

# SERIES: HALLOWED BE YOUR NAME

Week Commencing 14 NOVEMBER 2022

*Notes for next week's sermon on "Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil."*

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As this week I'm preparing for two weeks' annual leave, please excuse the fact that I'm using material from a great old preacher Charles Spurgeon to help us consider this great line of the Lord's prayer. The language is quite old, but **careful reading will result in much insight and blessing.**

## DAY 1: Read James 1:13-18

A great many persons have been troubled by that passage in James, where it is expressly said, "Let no man say, when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempts He any man." It has been found very difficult to reconcile that express declaration of the apostle with this prayer of our Saviour and some good, but very ignorant men, have gone the length of altering our Lord's words! English language can convey the meaning of the original, "Lead us not into temptation," and no sort of pinching, twisting, or wresting can make this prayer convey any other sense than that which our version conveys in so many words! Let us always be afraid of attempting improvements on God's perfect Word!

Neither can we get out of the difficulty by supposing that the word "temptation" does not mean "temptation," but must be restricted to the sense of "trial." Now, we grant at once that the use of the word "temptation" in our translation of Scripture is somewhat liable to mislead. The word temptation has two meanings – to try, and to entice. When we read that God tempted Abraham, we are by no means to understand that He enticed Abraham to anything that was evil; the meaning of the word in that place, doubtless, is simply and only that God tried him; but permit me to say that this interpretation will not stand with this particular text now before us. The word here used for "temptation," is not the word constantly written when trial is meant. It is the very word which one would employ if temptation to sin were intended, and I cannot believe that any other translation can meet the case.

"Well," asks one, "if God does not tempt men, how can it be proper to pray, 'Lead us not into temptation'?" Dear brothers and sisters do but notice the text does not say, "Tempt us not." If it did, then there would be a difficulty! It does not say, "Lord, tempt us not," but it says, "Lead us not into temptation." I think I shall very rapidly be able to show you that there is a vast difference between leading into temptation, and actually tempting! God tempts no man. For God to tempt, in the sense of enticing to sin, would be inconsistent with His nature, and altogether contrary to His known character! But for God to lead us into those conflicts with evil which we call temptations is not only possible, but usual. Full often the Great Captain of Salvation leads us by His providence to **battlefields** where we must face the full array of evil – and conquer through the blood of the Lamb; and this leading into temptation is, by divine grace, overruled for our good, since, by being tempted, we grow strong in grace and patience. Our God and Father may – for wise ends, which shall ultimately serve His own glory, and our profit – lead us into positions where Satan, the world, and the flesh may tempt us, and so the prayer is to be understood in that sense of a humble self-distrust which shrinks from the conflict. (See for example Matthew 4:1 where our Lord was *led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil.*) So in this line we are praying that we might be spared the battlefield where we might face temptation.

## DAY 2: Read James 1:1-8

Let me observe that God, in no sense, so leads men into temptation as to have any share in the blame of their sin if they fall into it! God cannot possibly, by any act of His, become partner with man in his crime. The devil tempts men that he may ruin them – God tries men, and puts them where Satan may try them – but He leads them into temptation for probation, that the chaff may be sifted from the wheat, that the dross may be separated from the fine gold. When the Lord leads us into [trial], it is always with a design for our good. He leads us to battle, not that we may be wounded and defeated, but that we may win glorious victories which shall crown the head of our gracious Leader with many crowns, and prepare us for future deeds of valour! Temptations overcome are inestimable blessings, because they make us lie the more humbly at His feet, bind us more firmly to our Lord, and train us to help others. God does not tempt men. But he may lead us into positions in His providence where it is absolutely certain that we shall be tempted! And therefore, our consciousness of weakness should compel us to plead for escape from the terrible contest – and deliverance out of it – if come, it must.

### **DAY 3: Read 1 Corinthians 10:(1-11) 12-17**

Possibly we may get at the meaning of the text better by supposing that we have just risen from our beds this morning. We are about to engage in prayer. Before we do so, we endeavour to prepare our hearts for that hallowed exercise. We look back upon yesterday. We remember all our follies, our mistakes and sins. We feel deeply grieved. We are conscious that we are, this morning, just as weak as we were yesterday! We feel that if temptation assails us we shall as surely fall into sin as we did on the past day. We have gathered some experience, but we find we are still as weak as water; that while the will to be holy is present with us, how to perform that which is good, we find not. At the same time, we have an intense abhorrence of sin – we feel in our own hearts that we would sooner die than offend our God – we can contemplate sorrow with pleasure, but sin only with horror. We feel afraid to venture downstairs. We fear that temptations may await us in the family, and in business; we feel, therefore, compelled to pray. We know that there is the temptation of the theatre and the music hall, but divine grace has made us resolute not to go there, for we feel we could not honestly ask God to preserve us from that temptation if we ran into it ourselves! There are our besetting sins, but being aware of them, we cry to God for help against them. But the black thought comes across our mind – “You do not know what is to happen today. You cannot tell what loss you may have to suffer; you do not know what trouble you may meet with, what rough word may be spoken to you; your ship is on the sea, but you know not what rough waves will beat against it; there are sunken rocks and hidden quicksand – what if you should be wrecked on these?” You feel that you are about to follow the course of divine providence, that whatever happens to you will be according to your Father’s will, and you put up this prayer, “Lord, You are to lead me this day; I would follow close to Your footsteps as a sheep follows its shepherd; but since I know not what is to happen to me, allow me to ask one thing of You; I do not pray that You lead me away from sorrow or trouble – do as You will about that, O my Lord – but do not, I beseech You, lead me in Your providence where I shall be tempted, for I am so feeble that, perhaps, the temptation may be too strong for me, therefore, this day make a straight path for my feet, and do not allow me to be assailed by the tempter. Or if it must be, if it is better for me to be tempted, and if You intend this day that I should fight with old Apollyon himself, then deliver me from evil. Oh, save me from the mischief of the temptation; let me have the temptation, if so it must be, but oh, let it do me no harm; let me not stain my garments; let me not slip nor slide, but may I stand fast at the end of the day! May this temptation, though it is not joyous but grievous, have so worked out in me the comfortable fruits of righteousness, that it may be a part of that grand method by which You shall ultimately deliver me from all evil, and make me perfectly like Yourself in glory everlasting.” That, I believe, is the meaning of the prayer.

### **DAY 4: Read Luke 22:24-32**

I cannot tell why it is that this text should come on this particular Sunday, but it is very likely that your life this week will let you into the secret of it. Thus says the Lord unto some of you, “This week I will sift you and try you.” Pray that you enter not into temptation. Christ pleads for you, for Satan has desired to have some of you, that he may sift you as wheat. Join your prayers with Christ’s supplications that your faith fails not. I cannot tell, I am no prophet, but I feel a call to warn you to watchfulness. There may happen something that may make us bless God for this warning note. We are forearmed because we are forewarned. We are able to put our helmet on in time, to gird on our breastplate and our shoes of brass, and to put our hand upon our sword, for the battle is coming, and the Lord has sounded the trumpet and bids us cry – “Lead us not into temptation.”

This prayer will not suit some of you. You need not be led into temptation, for you live in it already! Come before God and say, “O Lord, I know that Jesus died and took upon Himself the sins of all those who trust Him; I trust Him; for His sake, Lord, forgive my trespasses, and let my debt be blotted out by His blood.” He will hear you, sinner, and before you go out of yonder doors, your sins may be forgiven, and you may be white in Christ’s righteousness, and spotless as the newly fallen snow! After that, then, use my text and pray to Him who is able to keep you from falling, “Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.”

*From A SERMON DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, MAY 17, 1863,  
BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON, AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.*