

“9 We should not test the Lord, as some of them did—and were killed by snakes. 10 And do not grumble, as some of them did—and were killed by the destroying angel. 11 These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us, on whom the fulfillment of the ages has come. 12 So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don’t fall! 13 No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.” (1Co 10:9-13 NIV)

Is the common saying that “God will not allow circumstances in our lives to be more than we can bear”, a true statement?

The statement comes from verse 13.

As we have stated before we can read the Bible with pre-conceived ideas and we do. Remember the presentation by Baxter Kruger where he had these ridiculously large and oversized glasses. He made the point that our Western world often has serious misconceptions of God because we have been unduly influence by Greek philosophy and other misconceptions. The problem as he described it is that we see God as distant and uninvolved in our lives.

This statement that “God will not put us through more than we can bear” is such a statement, a pre-conceived idea. I know, as I personally believed it for many years. When we believe this statement, it can cause us to be inauthentic or not honest with ourselves as Christians. It can also cause us to doubt our faith.

During today’s sermon, we will expound on this misconception and fallacy.

Let’s re-read what Paul says slowly. Here is what he is inspired to write. **13 No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.” (1Co 10:9-13 NIV)**

Temptation = peirasmos pi-ras-mos’ = an **enticement to sin**, temptation, whether arising from the desires or from the outward circumstances. (From Strong’s Concordance – Online Bible).

What Paul was telling the Corinthians, (under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit) was that God would not put them in circumstances that would be such as to cause them to abandon God.

What is sin? **“Everyone who sins breaks the law; in fact, sin is lawlessness.” (1Jo 3:4 NIV).**

What are the New Testament commands God is giving us?

(1Jo 3:23-24 NIV) “23 ¶ And this is his command: to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another as he commanded us. 24 Those who obey his commands live in him, and he in them. And this is how we know that he lives in us: We know it by the Spirit he gave us.”

The commands from God the Father in the New Testament, under the New Covenant are simple and clear:

1. **to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ,**
2. **love one another as he commanded us**

This is the law of Christ. Paul talks about Christ’s law. This is what he says, **“To those not having the law I became like one not having the law (though I am not free from God’s law but am under Christ’s law), so as to win those not having the law.”** (1Co 9:21 NIV)

When we go through the various difficulties of life, one of the temptations is to stop believing in His Son. If the situation is caused by people, the other temptation is to become bitter and hateful.

Notice that God is talking about temptations in 1st Corinthians 10:13. He is not talking about circumstances in our life that are overwhelming. He is talking about our reactions to circumstances whether external or internal.

The commands that God gives us in the NT is to continue to believe in Jesus, the Eternal Son of God who willingly accepted to become one of us so we could become His. This is the Father’s love towards us and for us! As a result of trusting, of believing in Christ, we will love others for who they are! We will have the life of Christ, the life of God, flowing in our veins as He lives inside of us. We will have God’s DNA if you will. From being dead in our sins, we have a new life as we willingly receive His life, His grace in faith through the Holy Spirit.

What the devil wants us to do is to become the Lord of the Ring, to trust in ourselves rather than in Christ through the Holy Spirit for our life.

Paul wrote to Timothy about a common temptation that people have and that Christians can fall into if they keep their eyes off of Jesus.

The Bible gives various sources or examples of temptations. Let’s look at one of them.

(1Ti 6:7-10 NIV) “7 For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. 8 But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that. 9 People who want to get

rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction. 10 For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.”

We often forget that we came into this world with nothing and leave it with nothing. We have this tendency to put our trust in material things for our security. It is easy to shift from being God focused, to being “thing focused”.

Money comes and goes. It is a means of exchange, nothing more and nothing less. It does not give life. It has no power to save. It is not the provider of anything. It is part of the human system – a system that comes and goes. It is not evil in itself but the love of it is a root of all kinds of evils, as we see in our world. Although we need money to function in our world, it can't be the focus of our life. Money is simply a means to an end. It is a created thing. It is not wrong in itself as it is lifeless. How we think about it however can become a problem. The temptation is get our eyes off of Jesus and onto the created. Our minds are not to be set on earthy things.

(Col 3:1-3 NIV) “1 ¶ Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. 2 Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. 3 For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God.”

If you read Matthew 4, when Jesus was hungry after 40 days of fasting, the devil tempted Him to worship him in exchange for the glory of this world. Jesus simply told him, **“Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.”** (Matt. 4:10 NIV)

“2 ¶ My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; 3 Knowing *this*, that the trying of your faith worketh patience.” (Jas 1:2-3 AV)

Some modern versions of the Bible translate it in the following manner:

“2 ¶ Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, 3 because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance.” (Jas 1:2-3 NIV)

The New Revised Version has a similar translation. The word trial is translated from the Greek word which means temptation (peirasmos pi-ras-mos). This word is found 20 times in the New Testament.

The point is that the Bible doesn't say, “Count it all joy when you fall into diverse trials”. Trials cause pain. Before Jesus died, He was full of anxiety

(Mt 26:36-38 NIV) 36 ¶ Then Jesus went with his disciples to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to them, "Sit here while I go over there and pray." 37 He took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee along with him, and he began to be sorrowful and troubled. 38 Then he said to them, "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me.”

Jesus admitted that he was troubled in his emotions! He was not ashamed to say that He felt sorrow to the point of death.

The question is, "can we face situations in our life that are more than we can bear, that are beyond our ability to endure?" The answer is a definite yes as we all know deep inside. Yet we are often afraid to admit it, for fear of appearing weak and feeble. Or again, we may think that permitting ourselves to feel such emotions is a lack of faith. We want to appear stoic and strong. The fact is that situations occur that are far beyond our ability to endure. During those times, we are going to face emotions of sadness, grief, anxiety, loneliness, and all the emotions that we may feel as a human being.

It is okay to admit that these situations are beyond our ability to endure. It is okay to admit them to both God and to fellow human beings.

Why can you and I make the statement that there are situations that are beyond our ability to endure?

We can say it because Jesus was very transparent. The apostle Paul was also very transparent and admitted to the very great troubles that he faced and how he felt about them. Here is what he wrote:

(2Co 1:8-11 NIV) "8 We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about the hardships we suffered in the province of Asia. We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure, so that we despaired even of life. 9 Indeed, in our hearts we felt the sentence of death. But this happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead. 10 He has delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us. On him we have set our hope that he will continue to deliver us, 11 as you help us by your prayers. Then many will give thanks on our behalf for the gracious favour granted us in answer to the prayers of many."

Consider the words – the great apostle Paul faced situations and his colleagues faced situations that were beyond their ability to endure. He realized that he was powerless before what he faced and that the problems were beyond him and his ability to solve them. Did Paul lack faith for admitting this to the brethren? Of course not!

What did he do? He and his companions relied on God. They entrusted their lives to Him who raises from the dead! They gave glory to God that they were delivered!

I would like to read to you a devotional from Steve McVey's Online Devotional.

Outlook or an Uplook? (From Steve McVey's Online Devotional)

<p>"Your son may not live. He may be a paraplegic." The words stunned me as the emergency room doctor spoke them to us in a somber tone. The year was 1995 and our oldest son, twenty at the time, had just fallen from scaffolding on a job site where he was working. Suddenly, life made</p>

no sense to me at all. My world became instantly dark at the very thought of the long term implications of this accident.

The doctor told us that Andrew would have to be transferred to another hospital which was better equipped to handle such an extensive injury. After following the ambulance across town to the larger hospital with tears streaming down our cheeks, we pulled into the parking space outside the emergency room.

I reached over and took Melanie's hand. Through teary eyes and with a trembling voice I said, "We don't know what the rest of this day holds for us. Andrew may not live. He may be crippled for life. Before we go in here, can we agree on one thing? No matter what happens in this hospital, God is God and God is good."

Melanie nodded as she wiped tears from her own eyes. We got out of the car and walked into the hospital holding hands. A long journey was beginning.

Our son did survive that accident eight years ago and after three years of therapy, he was restored to complete health. Today he lives a normal life with little residual effects of the accident. We give God the glory for that.

How are we to survive, let alone triumph, when tragedy strikes our lives? What do we do when the outlook is bleak? The answer is, "Try the uplook." When John wrote the words in Revelation 4, he was exiled on an island – a prisoner in isolation. Humanly, things looked bleak. But the Lord showed John that life can't be properly understood from a human perspective, but must be seen from His perspective.

As long as God is on His throne, we have every reason to trust Him and know that, despite superficial evidence to the contrary, everything will ultimately work out for our highest good and His highest glory. This is a truth which has sustained saints through the ages.

When he lost his children, Job said, "The Lord gives and the Lord takes away. Blessed be the name of the Lord." "Job, how could you say such a thing?" He might answer, "Because I can see beyond the cemetery and I know there's a throne fixed in heaven and Somebody is sitting on it!" From a prison cell, Paul wrote, "Rejoice in the Lord. I'll say it again – rejoice!" "Paul," we might say, "Those are strange words coming from somebody imprisoned for preaching. How do you keep such a perspective?" The Apostle might answer, "You see prison bars, but I can look beyond them and see a throne in heaven and Somebody is sitting on it!"

The list goes on and on throughout Scripture – those who looked beyond the temporal circumstances of life and saw a sovereign God sitting on a throne. Will you choose that perspective?

When the outlook is hopeless, try the uplook. Your Father loves you and is sovereign over every detail of your life. That fact is enough to sustain us in the darkest days of our lives.

Question – Are there situations that are bigger than us where we can feel despair?

The reality is that we can have inward pain and still have faith. In the pain we can have joy that we have a sure hope in our Savior who has given us a new life – eternal life which will be totally manifested at the resurrection. We can acknowledge all those feelings and have faith. Christ suffered anguish in His incarnation as the perfect human being but He never lost faith.

The point is that we can be authentic when we face trials whether it is the loss of a loved one, the loss of a job, the loss of your health, etc... It is perfectly okay to admit the pain and the reality we live, while still expressing faith.

Imagine standing at the casket of a loved one, a wife, husband, child, parent, close friend and you are crying when a well-meaning Christians tells you that you shouldn't cry because the loved one is in the hands of a loving God or that he is with God. While that may be true, it doesn't ease the suffering of the moment.

Or imagine, you are preoccupied about something big in your life, you try to speak to the person and the other person minimizes your suffering, tells you shouldn't feel the way you do, would that be helpful? Would you feel that the other person understands?

Is Jesus minimized in our eyes because He suffered such anguish? Is Paul minimized in our eyes because he was very human and trusted in God, because he was powerless to deal with the situation he was facing.

Of course not!

We have a new life in Christ. We were dead and we are now spiritually alive because He dwells in us and we dwell in Him. We are accepted before our Father in heaven because Jesus, the perfect Man in heaven represents all of us. We are accepted in Him not because of anything we have done or feel but because of Him.

(Php 4:4-14 NIV) “4 Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! 5 Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. 6 Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. 7 And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. 8 Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. 9 Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you. 10 ¶ I rejoice greatly in the Lord that at last you have renewed your concern for me. Indeed, you have been concerned, but you had no opportunity to show it. 11 I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. 12 I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. 13 I can do everything through him who gives me strength. 14 Yet it was good of you to share in my troubles.”

Paul shared his troubles with the brethren. He encourages them not be anxious about anything but to wait on God. It is a learning process! Paul said that he learned to be content in all his life's situations! It is a gift that God gave Him over time as He received His life. He was content in very difficult situation. In Christ, he accepted life for what it was.

Paul did not condemn those who were troubled either as a result of their suffering.

(2Th 1:4-7 NIV) “4 Therefore, among God’s churches we boast about your perseverance and faith in all the persecutions and trials you are enduring. 5 ¶ All this is evidence that God’s judgment is right, and as a result you will be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are suffering. 6 God is just: He will pay back trouble to those who trouble you 7 and give relief to you who are troubled, and to us as well. This will happen when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with his powerful angels.”

You see God allows for authenticity in our Christian walk in the Lord. We don’t have to fake anything when we feel overwhelmed. We can admit it to God and to our brothers. The peace that we will eventually experience is not from us but from God Himself. It is a peace we receive as we receive His life in our life and learn to rest in Him. The rest also comes from Him. “Come to Me and I will give you rest”, Jesus tells us.

The basic fact is that we can admit our pain to God, to ourselves and to others when we go through hard times. It is not a lack of faith! We have or all will go through situations that are beyond our capacity to endure. During those times, like Paul, we are to **“not rely on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead.”**