Temptation

Intro: As a basis for our study let us turn to 1 Cor. 10:12-13 “Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall. 13 There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.” Temptation means two things. First, that which tries or proves a person. In this sense God tempts us, cf. Gen. 22:1 “And it came to pass after these things, that God did tempt Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham: and he said, Behold, here I am.” Second, that which entices us to sin or to do evil. In this sense God does not tempt us, cf. Jam. 1:13-14 “Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: 14 But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.” It is in this light that we wish to direct our thoughts today.

Temptation is a universal experience. The two great representative men (Adam and Christ) were tempted. The one tempted in the garden who fell (Gen. 3). The other was tempted in the wilderness and overcame (Mat. 4).

Thus, we come to the basis of our discussion. In the language of our text we have a warning and an encouragement in our temptations.

I. THE WARNING.

A. 1 Cor. 10:12 “Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.”

1. When we think or assume that we are secure, we are in grave danger.
2. The presumptuous person disarms himself, and becomes an easy victim to the onslaughts of the Devil.

B. Two facts that add to the danger of temptation.

1. The suddenness of them.
   a. Luke 4:5 “And the devil, taking him up into an high mountain, shewed unto him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time.” (in a moment of time.)
   b. Satan often strikes unexpectedly, finding us unaware and unarmed.
2. The unlikeliness of them.
   a. We may fall in those points wherein we seem to be strongest.
   b. Examples:
      (1) Moses—though a meek man (Num. 12:1 “(Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth.”), he was overcome by anger and arrogance.
      (2) Peter—though a courageous man, he did a cowardly thing.

II. ENCOURAGEMENT

A. 1 Cor. 10:13 “There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.”

1. First we are warned against presumption.
2. We are fortified against despair.

B. No temptation exceeds our power of resistance.

1. If the load becomes excessive, the Father will come to our rescue.
2. 1 John 4:4 “Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.”
C. There is a way of escape.

1. It is the way of meditation.
   a. Psa. 119:11 “Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.”
   b. Mat. 4:1-11 “Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil.
      And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungry. And when the
      tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread.
      But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that
      proceedeth out of the mouth of God. Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth
      him on a pinnacle of the temple, And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down:
      for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee
      up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone. Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou
      shalt not tempt the Lord thy God. Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain,
      and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; And saith unto him, All these
      things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me. Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee
      hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.
      Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him.”

2. It is the way of prayer and watchfulness.
   a. Mat. 26:41 “Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the
      flesh is weak.”
   b. Eph. 6:18 “Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto
      with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;”

3. It may be the way of flight.
   a. 1 Cor. 10:14 “Wherefore, my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry.”
   b. 2 Tim. 2:22 “Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that
      call on the Lord out of a pure heart.”
   c. Gen. 39:12 (Joseph and Potiphar’s wife) “And she caught him by his garment, saying, Lie with me: and he left his garment in her hand, and fled, and got him out.”

4. It may be in a face to face conflict as we cannot always escape. Eph. 6:10-18 “Finally, my
   brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye
   may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against
   principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in
   high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the
   evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having
   on the breastplate of righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;
   Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.
   And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: Praying always
   with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication
   for all saints;”

Conclusion: In every temptation there is a twofold possibility. A curse if we yield, a blessing if we
overcome. And there is a twofold blessing in overcoming. We gain strength, every trial we endure
fortifies us for the next. We have exaltation. Joseph was exalted when he overcame, Gen. 41:39-43 “And
Pharaoh said unto Joseph, Forasmuch as God hath shewed thee all this, there is none so discreet and wise as thou art. Thou shalt be over my house, and according unto thy word shall all my people be ruled: only in the throne will I be greater than thou. And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, See, I have set thee over all the land of Egypt. And Pharaoh took off his ring from his hand, and put it upon Joseph's hand, and arrayed him in vestures of fine linen, and put a gold chain about his neck; And he made him to ride in the second chariot which he had; and they cried before him, Bow the knee: and he made him ruler over all the land of Egypt.” Jesus was exalted when he overcame the world, Rev. 3:21 “To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.”