

**Lead Us in the Paths of Righteousness for Your Name's Sake  
LORD, Teach Us to Pray – Part 8**

**Lead Us Not Into Temptation (11:4; Matt. 6:13; WSC 106 – Sixth Petition)**

This morning we now turn to the sixth and final petition of the LORD Jesus' teaching on how we should (get to) approach our *Abba* in prayer. And again, a key word in the prayer can be translated in one of two ways. That word is translated in our passage as “temptation,” (NASB95) but it could be translated either as (1) “a trial / a testing” of our faith OR (2) a “temptation,” as in a seduction into sin.

**Example of “Testing”**

An example of the first possible translation would be when Jesus prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane asking the Father, if it is possible, to let this cup pass from Jesus; yet not what He wills but what His Father wills for Him (**Matt. 26:39 // Mk. 14:36 // Lk. 22:42; cf. John 6:38**). Jesus was dependent upon His Father at every point of His life. He said:

“Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do **nothing** of Himself, unless *it is* something He sees the Father doing; for whatever the Father does, these things the Son also does in like manner . . . I can do **nothing** on My own initiative (**John 5:19, 30; cf. 6:38; 8:28; 12:49; 14:10**).

Because He was dependent upon His Father, Jesus knew He needed to go to the Father to ask Him DAILY to give Jesus the strength to fulfill the Father's will.

Jesus' path to the cross was not as simple as sliding into home plate. There were many testings/trials along the way and where He received the strength to persevere through those trials was from the Father in the power of the Spirit. In fact, we can see that the Father did indeed sustain His Son in those darkest trials because the Scriptures tell us that at no point did Jesus sin and betray His Father in Heaven (**cf. Rom. 8:3; 2 Cor. 5:21; Heb. 4:15; 7:26; 10:5-10**).

If Jesus had to go to His Father and petition Him DAILY for the Spirit-empowered strength to stand firm in the hours of testing **how much more** must we pray to the Father during these times of testing in our lives? We must remember that if the Father did not choose to keep us at every moment, if Jesus did not intercede on our behalf during the times of the testing of our faith you would be in immediate danger of falling away and apostatizing from the faith! We must therefore daily and earnestly pray to our *Abba* because, like Jesus, we are dependent upon Him moment by moment because He alone possesses the power to keep us faithful to Him.

To see the difference between what it looks like when God intervenes to keep us from falling away during the testing of our faith we only need to remember the contrast between **Judas Iscariot**, who betrayed Jesus, and **Peter**, who equally denied and therefore betrayed Jesus. Do you remember what

the key difference was between the testing of those two men? Concerning Judas Iscariot, Jesus prayed to the Father:

<sup>12</sup> “While I was with them, **I was keeping them in Your [the Father's] name** which You have given Me; and I guarded them and not one of them perished **but the son of perdition, so that the Scripture would be fulfilled (John 17:12).**

We can see both here. The only reason that 11 disciples made it through the trials facing them was because **Jesus kept them** in the Father's name. The reason Judas did not remain faithful to God was because **God had declared him** to be “the son of perdition, so that the Scripture would be fulfilled.” Judas had a role to play in redemptive history and Jesus would not have prayed against God's eternal purpose for Judas' life to be kept from eternal destruction. But concerning Peter, Jesus told him:

<sup>31</sup> “Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has demanded *permission* to sift you like wheat; <sup>32</sup> **but I have prayed for you**, that your faith may not fail; and you, when once you have turned again, strengthen your brothers” (**Luke 22:31-32**).

What made the difference between Judas falling away from God and Peter being kept through his unfaithfulness, both equally heinous before God? Jesus prayed to the Father and He kept Peter from ultimately and forever denying Jesus. Peter too had a role and purpose to play in redemptive history and so He was kept in the faith by God. No wonder Peter so joyfully proclaimed later in his life:

<sup>3</sup> Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy **has caused us** to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, <sup>4</sup> **to obtain** an inheritance *which is* imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, <sup>5</sup> **who are protected by the power of God** through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time (**1 Pet. 1:3-5**).

### Example of “Temptation”

Now, to see an example of the second translation we need first to try to understand just what is being said by the word “temptation.” When Jesus tells us to pray to our heavenly Father, “and lead us not into temptation,” we know that God does not tempt us or seduce us into sinning against Him. He is not actively wooing us from within our hearts to break His commandments. The brother of our LORD said clearly:

<sup>12</sup> Blessed is a man **who perseveres under trial**; for once he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which *the Lord* has promised to those who love Him. <sup>13</sup> Let no one say when he is tempted, “I am being tempted by God”; **for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone.** <sup>14</sup> But each one is **tempted** when he is carried away and enticed **by his own lust.** <sup>15</sup> Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death. <sup>16</sup> Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren. <sup>17</sup> Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow. <sup>18</sup> In the exercise of His will He brought us

forth **by the word of truth**, so that we would be a kind of first fruits among His creatures (**James 1:12-18**).

James makes the important distinction between what God does and what takes place within our own hearts. The translators have to be careful how they translate each word in this section of Scripture. This passage is interesting because it begins by pronouncing a blessing on those who persevere under “trials,” (**James 1:12**) which is the same word translated “temptation” in the LORD's prayer (**Luke 11:4**) and in the next verse in **James 1:13** as “tempted” (3 x). Further, it is the same word that is translated as “trials” in **v. 2 of James 1** where he says:

<sup>2</sup> Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials,<sup>3</sup> knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. <sup>4</sup> And let endurance have *its* perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing (**James 1:2-4**).

And further, it is the same word translated in **1 Peter**, when he writes:

<sup>6</sup> In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various **trials** (**1 Pet. 1:6**),

<sup>12</sup> Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your **testing**, as though some strange thing were happening to you; <sup>13</sup> but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing, so that also at the revelation of His glory you may rejoice with exultation (**1 Peter 4:12-13**).

So our translators are doing more than a little interpretation by the English word they are choosing for the Greek word. It is God who tests our faith using trials in our life. It is **from within our own sinful hearts** that we are tempted to sin against God. God does **not** have to create “temptation” to occur within us. That occurs when the “lust” that resides in our hearts gives birth to sin and when the act of sin is completed, death is always the consequence.

Let's try and illustrate this another way. Think about what happened in the Garden with Adam and Eve. The tree of the knowledge of good and evil was clearly placed in the Garden to serve as a testing of the faith of our original parents – a trial by ordeal - to see if they would rule as God's vice-regents according to God's Word **OR** according to their own, autonomous authority. They failed! But did they prove unfaithful because God tempted them to sin? No! God did not have to create within their hearts a lusting after what they wanted in opposition to what God told them. That temptation or seduction, while precipitated by Satan, clearly came from within their own hearts. They lusted after what they did not possess and wanted it more than they wanted to obey God. Satan only needed to trigger what was already moving them away from God.

John the Beloved Apostle stated it this way:

Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, **the lust of the flesh** and **the lust of the eyes** and **the boastful pride of life**, is not from the Father, but is from the world. The world is passing away, and *also* its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever (**1 Jn 2:15-17**).

And you know, as well as I do, that it doesn't take much to veer us off from the straight and narrow path which God sets us upon. Out of our three deadly foes, Satan, the world, and the flesh, we all know that the most prominent malefactor is our own sinful flesh! It is of this world, worldly, and always wants its own apart from God's will.

Once Jesus was baptized, we are told that He “was **led up by the Spirit** into the wilderness to be **tempted** by the devil” (Matt. 4:1; Mk. 1:12-13; Lk. 4:1-2). Here again the same word “tempted” used here is the word used in the LORD's prayer, which we are told to plead with God not to lead us into. It is also the same word used in **Deuteronomy 8:2, 16** of God's **leading** Israel out into the wilderness where He **tested** them, to see if they would keep His commandments. Note that the Spirit **led** Jesus to be **tempted** by the devil (cf. Matt. 4:1 //). Where Israel proved unfaithful to God, Jesus proved faithful through the entire temptation – He passed God's test perfectly. But this is essentially what we are pleading with our *Abba* Father to not lead us into. While Jesus proved faithful in His time of testing, we often prove unfaithful in ours (cf. Abraham- Gen. 22; Job 1-2; Paul – 2 Cor. 12:1-10).

Contextually, in Jesus' teaching of us He has just mentioned the forgiveness of sins (Luke 11:4) and what He could be saying is that we are to ask our *Abba* to not bring us into a situation, where Satan, the world, or our flesh would tempt us to sin against God and therefore make it necessary to now ask God to forgive us our sins. We cry out to God to give us help – to provide us with Spirit-empowered strength to not fall into moments of temptation NOT because our Father is the One who is leading us there **BUT because He is the only One who can prevent us from going there** (cf. 2 Pet. 2:9). As God's children, we must learn “that the only way to avoid falling into sin is to follow where God leads and to be dependent upon him and his protection” (Bock, 1056). The Apostle Paul gives us incredible hope here:

<sup>18</sup> *I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know* (1) what is the hope of His calling, (2) what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, <sup>19</sup> and (3) what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe. *These are* in accordance with **the working of the strength of His might** <sup>20</sup> which He brought about in Christ, **when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places,** <sup>21</sup> far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come (Eph. 1:18-21).

This is one of my favorite prayers of the Apostle Paul for the LORD's church! Listen to what he is asking God for, for you! He wants God to so “enlighten your heart” so that among other things you may know “what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe” (v. 19). Paul wants you to know how great is the power of God at work in your life. And what is that power? God is working in you according to the strength of His might, the same might or power by which He raised Jesus from the dead and seated Him at His right hand.

Consider this! Now that we have been redeemed by Jesus' blood so that we have become truly the children of God one of our greatest desires is that the response to God's grace in our lives will be one of **thanksgiving** and **praise** to Him. Very simply, like any other child, we don't want to let our “Father” down! This means that regardless of which interpretation we decide upon, the point of this petition brings us back to the **first petition** to beautifully round out the prayer. Our greatest concern

as God's children is for the **hallowing** or **sanctifying** of our heavenly Father's name (**Luke 11:2**). Nothing makes us happier as His children than when the world sets our *Abba's* name apart as HOLY!

Further, we do not want anything to come into our lives that will lead us into a situation where something we have said or done would cause someone to curse our *Abba's* name. This is the motivation for this final petition of the LORD's prayer. We are pleading with our heavenly Father to keep us from any trial or testing, any temptation that we could be lead into, that would put us within a situation where we would dishonor the most precious name that we possess, the name of our God. There is nothing greater for us to protect with every fiber of our being than God's holy name AND there is no greater horror in our life than the thought that something I have said or done caused another to curse the name of God.

This is what happened when Israel sinned against God and had to be exiled from the land. The prophet's often described their going into exile as the cause of God's holy name to be profaned by the nations. The LORD said of His people through Ezekiel:

<sup>20</sup> "When they came to the nations where they went, they profaned My holy name, because it was said of them, 'These are the people of the LORD; yet they have come out of His land.' <sup>21</sup> "But I had concern for My holy name, which the house of Israel had profaned among the nations where they went" (**Ezek. 36:20-21**).

God then explains that the reason He redeemed Israel was not simply for their own peace and rest but for the far more important and vital concern, which was the sanctification of His name:

<sup>22</sup> "Therefore say to the house of Israel, 'Thus says the Lord GOD, "It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am about to act, but for My holy name, which you have profaned among the nations where you went. <sup>23</sup> "I will vindicate the holiness of My great name which has been profaned among the nations, which you have profaned in their midst. Then the nations will know **that I am the LORD**," declares the Lord GOD, "when I prove Myself holy among you in their sight" (**Ezek. 36:22-23**).

Equally, we are told by God in several places in the New Testament that the reason God has redeemed you and me was for the praise of His name, His grace, for His glory! In **Ephesians chapter 1, verses 6, 12, 14** Paul says three times that:

<sup>5</sup> He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, <sup>6</sup> **to the praise of the glory of His grace**, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved (**Eph. 1:5-6**).

In **Romans 9**, Paul exclaims:

<sup>23</sup> And *He did so* to make **known the riches of His glory** upon vessels of mercy, which He prepared beforehand for glory (**Rom. 9:23**).

And ultimately in **Peter's first epistle**:

<sup>9</sup> But you are A CHOSEN RACE, A royal PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR *God's* OWN POSSESSION, **so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him** who has called you out of

darkness into His marvelous light (1 Peter 2:9).

Before we are finished, let's take another look at the petition from one more angle. There is a passage in Paul's letter to the Ephesians which has always plagued me as a Christian, perpetually following me around like an afternoon shadow. It is found in **Ephesians 4:30** and reads like this:

<sup>30</sup> Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption (**Eph. 4:30**).

When you hear those words, don't they weigh heavy on your heart knowing that the things you do, and say, and think, which are not pleasing to God, as well as all those things we should do, and say, and think, which would be pleasing to God if we did them, that in either doing them or not doing them we grieve the Holy Spirit of God?

**To grieve the Holy Spirit**, the One who loves us having sealed us for the day of redemption, has to be one of the most horrible consequences in our DAILY continuing to sin against God. How can we possibly do that to the One who loves us so deeply? We already know that our sin is what caused Jesus to be crucified for us and every time we sin again it is like Jesus being crucified all over again and again for us. To add insult to injury, we now grieve the Holy Spirit each time we sin against God.

I've often thought that one of the greatest blessings to look forward to in our dying and going to heaven is the fact that I will be made perfect in Christ and will no longer have to grieve the Holy Spirit of God! Oh that we would learn **to love the precious name of our God so greatly, so intensely, so thoroughly** that we would plead daily with God to not lead us into any situation where we might cause the name of our *Abba* Father to be profaned BUT INSTEAD that He would lead us to live each and every day in such a way that we:

<sup>4</sup> coming to Him as to a living stone which has been rejected by men, but is choice and precious in the sight of God, <sup>5</sup> you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, **to offer up spiritual sacrifices [OUR VERY LIVES acceptable to God through Jesus Christ (1 Peter 2:4-5).**

**[BECAUSE]** <sup>9</sup> you are A CHOSEN RACE, A ROYAL PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR *God's* OWN POSSESSION, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; <sup>10</sup> for you once were NOT A PEOPLE, but now you are THE PEOPLE OF GOD; you had NOT RECEIVED MERCY, but now you have RECEIVED MERCY (**1 Peter 2:9-10**).

**Amen!**

**-SDG-**