

“Lead Us Not Into Temptation...” Sermon

5/26/2019

This morning we come to a section in the Lord's prayer that can be somewhat confusing if taken at face value. But hopefully, by the end of the sermon you'll more clearly understand and can then apply what Jesus is teaching us to pray.

Matthew 6:9-13 (NIV) *“Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.”*

The obvious question would be – would God even do this? Is God in the business of tempting us? If we look at James 1:13 we can safely assume that God doesn't and won't attempt to tempt us.

James 1:13 (NIV) *When tempted, no one should say, “God is tempting me.” For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone;*

And while we're at it, let's make things a but more confusing by reading what happened a short time before Jesus began his ministry.

Matthew 4:1 (NIV) *Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.*

So, the obvious question that strikes me when I look at these three passage is, “Does God tempt us or not? And if He doesn't, then why does Jesus instruct us to ask Him not to?”

To begin clarifying this confusion let me introduce you to a Greek word.

The word is “Peirasmos”. And it can be used to describe the process of testing something or someone. Like testing a rock to determine it's composition. Whether it's valuable gold or something far less valuable. A goldsmith would take a rock and heat it up thereby removing the cheap stuff, the dross, and allowing the precious metal to shine through.

Likewise, this same word was often applied to the various experiences individuals go through. Any given circumstance can reveal the character of the person. And each of us goes through these testings' almost every day.

- Someone cuts you off in traffic – how you choose to respond can be a test
- Someone treats you poorly – how you choose to respond can be a test
- You make a mistake at work and it's revealed. What do you do? Do you own up to it or immediately try to pass the blame onto someone else?
- You're on your computer looking something up and suddenly an ad pops up inviting you to look at indecent pictures. How you respond is a test.
- God puts someone in your path that's unlike you and can consume your time and possibly money – how you respond can be a test. Jesus told the parable of the Good Samaritan in which 3 individuals were put to the test on how they'd respond to a person in need. And two out of the three showed that they didn't care about a person beat up on the side of the road. And remember, this parable was Jesus' response to the question, “Who is my neighbor?”

So, this Greek word, peirasmos, is really a neutral term. And in different places in your Bible it can be translated either “test” or “tempt”.

James 1:12-13 (NIV) *Blessed is the one who perseveres under trial because, having stood the test, that person will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love him.*

13 When tempted, no one should say, “God is tempting me.” For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone;

All the words that are underlined at that exact same Greek word: *peirasmos*. And notice sometimes it's translated “*trial*” and other times it's translated “*tempt*.”

So, how do you determine the difference a test and a temptation?

Determining the difference between a test and a temptation.

1. Who is the source of it?
2. How do you respond to it?

A test: is given by God to show our true character and help us grow deeper in our faith.

- In the Old Testament it says that God “tested” Abraham when he asked him to offer his son, Isaac, up as a sacrifice. (**Genesis 22:1**) and then **Hebrews 11:17** affirms that Abraham passed that test.
- God also tested the Israelites in the wilderness when he gave them bread from heaven and very specific instructions on how much to take. (**Exodus 16:4**) There are several other examples of God testing various people throughout the Old Testament.

A temptation: is given by Satan in order to cause us to sin and draw away from God.

- In the Garden of Eden, Satan came and tempted Eve to sin by eating of the forbidden fruit and she and Adam both succumbed to his temptation and it severely wrecked their relationship with God.

Test cases

- Consider the cases of **Joseph with Potiphar’s wife** and **David with Bathsheba**. Both men had the opportunity to act on their impulses. Joseph kept his sights set on God, and passed the test – whereas David acted on his impulses and failed the test. Joseph turned his opportunity into a test that showed his true character and David turned it into a temptation which also revealed his true character but took him down a dangerous path that end up resulting in deceit, murder, a pregnancy, death of a child, a cover-up and a fractured relationship with God.

Satan is all about turning every circumstance, every test in life, into a temptation. And the key is how do you respond. Personally I think it’s a waste of time and energy to try to determine whether a situation you encounter is either a testing or a tempting. I think a far better approach is to be aware of what Satan’s schemes are, but determine that you are, under any and all circumstances, going to use every opportunity to praise and thank God for His greatness and His goodness.

Strategies of the Evil One:

1. **Sow seeds of suspicion:** He begins by raising suspicion that our Heavenly Father is not wholly disposed toward our good. And Satan does this very subtly. We see this in Jesus’ temptations. Remember, the last thing that happened prior to Jesus being tempted was his baptism where God descended Jesus in the form of a dove and declared, *“This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.”* From there the Holy Spirit led Jesus into the wilderness where he didn’t eat anything for 40 days and nights. When Satan shows up the first words out of his mouth are: *“If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread.”* Do you see what Satan is doing here? He’s trying to sow seeds of doubt in Jesus’ mind. *“I know God declared that you’re His son and that He loves you. But if that were true, wouldn’t he have treated you better than leaving you without any food for the past 40 days. Is that any way to treat a son you love?”* Have you ever experienced this strategy of Satan? Where, in the midst of difficulties in your life, He causes you to question your standing with God or even God’s motives. Why would a God who claims to love you allow you to be treated like this. It’s the same strategy Satan tried with Eve and it worked. He painted a picture that God wasn’t being truthful with them and was holding out on them.
2. **Focus on the negative:** The Evil One seeks to get us to focus on the negative circumstances of our lives. And as long as Satan gets you to focus on the negative in your life, then he can fill you with worry and take your focus off of the Provider. **2 Peter 1:3** says, *“God’s divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness.”* And “knowledge” here is more than just head knowledge. It implies a deep personal connection with your Heavenly Father. And so, as you continue to focus on God and His

many blessings, you'll be empowered to seize every temptation and turn it into a test in which you continue to grow and deepen your relationship with God.

3. **Make deductions from the negative:** The Evil One seeks to help us make deductions from the negative circumstances. That God doesn't really care about you or you've messed up so many times that God's has written you off. And often people's insensitive comments and reactions to you can reinforce those deductions. I've seen many times when a innocent comment or a look or a perceived slight, is interpreted in an accusatory way and relationships are destroyed.
4. **Take things into our own hands:** Because God's not going to come through for me, then I've got to solve this myself and by doing so, you may very well be circumventing something amazing that God wants to do for you and in you. God's plan is that He will bring you through every test/temptation and as He does you'll continue to grow deeper in your faith.

Your Response:

1. **Be aware of Satan's schemes to cause you to fall.** 2 Corinthians 2:11 Paul declares that "*we are not unaware of his schemes.*" So, be aware that Satan is out to get you. He's wanting to use every circumstance in your life to draw you into sin and thus away from God.
2. **Determine in your heart and mind to seize every circumstance and use it for God's glory.** 2 Corinthians 10:5 instructs us to "*take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.*" If you're in the middle of difficulties, remind yourself of the goodness of God and how He promised to always be with you, no matter what. Even when you "feel" all alone, recall the irrevocable promise of God's presence and power and love. Remind yourself that nothing can separate you from God's love for you in Christ Jesus.
3. **Give thanks to God in every circumstance.** Colossians 3:17 (NIV) *And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.* By committing to and following through with this you train your mind and heart to constantly focus on God, in good times and difficult times.

Isaiah 26:3 (NIV) *You will keep in perfect peace those whose minds are steadfast, because they trust in you.* Satan doesn't want you living in peace with God. He wants to use life's circumstances to disrupt and eventually destroy your peace. And it's way too easy to allow that to happen.

4. **Resolve to turn every temptation into a test that you will win, with God's help.** Approach every day with that resolve. Know that you're in a battle, but you will defeat Satan by glorifying and thanking God in the midst of every challenge.

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one

So, when you pray this portion of the Lord's model prayer, you're asking God to help you be victorious in every situation in life and that you not be allowed to be dragged down by Satan into his trap of temptation. That God would equip you to be victorious every single time.

James 4:7-8 (NIV) *Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. 8 Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded.*

You can't defeat Satan on your own but by drawing near to God, you create a mismatch because he doesn't want anything to do with God. Don't be double-minded by keeping one foot ready to jump into sin and the other foot dabbling in God. You've got to totally give yourself to God and let Him do your fighting for you.

“Lead Us Not Into Temptation...” Sermon **5/26/2019**

Peirasmos =

Determining the difference between a test and a temptation:

1. _____ is the source of it?
2. _____ do you respond to it?

A test is given by _____

A temptation is given by _____

Strategies of the Evil One:

1. Sow seeds of _____
2. Focus on the _____
3. Make _____ from the negative
4. Take things in _____ hands

Your Response:

1. Be _____ of Satan's schemes to cause you to fall.
2. Determine in your heart and mind to _____ every circumstance and use it for God's glory.
3. Give _____ in every circumstance
4. Resolve to turn every _____ into a _____ that you will win, with God's help.

“Lead Us Not Into Temptation...” Sermon **5/26/2019**

Peirasmos =

Determining the difference between a test and a temptation:

1. _____ is the source of it?
2. _____ do you respond to it?

A test is given by _____

A temptation is given by _____

Strategies of the Evil One:

1. Sow seeds of _____
2. Focus on the _____
3. Make _____ from the negative
4. Take things in _____ hands

Your Response:

1. Be _____ of Satan's schemes to cause you to fall.
2. Determine in your heart and mind to _____ every circumstance and use it for God's glory.
3. Give _____ in every circumstance
4. Resolve to turn every _____ into a _____ that you will win, with God's help.