

Copyright © Two Journeys Ministry

Andrew M. Davis

Sermon Notes

www.twojourneys.org

Please use in accordance with the copyright policy found at twojourneys.org

Killing Temptation, Starving Sin

1 Corinthians 10:12-13

I. The Constant Danger to Our Souls

A. In Enemy Territory

Perhaps the Most Daring Rescue of World War II: Cabanatuan POW Camp

On January 30, 1945, under the cover of darkness, the 150 Rangers, a specially trained commando unit in the US Army, infiltrated 30 miles behind enemy lines in the Philippine Islands and with the help of courageous Filipino resistance fighters, mounted a dangerous assault on the Cabanatuan POW camp. The raid to save these 511 POWs would turn out to be the most daring rescue mission of World War II

Imagine that terrifying journey back to the safety of the American lines... 30 miles, step by step, in enemy territory the entire way. They needed constant vigilance, amazing skill at quiet movements, lest they arouse the enemy and bring swift destruction on their heads

So it is with the church of Jesus Christ that lives in this present world

Every single moment of our lives, we are surrounded by spiritual dangers; we are in enemy territory

B. The Three-Fold Enemy: The World, the Flesh, and the Devil

1. The Devil

1 Peter 5:8 Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.

Satan is extremely skillful in crafting intelligent temptations that are deadly to our souls... scripture calls them SCHEMES

Ephesians 6:11 Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes.

2. The World

- a. Satan's dark masterpiece of alluring temptation
- b. Surrounded every moment by an evil system of allurements
- c. A lustful desire for sensual pleasure, for worldly power, for glittering possessions, for human honors and illicit comforts

3. The Flesh

- a. The enemy within... the SIN NATURE... the internal part of us that responds powerfully to the lusts that Satan hurls our way

Romans 7:15 I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do.

Romans 7:17-18 As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me. ¹⁸ I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out

Sin living in me = the flesh... the sinful nature... indwelling sin

C. What is TEMPTATION?

- 1. Temptation is like a magnetic pull on the soul, intelligently crafted by Satan to PULL PULL PULL us away from Christ toward sin
- 2. It is a specific occasion, a moment in time
- 3. There is a categorical sin behind it... like sexual immorality, or gossip, or drunkenness, or laziness, or complaining

4. But a temptation is a specific momentary occasion in which there is opportunity to act in a specific way in one of those sinful patterns
 - a. Example: a man was addicted to alcohol and regularly got drunk, again and again
 - b. He becomes a Christian, repenting of his sins and trusting in Christ's blood for his forgiveness
 - c. But now he has to stop getting drunk... he is convicted by the Spirit that drunkenness is a sin
 - d. Drunkenness is the category of sin... but temptation is a specific occasion; so as this man is driving home one night from work, he drives by a bar where he used to spend a lot of time
 - e. He sees the sign; some memories come, he feels a pull... he feels some excuses pass into his mind... he begins to rationalize... he doesn't fully realize that he is in spiritual battle RIGHT NOW!! He begins to breathe hard, his heart is racing... he is in the throes of temptation
 - f. He CAN and MUST put that temptation to death by the power of the Spirit
 - g. BUT he can NEVER put drunkenness to death as a category; he will never be able to say that sin is forever dead in his life and he knows for a fact it will never trouble him again
 - h. Rather this passage teaches the needs for CONSTANT VIGILANCE as we will see

D. Led by the Spirit Daily Into Battle

Romans 8:13-14 For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. ¹⁴ For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.

John Owen: The vigor, and power, and comfort of our spiritual life depend on the mortification of the deeds of the flesh.

“You must mortify! You must make it your daily work. You must be constantly at it while you live. Cease not a day from this work!
Be killing sin, or sin will be killing you!

II. Eternal Vigilance the Price of Freedom

A. The Context in 1 Corinthians: Meat Sacrificed to Idols

1. Paul addresses this for THREE CHAPTERS!
2. Corinth was a PAGAN city, with pagan temples that offered animals to false gods and goddesses, and that combined that false religion with a sensual appeal to sex and food that was a powerful combination; people worshiped the false gods by having sex with temple prostitutes and eating delicious meats which had been sacrificed to those idols
3. Paul preached the gospel of Christ crucified, and called people out of their pagan darkness into the light of truth; and many people were converted
4. In chapters 8-9, he gives the principle that LOVE LIMITS LIBERTY... people who are more mature in the faith were flaunting their freedoms; in so doing, they were hurting weaker brothers and sisters who had only recently come out of paganism
5. Throughout chapter 9, he says they should be willing to give up their personal desires and tastes and pleasures to benefit the salvation of others; **Paul became all things to all kinds of people so that by all possible means he might save some**
6. But he also spoke of a lifestyle of careful discipline he carried out over himself

1 Corinthians 9:27 But I discipline my body and keep it under control, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified.

7. Then he goes on to explain WHY he does this... the terrible example of what happened to Israel
 - a. All the Jews experienced the powerful work of God in saving them from slavery in Egypt

- b. But MOST of the adults who were rescued from slavery and who passed through the Red Sea, and who ate the manna and who drank water that flowed miraculously from the rock NEVER MADE IT INTO THE PROMISED LAND... their bodies were scattered through the desert, because God was angry with them
 - c. They fell into IDOLATRY and SEXUAL IMMORALITY... and God had to put them to death
8. SO... what about Christians? Just because we have BEGUN this Christian journey, are we now SAFE from all sin? Are we home free? Or do we have to fight battles with sin and temptation to make it to heaven?
9. Paul answers that quite clearly here

1 Corinthians 10:12 Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed that he does not fall.

1 Corinthians 10:13-14 No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it. ¹⁴Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry.

B. Eternal Vigilance is the Price of Freedom

At the entrance to the National Archives building in Washington DC is an inscription in marble:

“Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty.”

Above the inscription is a scary-looking warrior holding a helmet and a sword, ready to fight

Many people think Thomas Jefferson said it...

Irish orator and politician John Philpot Curran said in Dublin in 1790. “The condition upon which God hath given liberty to man is eternal vigilance”.

At any rate, the idea is powerful... in a hostile world like ours, if we want to maintain our freedom, we have to be ready to FIGHT for it

This is even more significantly true in the Christian life

Christ has set us free from all sin... but we have to fight to not allow ourselves to be enslaved again

1 Corinthians 10:12 speaks clearly of the need for eternal vigilance...
CONSTANT WATCHFULNESS

1 Corinthians 10:12 Therefore let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall.

C. Do You Think You are Standing Firm?

1. Has Christ cleansed you by his blood?
2. If so, then Christ has set you free from sin itself:

Romans 6:18 having been set free from sin, [you] have become slaves of righteousness.

D. But even so... TAKE HEED lest you fall

1. Take heed = be watchful, be vigilant; know that temptation is sure to come
2. It is the simple Greek word WATCH... open your eyes... see your constant danger

As Jesus said to Peter and the others...

Matthew 26:41 "Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak."

3. Your enemy the devil is prowling around looking for someone to devour
4. Be alert EVERY SINGLE DAY, lest you fall back into sin habits and patterns

5. For the Corinthians, it was the constant allure of the old life of sin in paganism... walking by the temple, seeing the beautiful temple prostitutes; they recognize you, by now they know you are a Christian; they beckon, they call with siren calls to enjoy some time with them
6. The aroma of roasting meat fills your nostrils; the enticing memories of sensual pleasure start working on your heart

E. For Us... It is Other Patterns of Sin... but the Danger is Still There

1. Perhaps it is the allure of internet pornography; the constant allure of sensual pleasure by electronic means; Watch and pray!!
2. Perhaps it is the enticing call of a worldly prosperous life... of money earned and invested so that you can become rich; Watch and pray!!
3. Perhaps it is an addiction to electronic games that has wasted so many hours; Watch and pray!!
4. Perhaps it is a more daily sin habit... overeating, oversleeping, spiritual laziness in the quiet times; Watch and pray!!
5. Perhaps it is gossip... the phone rings, it's a good friend, you begin talking, next thing you know, a juicy topic about someone you both know comes up, and you feel the temptation to gossip, to slander their name; Watch and pray!!
6. Perhaps it is complaining... you are struggling with patience in life... traffic patterns on Rte 40, or in downtown Durham; perhaps it is issues at home, arguing with your spouse; Watch and pray!!

IF YOU THINK YOU ARE STANDING FIRM, YOU BETTER
WATCH YOURSELF LEST YOU FALL BACK INTO SIN

III. The Worldwide Experience of Temptation

1 Corinthians 10:13 No temptation has seized you except what is common to man.

A. The Temptations We Face Every Day are Common Around the World

1. There is nothing unusual about you
2. Your fleshly drives are the same ones that your Christian ancestors fought as well... the same lusts assaulted their souls
3. So also your brothers and sisters around the world... in Kenya, they are fighting the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh and the boastful pride of life just the same way as you, the same as your brothers and sisters in Shanghai and in Madrid and in Rio

B. Satan Lies to Us that We Are UNIQUE

1. We are unusual in our temptations
2. No one like us has ever lived with this level of suffering, this level of allure
3. NOT AT ALL! Every Christian on earth gets tempted, allured toward sin
4. Also Satan is not very creative... he uses what has worked in every generation... what will ALWAYS work; pandering to our pride, our sensual pleasures, our desire for affirmation, our bodily drives
5. He has studied us and he knows us... all over the world, we are essentially the same

IV. God's Faithfulness in Filtering our Temptations

1 Corinthians 10:13 No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear.

A. God Is Faithful = God is Permanently Committed to Saving You

1. God is faithful to you ... He will never give you over to your sins
2. He will fight your sins more persistently and violently than you do

"How Firm a Foundation"

**The soul that on Jesus has leaned for repose,
I will not, I will not desert to his foes;
that soul, though all hell should endeavor to shake,**

I'll never, no never, no never forsake.

3. That is the FAITHFULNESS of God

1 Thessalonians 5:23-24 May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁴ The one who calls you is faithful and he will do it.

a. Faithful concerning your temptations

b. Faithful even when you sin

1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

B. God's Sovereign Filtering of Temptations

1. The text says God will not ALLOW YOU to be tempted beyond what you can bear

2. God knows us, he knows our weaknesses

Psalm 139:1 O LORD, you have searched me and you know me.

Psalm 103:14 he knows how we are formed, he remembers that we are dust.

3. God knows there are some temptations that would be 100% effective and would destroy our worlds

4. So he WILL NOT ALLOW that temptation to come your way

5. Satan the tempter is on a leash! He has to ask permission

6. We see this plainly in Job 1-2; Satan has to come asking permission to get at Job

7. God is controlling the level of trial that Satan is allowed to bring into Job's life

8. In Job's case, it was MASSIVE: the loss of all his possessions and all his children in one single day; then the loss of his health

9. In the case of others, he knows how weak we are and will not allow Satan or his demons to get at us in hardly any ways; there are temptations, but nowhere near what Job experienced

C. Satan on a Leash: What a Comforting Thought

Pilgrim's Progress:

Christian sees a pair of lions on either side of the road he has to travel on, and he is terrified; but a guide calls to him: "Fear not the lions, for they are chained, and are placed there for the trial of faith... keep in the midst of the path, and no hurt shall come to you!"

So it will be for the rest of your lives... Satan wants to attack you directly, rip you to shreds; but he is on a leash, having to ask permission to tempt you. And God is faithful; he will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you can bear

D. Application

1. Whatever temptations DO come your way have already been filtered by your Father and he commands you to stand firm in the day of testing
2. God has decided what you can bear, and you cannot say to him "I can't take any more of this!"
3. Your responsibility is to kill the temptation and weaken the sin habit

V. Standing Firm by Escaping

1 Corinthians 10:13 God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.

A. The General Call of Holiness: STAND FIRM in Christ

1. Stand your ground
2. Like a warrior, fighting a battle; don't FALL into sin

B. How Do We Bear Temptation? Don't Yield to It

1. We kill temptation by saying NO to it; the grace of God teaches us to say NO to ungodliness and worldly passions (Titus 2:12)
2. Like Joseph, running from Potiphar's wife... he refused her! He said NO! to her
3. So we must do to all alluring, enticing temptations that are seeking to pull us from Christ

C. God Provides a Way of Escape!! Run for your life!!

VI. Applications

A. Come to Christ First!

B. Prepare for Battle

1. Be aware you will have to fight sin the rest of your life
2. Think of what Jesus said to Peter: "Watch and Pray so that you will not fall into temptation"
3. Be vigilant: "When sin leaves you alone, you may leave sin alone" (John Owen)
4. In your morning quiet time, think ahead of time of the tempting circumstances you are likely to face that day
 - a. In your morning routine—showering, getting dressed, eating breakfast, interacting with your family or roommates
 - b. In your coming and going: your commute, when you're driving: temptations toward impatience with others, selfishness
 - c. In your classes or your job or your work as a mom... what is likely to tempt you toward ungodly attitudes
5. Put on your spiritual armor (Ephesians 6)... ready for battle

C. Avoid Temptations You Don't Have to Endure

Matthew 6:13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.

D. Specific Areas

1. Lust through the internet... lustful websites
2. Covetousness through the internet... Amazon Prime as a therapy
3. Anger and arguing with family members
4. Complaining about trials in life
5. Displays of pride

E. Specific Elements of Defeating Temptation

1. Understand the eternal stakes of this battle!

Romans 8:13 For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live,

2. Understand the mysterious partnership between us and the Spirit
 - a. YOU... BY THE SPIRIT put to death the deeds of the body

Philippians 2:12-13 work out your salvation with fear and trembling, ¹³ for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose.

3. Take personal responsibility
 - a. YOU must kill temptations by the Spirit
 - b. If you fall into sin, it is YOUR responsibility
4. Understand the relentless marathon

John Owen: "There is not a day that goes by in which sin is not either

"You must mortify! You must make it your daily work. You must be constantly at it while you live. Cease not a day from this work!
Be killing sin, or sin will be killing you!

There is not a day but sin foils or is foiled, prevails or is prevailed upon; and it will be that way while we live in this world.

5. Understand the role of scripture
 - a. Saturate your mind with scripture texts that will help you defeat temptations
 - b. Jesus Christ fought the devil's temptations with "It is written..."

Psalm 119:9, 11 How can a young man keep his way pure? By living according to your word... I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you.

6. Understand that specific SINS cannot be killed, but they can be weakened
 - a. Death by starvation
 - b. Individual temptations can be destroyed!! Must be destroyed
7. Kill temptations by being FULL OF CHRIST by the Spirit
 - a. Full people are hard to tempt
 - b. Jeremiah Burroughs, "Trying to tempt a content man is like shooting a flaming arrow at an iron wall!"
 - c. Be so filled with joy and peace and love through the Holy Spirit that temptations will lose their power
8. Make sin PERSONAL with Christ!

Luke 22:60-62 Peter replied, "Man, I don't know what you're talking about!" Just as he was speaking, the rooster crowed. ⁶¹ The Lord turned and looked straight at Peter. Then Peter remembered the word the Lord had spoken to him: "Before the rooster crows today, you will disown me three times." ⁶² And he went outside and wept bitterly.

9. Accountability in a healthy church

Hebrews 3:13 But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness.

10. Saturate your mind in heavenly meditation... SET YOUR HEARTS ON THINGS ABOVE, not on earthly things