill him.

John 7, verse 1. That's why he didn't go. The Holy Spirit says that. But a little later, we read in John chapter 7 and verse 10, same chapter, that the Lord, the Father spoke to him.

Now, go. Then what did he do? Then he went to Judea, the very place where people were trying to kill him. He went because now he was led by the Father.

Now, that makes a world of difference. If God supernaturally leads you to go to Afghanistan, go. But don't go on your own with some type of human zeal.

Human zeal, you'll get killed. But if you're led by God, God will protect you. He'll fulfill his will for your life.

So, when God led him, he went. And then what happened? People tried to catch him. You read in verse 30.

It's a very interesting verse. John 7, verse 30. They were trying to seize him, to kill him.

But no one could touch him because his hour had not yet come. So, you see, when he followed the leading of God, his Father, then God protected him. But if he had gone without the leading of the Father, that would be different.

In fact, it's the same instruction he gave to his disciples that he gives to us, for example, in Matthew chapter 10 and verse... He's telling them to go and preach the gospel in every place and, you know, I'm sending you out as sheep in the midst of wolves, Matthew 10, 16. And you must be shrewd as serpents, be wise, don't be foolish. And what is one part of that wisdom? When, Matthew 10, 23, when they persecute you in one city, don't stand there boldly and say, I'm going to stand here and be a witness.

No. Go to the next city. Not just go.

Flee. You know what flee means? Flee means run away. Hey, are you scared? No, I'm not scared.

It's common sense. If they're persecuting me in one city, why should I stand there and allow them to kill me? Let me go to the next city. I want to live to preach the gospel.

These are the instructions of Jesus. When they persecute you in one city, flee to the next one. Unless, like in John 7, God says stay there.

So that's... I want to say that because a lot of people think faith and common sense are opposite to each other. They are not. Common sense is not from the devil.

Common sense is given to us by God of reason. Faith supersedes it, but where God does not lead us in any particular way, we use our common sense. Very, very important to understand, especially at this particular time.

Okay, now we go to the third temptation in Matthew 4. There again, there are two temptations there. First of all, the third temptation, the devil says, the devil shows him all the kingdoms of the world, by glory, verse 8, and says, all this I will give you if you fall down and worship me. Matthew 4, verse 8 and 9. So, what's the first temptation here? The attraction of the things in the world.

Money, pleasure, power, honor. The devil says, I can give you this, but sometimes we don't realize that those who pursue after these things usually get it by bowing the knee to Satan in some place or the other. Take the matter of money.

If you have a craze for money and you don't put God above money in your life, you'll almost certainly one day do something slightly wrong to get a little more money. You'll compromise somewhere, unless you've made a decision in your life, I will never put money above God. In fact, I will only serve God.

Money will be my slave. See, money is a wonderful servant, but a terrible master. It's like fire.

Fire is a wonderful servant. How can we cook food? Fire is the one we use. We get heat by fire in cold times, but it's a terrible master if it burns up your house.

You've got to keep fire under control. You keep the fire under control in your gas stove. You keep the fire under control in your fireplace.

You don't let it take over the whole house. It'll destroy you. That's the picture of money.

Keep money in its proper place as your servant, like you turn off the gas stove. Turn off that occupation with money when your work is done. Otherwise, it'll take over your house and burn you up completely.

It's a wonderful servant, but a terrible master. And so also, and you don't realize very often that when people have this craze to get more and more, they very often compromise something or the other. Tell a small lie here.

People, for example, in other countries who want to get a visa to the United States. Tell a little lie here, or get admission to a college. Tell a little lie and get this benefit.

So it's a great temptation. And you read a great example in Moses. Why did God use Moses? I'll tell you.

There's a principle there which is the way in which he uses other people today as well. God tested Moses when he was in Pharaoh's palace. He tested Moses in three areas.

Will you bow down to Satan and get money, pleasure, and honor and power? Three things. Moses said no to all three. See Hebrews chapter 11.

It says here in verse 24, when Moses was grown up, number one, he refused the honor of being known as the son of Pharaoh's daughter. He could have become the next Pharaoh. Ruler of the world.

Honor, position, power. No. And then he rejected, verse 25, the passing pleasures of sin.

The Bible says in that verse that there is pleasure in sin. If you didn't believe it, read Hebrews 10.25. 11.25, sorry. There is pleasure in sin, but it also says it's a passing pleasure.

All the pleasures that you get from sin, think of all the pleasures there are in sinful things. They are a passing pleasure. There is pleasure, but it's a passing pleasure.

And Moses recognized it and said, I don't want the honor of the world to be Pharaoh's, to be next Pharaoh. I don't want the pleasures of sin. And thirdly, he rejected, verse 26, the treasures of Egypt.

Wealth. These are the three things that a lot of people seek for even today. Money, pleasures of sin, and position, and power, and honor.

And it's because Moses rejected them. He'd been taught that from childhood by his mother. You're not to live for these things.

And that's why 30 years later, when he was 40 years old in Egypt, he retained what he had heard from his mother, and he stood against these three things. There's a great lesson for us to teach our children and drill into their minds the emptiness of this world and to live for God. 30 years later, they'll remember it if

you have taught your children properly at this time.

That's why it's so important to teach children God's ways at a very young age. So that's the first thing the devil told Jesus. I'll give you all of this if you fall down and worship me.

And Jesus said no. All the things that... Jesus earned money as a carpenter, sure, but he earned it honestly. His aim was not to become the richest carpenter in Nazareth.

How could he do that? I mean, if some poor widow wanted him to make a stool or something for her, he would go there and tell her, you can have it. I don't want to charge you for it. How would such a person become the richest carpenter in Nazareth? His aim was to bless people, not to make money.

He earned enough to support himself and the seven people in his home, his four brothers, two sisters, and his widowed mother, but he didn't pursue after money. He knew how to keep money under his feet. Gold is a good thing.

There's a lovely verse in Genesis chapter 2, which says the gold of that land is good. In Eden, gold is good. You read that sometimes.

In heaven, gold is good, but the gold is under your feet in heaven. The streets are made of gold. That's the difference between heaven and this earth.

On earth, people put gold on their head as a crown and around their neck, but in heaven, gold is under the feet. They walk on streets of gold, and I say that when you learn to put gold under your feet, you're ready for heaven. If you have not learned to do that yet, you're not yet ready for heaven.

If gold is still on your head and in your mind, you're not ready for heaven, my brother, my sister. You've got to learn. This earth, God's testing you to learn to put it under your feet.

Maybe you're earning money, but that's fine. Use it, but use it wisely and never become a slave to it. So that's the thing, because when you do that, it's invariably by bowing the knee to the devil somewhere or the other.

You may not do something wrong, but you can do so many extra things to make more money than you need, and that extra time is time you could have spent with God's Word. I remember when I was in the Navy, and I was earning a very good salary, and I had ambitions. I said, I'm not going to live for that.

I spent all my days, my spare time, studying God's Word, and that's what's helped me so much today. You put God's Word above money and all the things of earth, you will, God will have a purpose. He'll be able to fulfill his purpose for you, but if you don't do that unconsciously, you'll be bowing the knee to Satan somewhere.

So we've got to be very careful now, because so many people's mind is not occupied with money. That's why it's relevant for our time. People are wondering, the stock market has crashed, and things are getting expensive.

We've got to hoard, we've got to hoard, we've got to hoard, otherwise we won't survive. Their mind is so much on money and material things, and very often the way they get it is like, it just indicates very often that somewhere or the other they're bowing the knee to Satan. It makes them worried and anxious, bowing the knee to Satan.

The second temptation here is to get a right thing in a wrong way. Jesus had come to earth to get the kingdoms of the world for God, verse 8. He showed him all the kingdoms of the world, and it's as it were, he was saying, hey, you come from heaven to get all this for God, right? Well, I'll give it to you by a shortcut. You don't have to go that long way of the cross.

Come and bow down to me, I'll give it to you, to get the right thing in a wrong way. That's another temptation that can come to us now. There are shortages and so many things.

To get a right thing in a wrong way. I don't know how that will apply in your case, but let's take these warnings. Lord, I never want to get a right thing in a wrong way.

If I get what is right, I must get it in the way I get it. So many Christians compromise in little, little things to get what is right, but in a wrong way. May God help us.

Well, that's a little gist I gave you, but you can spend more time meditating on that chapter, and asking the Lord to apply that to your life, and say, Lord, how does this apply to my life? What I heard today. Let me repeat again. The first temptation was to move without God's meaning.

Don't listen to God. Just move ahead. And the second temptation there was, use the power God has given you to meet your own needs.

Then in the second temptation, the first temptation was to tempt God by taking shortcuts. Don't use the stairs. Jump off and claim the promises.

Do something foolish like that. Jesus said no. And the third is, you know, if you come down and land there, you get honor.

Seeking honor. There are people seeking that at this time as well. And the third temptation is the attraction of money, position, honor, which if you seek for, you may end up bowing the knee to Satan, and the temptation to get a right thing in a wrong way.

So let's meditate on these things and say, Lord, I want to use this time of trial, and also a time when I've got plenty of free time to be with my family, to build relationships at home with my family, and build that up. And I may not get another opportunity like this. So may God help all of us.

Put family above money and other things. God bless you all. Can we bow our heads and pray? Our Heavenly Father, I thank you.

We thank you for the example of Jesus who has gone ahead of us in everything. And there's so much a wealth of revelation in your Word, even in a small passage of just 11 verses. Help us, Lord, to live by your Word every day.

To know the, to be alert to the temptations of Satan when he tries to tell us to take shortcuts, and to ignore reason, to do stupid things, to be alert to that. And the temptation to get right things in a wrong way. Please help us to be alert, Lord, sensitive to the voice of the Holy Spirit.

Help us in these days, we pray in Jesus' name. Amen. Before I close, I want to point you to this picture above my head.

It's a very challenging picture. It's about the early Christians who, when they stood for the Lord, they were brought into this big amphitheater in Rome and thrown to the lions. And there they are in the middle.

Some of them are crucified on crosses around that amphitheater. But there, those who were caught, who would not deny the faith, men and women, kneeling down and praying. And the lion and the tiger have been loosed from their cages to come and bite them and kill them.

A great example. These are our brothers and sisters who lived in Rome about 1,900-2,000 years ago. And we are to follow in their footsteps.

One day we're going to meet them. I tell you, you'll meet them one day when you get to heaven. And they'll tell you their stories.

I hope you'll have a story to tell of your faithfulness to the Lord as well in that day. Amen. Thank you.

I was wondering if any of the children are scared about the lions eating Christians. I think in those days, those children were among the bravest who said, we love Jesus. We're ready to face anything.

Because, you know, God gives grace at that time. I wouldn't be able to face it if God didn't give me grace at that time. No, none of us can face such a trial.

But it says, my grace is sufficient for you. Even the smallest child will experience a remarkable boldness and grace if such a time ever comes. I believe that.

It's very foolish to take verses like this from the Old Testament and apply them to today. You know, people are, they're looking for something spectacular to try and get honor for themselves. I tell you, live by the words of Jesus Christ.

I will never leave you, nor forsake you. Hebrews 13. Be content.

There's a great verse which I can give to all of you at this time. And that's Hebrews 13, which says, be content with such things as you have. Hebrews 13, verse 5. Because the Lord has said, I will never leave you.

I will never forsake you. So we can boldly say, the Lord is my helper. I will not be afraid.

What will man do to me? I'm not interested to find out whether prophet is Italy of today. To me, that's not what I'm interested in. I want to hear what the Lord is saying to my heart.

And I know what the Lord is saying to my heart, that he will never leave me, nor forsake me. And so I say, you guys can believe what you like. If somebody sends a message like that to me, that doesn't apply to me.

I live by Hebrews 13, verse 5 and 6. The Lord is my helper. I will not be afraid. Whatever man can do to me, wherever I live.

And I believe true children of God who live in Italy can trust God as well. Or who live in China, or anywhere. Because Jesus said, the hairs on your head are numbered.

And Jesus said, two sparrows are sold for one cent. Even one of them will not be forsaken. And I see the birds flying in the air.

They remind me that God is still feeding them and caring for them. And Jesus said, you're more value than many sparrows. We need to live by the words of Jesus at this time.

And not by these people who pick up strange verses out of the Old Testament and teach all types of foolish things. I'm glad you asked that question, because I'm sure the answer will help many others too. Never hesitate to ask a question.

When the Bible speaks about the old man in Romans 6, the old man is the man who wants to sin. The new man is not the one who does not sin, but who does not want to sin. The want to is what determines whether you're old man or new man.

The old man wants to sin. The new man does not want to sin. But the new man falls.

I use the example of a pig and a cat. A pig loves the muck and the mire, and jumps into it and enjoys it. A cat may fall into the mire too, but it detests it.

It jumps out immediately. And it licks itself clean. So a believer can also fall, but it doesn't want to fall.

A cat does not choose to jump into the mire. And if it does fall, if a believer does fall, he immediately feels guilty about it. That's one proof that he is a believer.

And say, oh Lord, I feel sorry, please forgive me. And habits that we have acquired for many years as sinners will take quite a while to get rid of. Some sins you can get rid of easily, but those you have indulged in a long time, I always say don't feel guilty that you fall.

Ask yourself, do you want to? If you don't want to sin, you have repented. If you want to please God, then the new man is in your heart. And then it may take time for you to become perfect.

That is a growth. It says we follow Jesus to the place where we become totally like Him. And the Apostle Paul said towards the end of his life in Philippians 3, I'm not yet perfect.

So we can use the example of a race. Let us run the race looking at the Jesus, Hebrews 12. Being born again is coming to the starting line of the race.

Becoming like Christ completely is at the end of the race. I'm very conscious I have not become a hundred percent like Christ. Paul was conscious of that, but I say I'm way ahead of where I was when I was born again 60 years ago, because I've been running.

But still, the finishing line is a long way off. So until we get there, I keep this attitude, the new man, I don't want to sin. If I trip and fall, I just get up and continue the race.

That's why I say keeping a good conscience all the time. Forgiving everybody who has hurt us, very important. Apologizing to people whom we hurt, very important.

Always keeping our conscience clear before God and before men. A wrong attitude in the heart, confess it to God. A wrong thought that came into our mind, confess it to God.

And if you are serious about it, the Holy Spirit will gradually help us to become better and better day by day, and we can claim the promises. Promises are not for those who are perfect. In that case, nobody could get it.

It's for those who want to be perfect, and who our God sees are pursuing along that way. Families could ask your children, once the meeting is over, how much they understood. I'd be very happy if I heard that the children understood what I said.

That's always my goal, because if the children understand, then the grown-ups can understand definitely. So please ask your children, and what they don't understand, explain it to them. See, everything depends on the opportunity we have.

You mentioned Richard Rombrand. He was in a prison for many years. How much fellowship did he have? Zero, with other believers.

Maybe with some others in the prison, but other than that, imagine yourself, for example, with different families locked up in prisons. What are you going to do? Build fellowship with one another in your home. Those little children, build fellowship with them.

There's a great opportunity. I've always taught the foundation of the Church is Christ's love for us. The first floor is our own walk with the God, and the second floor is the family.

Then comes the ministry and the Church on top. So now is the time to build the second floor. Plenty of time to be with the children.

In fact, the last verse of the Old Testament, Malachi 4, 6 says, I'm going to draw the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the children to the fathers. I believe God may have allowed this time to happen, because we are living in a day when fathers and children are separated. Even among believers, I find, very few fathers spend time with their children.

So Malachi 4 says, I'm going to restore the hearts of the fathers to their children, and this is the time for that. So don't think of fellowship only with some grown-up believers and some other family. With all the members of your own family first.

And then, as God gives opportunity, we can still use the telephone, which is a lot more than what people had in Paul's time, and speak to people when you get the opportunity. So conversation is still possible at this time, even if we don't see face-to-face. And with things like WhatsApp, we can even see one another and talk to each other.

They may not be physically present there. We have such tremendous facilities today, that we can do a lot more in terms of fellowship with others, and especially with our own family.

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