

TODAY’S ORDER OF WORSHIP

Welcome by: Daniel Balch Opening Prayer by: Craig Girard  
Morning Assembly Song Leader: Danny Balch

#869 We’re Marching to Zion  
#882 No Tears in Heaven

Scripture Reading by: Matthew Girard  
#315 When I Survey the Wondrous Cross

Communion Devotional by: Robert Ward  
**Lord’s Supper and Contribution**

#539 Higher Ground  
**Sermon: “Faith Only?”**  
**James 2:20-26**

#947 Jesus Is Tenderly Calling  
#878 Sweet By and By  
Closing Prayer by: River Lucy

**Small Groups**

Our Small Groups will meet tonight.  
Robert Ward’s group will meet at the building at  
5:00 p.m. If you have signed up and not been  
contacted, get with Bryant or one of the Elders.

**Other Opportunities For Spiritual Growth**

**Sunday:** 9:00am — Bible Study Classes, 10:00am — Worship, 5:00pm — Worship  
**Wednesday:** 6:30pm — Bible Study Classes

Mar. 26, 2023

**“Stand Firm in...Liberty”**

Galatians 5:1

**Lead Us Not Into Temptation**

On the night of his betrayal, Jesus poured his heart out in prayer to God in Gethsemane. Then he returned to his disciples. He said to them, “*Watch and pray, that you may not enter into temptation.*” (**Matt. 26:41**). Those words were particularly appropriate that night. Judas had already yielded to temptation, betraying Jesus and destroying his own hopes. Soon, the mob would overwhelm Peter and he would deny that he even knew Jesus. The rest of the disciples would scatter as sheep without a shepherd. It was timely.

But those words are also universally appropriate. We all need to be warned against the danger of being overcome by temptation. In keeping with talking about everyday problems in this space, inspired by our sermon series in James, we want to consider that here now. Is temptation something that you struggle with? Resisting it is often a difficult proposition. There isn’t a day that goes by that we are not tempted in some way, and it comes in many forms: to not tell the truth; to take advantage of someone; to gossip or hold a grudge. It threatens to overwhelm us all; how do we deal with it?

Let’s consider four basic facts about temptation:

**1. Temptation is part of the world.** This is suggested by John: *Do not love the world or 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 desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world. And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.* (**1 Jn 2:15-17**) This is the fundamental reality of temptation, initiated by the world in a sense.

**2. Temptation is rooted in our basic desires.** Recall what James writes in a passage we studied recently: *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 each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death.* (**James 1:13-15**). Temptation is going to come; it is not a question of “if,” but “when.” That is because, whatever the proximate cause, it is brought to life by our own basic nature. We are tempted when we are drawn away by our own lust.

**3. Temptation is a struggle with the Devil.** *Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.* (**1 Pet 5:8**) Temptations do not just happen. They are planned by Satan. He is always an active participant in them.

**4. Temptation has consequences.** *Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life.* (**Gal 6:7-8**) The results of temptation are of tremendous significance: they can be positive, if we overcome it; or negative, if we succumb to sin. The aftereffects are not confined to one place, one moment in time, or even one person—they stretch through time and impact many.

# Family News & Notes

WHAT'S HAPPENING WITH YOUR CHURCH FAMILY

## Our Sick

May Belle Sibley was in the hospital last week.

## Continued Prayers

### (Need cards, phone calls & visits)

Geri Cryer, Steve Ward, Oscar Cantu, Caitlin Smith, Virginia Cole, Ka'Leisha Jones, Linda Frank, Ken Coleman, Joe Edd Stiflemire, Donna Wilson, Bryan Senegal, Cynthia Deblanc, Patricia Prater, Richard Prater, Edna Semien, Wilson Semien, Gloria Moore, Betty Spencer, Willie Spencer, James Wilson

## Shut Ins

### (Need cards, phone calls & visits)

Jim Smith, Winona Angelle, Myrtle Sheffield, Catherine Parker, Peggy McIntosh, Lois Watts, Willo Dean Ellis

## Our Missionaries

Aaron & Marisa Bailey in Montepuez, Mozambique, Rod Kyle in the South Pacific

## Upcoming Activities

**Elders, Minister** meet Monday, Mar. 27th at 5:30 p.m.

We will have a meal this Wednesday night at 5:30 p.m. in the family life center.

We will have a Houston Food Bank truck on Tuesday, April 4th at 8:00 a.m.

**Primetimers** will be meeting to Mike's BBQ and Steak in Dayton on Tuesday, April 11th at 6:00 p.m. A sign up sheet is on the bulletin board.

<u>Elders</u>	<u>Deacons</u>	<u>Minister</u>
Ken Coleman	Zach Arthur	Bryant Perkins
Bobby Rader	Daniel Balch	
Don Taylor	Danny Balch	
Robert Ward	Walden David	
	Gus Tristan	

Think about the two most famous examples of temptation in Scripture to see those facts in action: the temptation of Eve, recorded in **Genesis 3:1-6**, and the temptation of Jesus, in **Matthew 4:1-11** (and parallels). Take a close look at both of these temptations. Both were precipitated by the world around them, tempted in the ways John talked about (the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, the pride of life). Both grew out of the innermost desires: for Eve, it was to be her own God, the root of all sin in a sense; for Jesus, to avoid the cross. In both cases, Satan was present, waging the battle personally. And note the importance of the results in each case: Eve's failure to withstand her temptation brought sin and its attendant consequences—suffering, sickness, death—to the whole human race; Jesus' resistance undid that, bringing reconciliation with God.

So how do we face temptation more like Jesus than Eve? I think we are pointed the way here in the Model Prayer: *Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil (Mt 6:13)*. That is a powerful reminder that we will ALWAYS have temptation with us, and that we cannot overcome it alone. Sometimes, people who decide to follow Jesus expect to completely overcome this. John Wesley, for instance, thought Christians could become perfect in this life. Or on a more personal level, how often have we seen new Christians experience the spiritual peak of conversion—assume their lives are going to be of complete and total sinless dedication—only to find their confidence come crashing down sooner or later, as they are tempted like never before! Perhaps we have been the new Christian to go through that at some point.

Jesus serves as an example here too, as we have already seen. Jesus had the same needs and desires we do—he was tempted in every way that we are. If Jesus himself was not spared this testing, should we expect any less? Sometimes we might feel shame because we struggle with temptation. But there is no shame in it—even Jesus experienced it! What we must do is not get rid of it, but overcome it.

To do that, we must realize that we cannot do this in our own power. Sometimes people wonder why God would not eliminate temptation in the world. Does he not have the power to do it? Or does he not care? But to eliminate it would mean we must serve God; we would be automatons. But God wants us to grow into his likeness, to come into relationship with him, and to live a life of trusting faith. We must trust the Father's guidance in order to grow in holiness. Our confidence is not in our ability to master temptation, but in his care.

C.S. Lewis in *The Screwtape Letters*, an imaginary communication from the Devil to his subordinate, Wormwood, illustrates the necessity of trust in our Father well: *The most alarming thing in your last account of the patient is that he is making none of those confident resolutions which marked his original conversion. No more lavish promises of perpetual virtue, I gather; not even the expectation of an endowment of "grace" for life, but only a hope for the daily and hourly pittance to meet the daily and hourly temptation! This is very bad.*

Lewis reminds us that Satan rejoices in overconfidence. But he falters in the face of humble dependence on God's daily care. When praying *lead us not into temptation*, we acknowledge that living a faithful life is difficult. We are trusting in our Father to guide us. Only he can carry us through.

**Bryant Perkins**

## ***"Stand Firm in...Liberty"***

is the weekly bulletin of the Liberty Church of Christ 3201 North Main, Liberty Texas 77575

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