

Lead Us Not Into Temptation

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[0 : 0 0] Well if we could this evening with the Lord's enabling if we could turn back to that portion of scripture that we read in Matthew chapter 6 Matthew chapter 6 and as you know, we're looking at the Lord's prayer If we just read again at verse 13 Matthew chapter 6 at verse 13 Where Jesus teaches us to pray lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil Now as you know, there are many Bible texts which we use in almost everyday conversation Sometimes without even thinking but you know when we use these Bible texts We often use them out of context One of the most well-known is found actually in verse 30 of this chapter in chapter 6 Where it says O ye of little faith But there's also the Bible text from Mark chapter 4 where we often say that it fell by the wayside or

The 11th hour which is Matthew 20 or the blind leading the blind Luke chapter 6 or at their wits end Samhainter and seven judge not lest you be judged Matthew chapter 7 I escaped by the skin of my teeth I'm just job 19 and I for an eye exodus 21 cast your pearls before swine Which is also Matthew 7 feet of clay. It's from Daniel chapter 2 a leopard can't change its spots That's from Jeremiah 14 a millstone about your neck. It's mark chapter 9. There's nothing new under the Sun Ecclesiastes 1 the land of nod. It's not a place of sleeping. It's actually in Genesis 4 The writings on the wall from Daniel chapter 5 We use all these Bible texts in everyday conversation sometimes without even thinking But the truth is most of the time when we're using them we're using them out of context But you know the Bible text that we often take out of context

That is but it's actually relevant to our study this evening that Bible text is what Jesus said to Peter and Matthew 26 The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak. We often say that don't we the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak But you know when we read the context of that text in Matthew 26 Jesus wasn't referring to weariness or weakness. He wasn't referring to laziness or lethargy Jesus was referring to trial and temptation Because you know the context of that text in Matthew 26 is prayer Where Jesus said to Peter in the Garden of Gethsemane Could you not watch with me one hour?

Watch and pray that you do not enter into temptation For the spirit indeed is willing but the flesh is weak Jesus was urging his disciples to pray so that they would avoid falling into temptation And you know that's what Jesus is teaching us this evening as we come to the sixth and final petition of the Lord's Prayer Because as you know in our study of the Lord's Prayer Jesus is teaching us here to pray and he's giving to us a pattern For prayer and we've discovered that as we've gone through the Lord's Prayer. We discovered the opening words Our Father which art in heaven They're the preface to the Lord's Prayer and they teach us that we're to come to God Just like little children we're to come to God and we're to pray to him as our Father And we're to pray to the Father through the Son by the Holy Spirit And then following the the preface to the Lord's Prayer there are six petitions

The first three petitions focus upon God's glory and the last three petitions focus upon God's grace And that's that summarizes the whole of the Lord's Prayer that the Lord's Prayer is all about God's glory and God's grace The first petition which we looked at a number of weeks ago is Hallowed be thy name which teaches us that we're to regard the name of God as Holy and that when we pray we're to seek to glorify God's nature and glorify God's name Then the second petition of the Lord's Prayer is thy kingdom come Which teaches us to pray that the kingdom of hell will be abolished the kingdom of heaven will advance and the kingdom of holiness Will appear and then the third petition of the Lord's Prayer is Thy will be done which teaches us to pray that we're to submit and Surrender our will to God's sovereign will

[5 : 00] Then the fourth petition of the Lord's Prayer is give us this day our daily bread which teaches us daily Dependence upon the Lord for our sustenance and our salvation Then the fifth petition of the Lord's Prayer which we consider last Lord's Day is The difficult petition Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors and we learned that this petition teaches us that we're to practice what we pray by By seeking forgiveness and also by showing forgiveness But now as we come to the sixth and final petition of the Lord's Prayer Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil This petition in this petition Jesus is teaching us to pray so that we'll have avoid falling into temptation Jesus is teaching us to pray so that will avoid falling into temptation And I'd like us to consider this petition under three headings

The temptation of the serpent the temptation of the sinner and the temptation of the saviour So the temptation of the serpent the temptation of the sinner and the temptation of the saviour So first of all the temptation of the serpent and as we're taught to pray Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil And you know the way in which this fifth petition the sixth petition is phrased, it has often caused confusion because Jesus teaches us to pray to our Heavenly Father using the words lead us not into temptation, which immediately raises the question does God ever lead us and lure us into temptation? Does God entice us and encourage us to sin? And of course the answer is no, because if you remember James says in his New Testament letter he says, let no one say when he is tempted I am being tempted by God for

God cannot be tempted with evil and he himself tempts no one. But you know what we often have to grapple with is that our understanding of temptation and the biblical understanding of temptation is slightly different because when the Bible uses the word temptation it not only uses it in the sense of being enticed to sin, which is the way we would usually understand temptation, but the Bible also uses the word temptation in the sense of testing and being tested by God. It's actually the same word both in Hebrew and in Greek, temptation and testing it's the same word. So what we have to understand is that God doesn't tempt us but he does test us. God doesn't tempt us but he does test us. But then well what's the difference? What's the difference between being tempted and being tested? Well temptation is being enticed to sin, testing is being encouraged to be strong. Temptation seeks failure, testing seeks faith, temptation longs for wrongdoing, testing longs for righteousness, temptation is from Satan, testing is from God. And as you know Satan is given many names, he's given many descriptions in the Bible because he's referred to as the Prince of the Power of the Air, he's known to us as the

Prince of Darkness, he's Beelzebub, he's his passion in this world is to be the Antichrist, he's our adversary, he's our deceiver who comes to us as an angel of light, he's the father of lies, he's been a liar and a murderer from the beginning, he's the devil, the diabolos, the divider, he goes around like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour. But you know more than that Satan is revealed to us as the accuser of the brethren and the tempter, the tempter. And you know we don't even have to go very far into the narrative of the Bible to find the tempter at work. Because in the opening chapters of the book of Genesis we're told that Adam was created in the image and likeness of God and he was created with perfect knowledge, righteousness and holiness and Adam were told that he was placed in the Garden of Eden to work and to keep it but he was also put to the test. God tested Adam, God gave Adam a law and that he was to keep this law and he was to keep it with perfect and personal obedience. God said to Adam you may surely eat of every three of the Garden but of the three of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat of it for in the day that you eat thereof you shall surely die. And so if Adam completed the test, if Adam faithfully appell the law of God by his perfect and personal obedience, he was promised eternal life for himself and all his descendants. And you know this is what our Westminster Confession of Faith describes as the covenant of works. It says in chapter 7 of the confession, it says the first covenant made with man was a covenant of works wherein life was promised to Adam and in him to his posterity upon condition of perfect and personal obedience. Therefore in the

Garden of Eden God tested Adam but Satan tempted Adam. And Adam's temptation is recorded for us in Genesis 3 where we have the temptation of the serpent who he came, the serpent came and enticed both Adam and Eve to eat the forbidden fruit. And as you know the trap of temptation which the tempter set for both Adam and Eve was the lie that when they ate the fruit they would not die but they would be like God knowing good and evil. But as you know Adam he failed the test by falling into temptation and as James tells us in his letter Adam was lured and enticed by his own desire to be like God. But his desire when it was conceived it gave birth to sin and when sin grew it brought forth death.

[11 : 56] That's why the Bible tells us the wages of sin is death. And you know as soon as Adam and Eve ate from the forbidden fruit they fell into temptation. They sinned against God, their conscience was awakened and their eyes were opened to the reality of what they had done. And as the catechism puts it the covenant of works being made with Adam because of it, because Adam failed in that covenant of works all mankind sinned in him and fell with him in his first transgression.

But you know how bad was Adam's fall? How bad, how far did Adam really fall? The catechism, go back to the catechism, catechism says all mankind by their fall lost communion with God they are under his wrath and curse and so made liable to all the miseries of this life to death itself and to the pains of hell forever.

That's how bad it was, that's how far Adam fell. And you know my friend God tested Adam but Satan tempted Adam and Adam failed and fell into temptation.

But you know the story of the Bible isn't just about Adam's failure to uphold the covenant of works. No the story of the Bible from Genesis 3 onwards, the story of the Bible is all about God's faithfulness to the covenant of grace and that God didn't leave mankind in their sin and misery but out of his own good pleasure he sought to deliver us from sin and bring us into a state of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. My friend God allows testing but Satan is always tempting. God allows testing but Satan is always tempting. And you know we see that so clearly also in the life of Abraham because Abraham he was the one who received the covenant of grace. We see that in Genesis chapter 12. God promised and covenanted with Abraham that through his seed all the nations of the earth would be blessed. And at the age of 100 years old Abraham he rejoiced to see God's promise being fulfilled when his son Isaac was born. But you remember in Genesis 22 that God tested Abraham. He didn't tempt Abraham as the authorized version puts it which can often make it quite confusing because as we said the word temptation and testing it's the same word in Hebrew and Greek.

But you know which word to use can often be understood by just reading the context. It's always good to read the context. But as we said God doesn't tempt us. He tests us and God tested Abraham. He sent to Abraham take your son your only son Isaac whom you love and go to the land of Mariah and offer him there as a burnt offering. And as you know from the narrative of Genesis 22 Abraham was obedient to God's test. Abraham faithfully succeeded God's test. And of course what happened on Mount Mariah was a foreshadowing of Jesus who would himself be obedient unto death even the death of the cross. And you know in this sixth petition of the Lord's Prayer Jesus here he's teaching us to pray and he's teaching us to pray so that we'll avoid falling into temptation. And so we've considered the temptation of the serpent but secondly the temptation of the sinner.

[15 : 57] The temptation of the sinner lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.

Now we said earlier that God allows testing and we've touched on that in the life of Adam and Abraham. But we also said that God allows testing but Satan is always tempting. And we see that Satan is always tempting us to fall into sin in a number of different ways when we again consider the lives of certain individuals in scripture. And what we'll see when we look at these individuals is that sometimes Satan tempts us to fall into sin in ways that we never saw coming and in ways that we never thought possible. You know that's how powerful he is as a deceiver and as a tempter of sinners that he can even take the things that we innocently enjoy in life and he can twist them to make them this sinful obsession in our heart. But you know the thing is Satan comes to us in such a sly and subtle manner doesn't he? He comes in such a sly and subtle manner to the point that he causes us to question the authority of God and even to question the word of God. Satan causes us to doubt and disbelieve the truth. He causes us to be uncertain and undermine the truth. He's causes us to question and even query the truth. And you know we see that very clearly in the experience of

Eve don't we? When Eve encountered Satan in the Garden of Eden. Satan came to Eve as a sly and subtle serpent and he presented to Eve what has become known to us as the oldest trick in the book because Satan he asked only one question did God really say? Did God really say? And as soon as that seed of doubt was sown into Eve's heart it wreaked havoc in her relationships. Her relationship first of all with Adam and then her relationship with God. Did God really say? And you know it was with that one question that Eve began to doubt God.

Where she doubted his authority. She doubted his word. She doubted his law. She doubted his promise. She doubted his provision and she doubted his punishment. My friend Eve doubted God and it led to disaster, destruction and death. Eve doubted God and it led to disaster, destruction and death. And you know that's what Satan does. He sows seeds of doubt in our heart. He comes to us and he says to us did God really say? Is God really there? Is God really the creator? Is God really in control? Is the Bible really true? Did Jesus really die?

Did Jesus really rise from the dead? Does God really hear my prayers? Am I really saved? Does heaven really exist? Is hell a real place? My friend when Satan sows these seeds of doubt in our hearts it can lead to disaster, destruction and even death. That's why he comes. Jesus says he comes only to steal and to kill and to destroy. And you know like Eve in our moments of doubt we doubt God's authority.

[19 : 48] We doubt God's word. We doubt God's law. We doubt God's promises. We doubt God's provision. We doubt God's punishment. My friend doubt is the oldest trick in the book that this sly and subtle serpent of Satan comes to us with. It's the oldest trick in the book but you know there's many other tricks that the devil uses.

There's many other tricks that Satan comes to us with and another one is fear. Fear. You know we see that later on in the narrative of scripture. We see that in the experience of the children of Israel. Where they had just began their wilderness journey. They just left Egypt and they crossed the Red Sea and they're going towards the Promised Land and they've just entered the wilderness.

But you know the Israelites they weren't long into their wilderness journey when they started moaning and murmuring against the Lord. We're told in Exodus 16 that the Israelites they were afraid. They were afraid that they were going to starve to death but the Lord sent manna from heaven. And then in Exodus 17 the following chapter the Israelites they're afraid again. They're afraid that they're going to die of thirst. And so the Lord sends water from a rock. And we're told that they called the name of that place masa. Which means testing or temptation.

And they also called it meraba. Which means quarrelling. Because the Israelites they quarrelled among themselves wondering why they'd been brought out into this wilderness. And then they tested the Lord saying is the Lord really among us.

Is the Lord really among us. And of course the Lord was testing the Israelites in the wilderness. But Satan was also tempting them. And he was tempting them with fear. Because you know the Israelites they were afraid of dying. And they were afraid of death. And you know that's one thing Satan uses to tempt us. Fear. The fear of dying. And the fear of death. You've seen that in recent months. With all that's going on during lockdown. Where you know we all obeyed the rules and regulations of the government. Because we were told that if we catch COVID-19 the likelihood is that we'll become very ill and die. And sadly for many people that has actually happened. But you know what has caused us to obey the rules and regulations. Was the constant media information of coronavirus cases. And the regularly updated death toll. Where how many people died on this particular day. And what the total death toll was. And you know my friend the fear of dying. And the fear of death. Is what kept us locked up in our homes. Even when many of the risks had been mitigated. Now that's not to say that we should be carefree and careless. When it comes to COVID-19. Not at all.

[22 : 55] But you know it's interesting that Satan's temptation of the fear of death. And the fear of dying. Has caused so much of the illness. And isolation. And yet you know Jesus says to us. Do not fear those. Who are able to kill the body.

But cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him. Who is able to destroy both body and soul. In hell. My friend you know the Bible assures us that when we're in Christ. When you're in Christ. When you're trusting in Jesus Christ for your salvation. The sting of death has been removed. The power of the grave has been taken away. Because not even death itself. Is able to separate you. From the love of God. In Jesus Christ. And you know is that not the promise of our good shepherd. Is that not the promise of the one. Who may confess and commit our lives too. He gives to us the assurance in Psalm 23. Yet will I fear in an ill.

For thou art with me. And thy rod and staff. May comfort still. My friend Satan tempts us with the fear of death. And the fear of dying. But Jesus says to us. Do not fear. Only believe. Do not fear. Only believe. But you know more than illness and isolation. Another temptation which Satan appeals and attracts. And even allures us with. Is idolatry. Where we idolise people. Or our possessions. We idolise sinners. Or our stuff. We idolise. Self. Myself. And my materials. And yet the Bible teaches us in 1st Timothy. That godliness with contentment. Is great gain. Because we can. We brought nothing into the world. Says Paul. And we will take nothing out of it. But those who desire to be rich. Says Paul. They fall into the snare of temptation. Which leads to ruin. And destruction. So there's the temptation with idolatry. But there's more. Because Satan he's very clever isn't he. He's very cunning. In the way in which he presents sin to us. And you know there was one who struggled a lot. With the temptations of sin. And that was a lot. He struggled a lot. Lot struggled a lot. Because you know lot looked. Lot leaned. Lot lived. And lot lingered. In Sodom. Scripture tells us that lot looked towards Sodom. Lot leaned towards Sodom. Lot lived in Sodom. And even when there was the threat of the Lord's judgment. Lot lingered. In Sodom. And you know lot is a warning to every Christian. Because lot is an example of lazy and lukewarm

Christianity. Lot is an example of casual and careless Christianity. Lot is an example of comfortable and consumerist Christianity. In fact in his book entitled Holiness. It's a brilliant book. I encourage you to read it. But in his book Holiness, J.C. Riley has a very challenging chapter called Lot. A beacon.

A warning beacon. And J.C. Riley he says come and look at Lot. Come and mark Lot's history. Come and consider Lot's lingering. And be wise. If you ever would be safe from lingering he says beware of needless mingling with the world and with worldly people. Beware of Lot's choice. Because my friend Lot looked. Lot leaned.

[27 : 00] Lot lived. And Lot lingered. In Sodom. But you know it was David who lusted.

David lusted. You know when David, King David fell into sin. He wasn't a young and youthful man. He was in his 50s. He was a well established Christian. He was well known in his community. He was hard working in society. And he was a committed family man. And yet what began with a look at Bathsheba. It led to lust. And then progressed to adultery. To lies. And to murder. My friend when it came to temptation. David fell into sin. But you know the reason David lusted and Lot lingered. And the Israelites murmured. And even Eve doubted. The reason we all fail and fall into sin. Is because we forget. The reason we all fail and fall into sin. Is because we forget to put our armour on. And that's why the New

Testament describes our battle against the world, the flesh and the devil. It describes it as the evil day. The evil day. The day we forget to put our armour on. And you know as we're taught in Ephesians 6. The only way to stand against the schemes of Satan. Is to put on the armour of God. The whole armour of God.

Paul says to us. We wrestle not against flesh and blood. But against principalities and powers. Against rulers of the darkness of this world. Against the spiritual wickedness in high places. And Paul says. Therefore put on the whole armour of God. That you may be able to withstand in the evil day. Stand with the belt of truth he says. Stand with the breastplate of righteousness.

Stand with gospel shoes of peace. Stand with the shield of faith. The helmet of salvation. And the sword of the spirit. Which is the word of God. My friend the reason we fail and fall into sin. Is because we forget to put our armour on.

[29 : 16] The reason we fail and fall into sin. Is because we forget to put our armour on. But you know the 6th petition of the Lord's Prayer is teaching us. To prayerfully. Every day to prayerfully put on our armour. So that we'll avoid falling into temptation. Lead us not into temptation. But deliver us from evil.

That's this petition. The sixth petition in the Lord's Prayer. It's teaching us to prayerfully put our armour on. So that we'll avoid falling into temptation. And so we've considered the temptation of the serpent. The temptation of the sinner.

But then lastly and just in conclusion. I want us to think briefly about the temptation of the Savior. The temptation of the Savior. Lead us not into temptation. But deliver us from evil. And I want us to think about the temptation of the Savior. Because back in Matthew chapter 4. Just two chapters earlier.

We're told that Jesus was led by the Holy Spirit. Into the wilderness. To be tempted by the devil. And we're told also there that after fasting 40 days and 40 nights. The tempter came to Jesus. To tempt him to fall into sin. But as we've said. God allows testing. And but Satan is always tempting. God allowed Jesus to be tested in the wilderness. Just like he allowed Adam. To be tested in the Garden of Eden. And you know Jesus was tested in the wilderness. Because Jesus was the new Adam. Jesus was the last Adam. Jesus was seeking to right the wrongs and undo what was done in the Garden of Eden. But more than that. Jesus was tempted in the wilderness. Not only as the new Adam. But also as the new Israel.

And as the new Israel. Jesus was faithful in the wilderness. Whereas the Israelites. They were faithless in the wilderness. They had failed in the wilderness. Because after fasting 40 days and 40 nights. We see in chapter 4.

[31 : 37] That Satan tempted the Savior. By enticing him to transform stones. Into loaves of bread. But you know the Savior. He responded to Satan. With the same words. That the Lord spoke to the Israelites. When they failed in the wilderness. Man shall not live by bread alone. But by every word. That proceeds from the mouth of God. And you know what we discover about the temptation of the Savior. In the wilderness. Is that he repeatedly used scripture. As his sword.

Against Satan. The Savior repeatedly used scripture. As his sword. Against Satan. And you know my friend. That's what we need to do. That's what we need to do. We need to prayerfully put on the whole armor of God. Every day. So that when Satan comes to tempt us. In a myriad of different ways. Ways that we never thought even possible. And yet. We are to use scripture. As our sword. Against Satan.

We're to use scripture. As our sword. Against Satan. You know my friend. There are times that God will test us. And there are times that Satan will tempt us.

Through people. Providences. And places. Through things that we would never choose for ourselves. And things that we would never think possible. But you know. It's through these things that scripture. And our Savior. Teaches us. And assures us.

That God is faithful. God is faithful because he will not let you be tempted beyond what you are able. He will provide a way of escape. That you will be able to endure it. But more than that. The scriptures tell us that. Our Savior suffered. When tempted. And because of that. He's able to help you. When you are being tempted. Because in Jesus Christ. The writer to the Hebrews tells us. That we have a great high priest. And he is one who has been touched with a feeling of our infirmities. Because he was in all points tempted as we are. Yet without.

[33 : 57] Sin. Therefore. We are encouraged. We are encouraged. In the sixth petition of the Lord's prayer. To prayerfully put on the whole armor of God. By coming boldly to the throne of grace. So that in our time of temptation. We may receive mercy. And find grace to help. In our time of need. You know my friend. It's at the throne of grace. That the Lord promises. The Lord promises to keep us. To keep us. To watch over us. To protect us. In our time of temptation. It's when we come to the throne of grace. When we prayerfully put on the whole armor of God. That the Lord promises to keep us. From falling. Into temptation. But more than that. He not only promises to keep us from falling. He also promises us that one day. He will present us faultless. Before his glory. With exceeding joy. My friend keep putting on the whole armor. Every day. That you may be able to stand. In the evil day. Put on the whole our prayerfully put on the whole armor of God. So that the Lord will keep you. From falling. Lead us not into temptation. But deliver us. From evil.

Well may the Lord bless these thoughts to us. Let us pray. O Lord our gracious God. May give thanks to thee for thy word. That it gives to us not only warnings. But also great and precious promises. And Lord we can see the warnings clearly there. The warnings of those who went before us. And yet they fell into temptation. We see people like Adam and David and even Lot. And Lord we pray that we would learn from their mistakes. That we too would put on the whole armor of God every day. That we would prayerfully put on the armor. That we might have the helmet of salvation. And the breastplate of righteousness. And the belt of truth. And shoes of peace. And even the sword of the spirit. And the shield of faith. That we would be ready. Each and every morning that we get up.

Ready for the day. Ready to stand against the evil one. Who goes around like a roaring lion. Seeking whom he may devour. O Lord keep us we pray. For Lord we know that we cannot keep ourselves. Keep us from falling. Keep us from falling away.

Keep us Lord in the hollow of thine own hand. Or go before us. And keep the evil one from us. For Jesus' sake. Amen. Well we're going to bring our time to a conclusion this evening. By singing in Psalm 121. Sam 121. We're singing in the Scottish Salter. And we're going to sing the whole Psalm. And as we've said many times before. Psalm 121 is the Keeper's Psalm. It's a Psalm in which we are promised that the Lord will keep us. And that should be our prayer. That as we consider this petition this evening. That we should be praying that the Lord would keep us. And he would keep us from falling. To keep us from falling. And that's the assurance we have in this Psalm. That the Lord watches over our feet. He watches over our way. And he's watching over us even when we slumber and sleep. He's the Lord who keeps us. So Psalm 121. I to the hills will lift my eyes. From whence doth come my need. My safety cometh from the Lord. Who heaven and earth hath made. Thy foot he'll not let slide. Nor will he slumber that the Keeps. Behold he that keeps Israel. He slumbers not. Nor sleeps. We'll sing the whole Psalm of Psalm 121. To God's praise.

I to the hills will lift my eyes. From whence doth come my need. My safety cometh from the Lord. Who heaven and earth hath made. My good deal hath excite nor will he slumber that the Keeps. Behold he that keeps Israel. He slumbers not. Nor sleeps. The Lord he keeps. The Lord I shake. All my life and the same. The world of my life he shall not fight. Nor yet does not my name. The Lord shall be my salvation. He is every calling. And for thy glory come damn it. God be forever dumb.