



## Sunday Morning Grow Groups

Week of February 10, 2019

### ***TEMPTED! God's provision***

#### **Welcome**

- Please add your name to the roster and get a name tag.
- Help yourself to food and coffee in the hallway.

#### **Announcements**

- **Luther's Renaissance Festival Dinner TONIGHT** to sponsor our youth for their summer SERVE trips; tickets on sale in atrium for \$25/person. 5:30pm in the Fellowship Hall.
- **Blood Drive TODAY!** In rooms 27/28 because of youth dinner set up in FH.
- **WomenConnect Spring Retreat**, first weekend of April. Overnight retreat at Camp All Saints at Lake Texoma. Retreat fee \$75. Just a few spots remaining!
- **LifeConnect Super Soul Sunday** on Feb 24. Soup lunch after worship in the Fellowship Hall for families, adults, singles, newly marrieds, everybody who enjoys fellowship!

#### **Connecting with Each Other (9:50 - 10:00am)**

*If there are new people to get to know, spend some time introducing yourselves.*

- Have everyone in the group share their favorite Valentine's Day candy.
- If you were to write a short, inspirational message on a piece of candy to your younger self, what would you say?

#### **Digging Deeper and Turning to the Texts (10:00 - 10:40am)**

We continue in our sermon series, "Tempted!", reflecting on the story of the temptation of Jesus in the wilderness after his baptism. Pastor Paul set up the series last week by telling us that the devil's job in life is to capture all the ways we fall short of God's ways and to accuse us before God in order to convince God that we're not worthy of God's mercy.

The devil's only real power is the power of suggestion because the devil gets more pleasure out of convincing people to sin instead of causing them to sin. Thinking back to our reading from Luke 4, the devil uses the word, "if," three times with Jesus to plant doubt that Jesus isn't as special and beloved as he thinks he is. Thankfully, Jesus trusts God more than the vain promises of the devil.

Today, we turn to the first empty promise of the devil and the first key Jesus gives us in resisting temptation. This is the Temptation of Self-Provision, or depending on ourselves rather than on God.

**Read Luke 4:1-4 (The Message translation) to refresh your memories:**

**1-2** Now Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, left the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wild. For forty wilderness days and nights he was tested by the Devil. He ate nothing during those days, and when the time was up he was hungry. **3** The Devil, playing on his hunger, gave the first test: “If you’re God’s Son, command this stone to turn into a loaf of bread.” **4** Jesus answered by quoting Deuteronomy: “It takes more than bread to really live.”

- What was the devil’s aim here?
- What do you think Jesus means with his response?

**Let’s turn now to Deuteronomy 8:1-10 (The Message translation) where Jesus gets his inspiration.**

**1-5** Keep and live out the entire commandment that I’m commanding you today so that you’ll live and prosper and enter and own the land that God promised to your ancestors. Remember every road that God led you on for those forty years in the wilderness, pushing you to your limits, testing you so that he would know what you were made of, whether you would keep his commandments or not. He put you through hard times. He made you go hungry. Then he fed you with manna, something neither you nor your parents knew anything about, so you would learn that men and women don’t live by bread only; *we live by every word that comes from God’s mouth*. Your clothes didn’t wear out and your feet didn’t blister those forty years. You learned deep in your heart that God disciplines you in the same ways a father disciplines his child.

**6-10** So it’s paramount that you keep the commandments of God, your God, walk down the roads he shows you and reverently respect him. God is about to bring you into a good land, a land with brooks and rivers, springs and lakes, streams out of the hills and through the valleys. It’s a land of wheat and barley, of vines and figs and pomegranates, of olives, oil, and honey. It’s land where you’ll never go hungry—always food on the table and a roof over your head. It’s a land where you’ll get iron out of rocks and mine copper from the hills. After a meal, satisfied, bless God, your God, for the good land he has given you.

- Why is it important to keep and live out the commandments?
- The writer reminds the audience of the ways God took care of the Israelites during their 40 years of wandering the wilderness. What are the examples given? Are there other ways God provided for them?

- How does God take care of you in your life? Individually, jot down what you think the top 5 provisions of God are in your life.
- Now share those top 5 with the group. Is everyone's list the same? What differences were there?
- What do you think God expects in return from us for these daily provisions? (see last verse)
- What does it mean "to live by every word that comes from God's mouth?"
- You can go three weeks without food, three days without water, and only three minutes without air before you die. How long should you go without God's Word?

**If you have time, read through the New Testament reading for today: James 1:1-4, 12-18**

**1** I, James, am a slave of God and the Master Jesus, writing to the twelve tribes scattered to Kingdom Come: Hello!

**2-4** Consider it a sheer gift, friends, when tests and challenges come at you from all sides. You know that under pressure, your faith-life is forced into the open and shows its true colors. So don't try to get out of anything prematurely. Let it do its work so you become mature and well-developed, not deficient in any way.

**12** Anyone who meets a testing challenge head-on and manages to stick it out is mighty fortunate. For such persons loyally in love with God, the reward is life and more life.

**13-15** Don't let anyone under pressure to give in to evil say, "God is trying to trip me up." God is impervious to evil, and puts evil in no one's way. The temptation to give in to evil comes from us and only us. We have no one to blame but the leering, seducing flare-up of our own lust. Lust gets pregnant, and has a baby: sin! Sin grows up to adulthood, and becomes a real killer.

**16-18** So, my very dear friends, don't get thrown off course. Every desirable and beneficial gift comes out of heaven. The gifts are rivers of light cascading down from the Father of Light. There is nothing deceitful in God, nothing two-faced, nothing fickle. He brought us to life using the true Word, showing us off as the crown of all his creatures.

- Have you ever considered a test or trial in your life to be a joyful experience, or a "sheer gift?" Why do you think James looks at these experiences in this way?

For most problems in our lives, our attitude makes all the difference in how much power those problems will have over us. James teaches us to turn challenges into opportunities by using our faith and knowing that we'll come out more mature in the end.

- Verses 13-15 tells us that "God tempts no one" (or tries to trip us up as Eugene Peterson says in the above translation). Why is this important to point out for our faith?

- At PMLC, we believe a disciple of Jesus is **grateful for God's good gifts**. How do you show gratitude to God for the good gifts in your life?

## **Taking It Home & Prayer (10:40 - 10:45a)**

By the end of today, put down ten things for which you're grateful to God. Say a little prayer of thanks to God for these ten things. Each day this week, add to your list by adding another five things -- either things that happened that day or things you forgot in your original ten. Repeat the simple prayer to end your day. Challenge family and friends to join you in this simple gratitude exercise.

- You can ask for prayer concerns during this time and simply pray over those that have been lifted up.
- Together, pray this prayer in closing:

*Lord Christ, you came into the world as one of us, and suffered as we do. As we go through the trials of life, help us to realize that you are with us at all times and in all things; that we have no secrets from you; and that your loving grace enfolds us for eternity. In the security of your embrace we pray. Amen. (taken from ELW hymnal, p. 84)*