

**Preaching Christ....  
...by the power of the Holy Spirit  
...and the authority of the Word of God**

**Date:** 20 Nov 2022  
**Service/s:** *Across the diocese*  
**Series:** Hallowed be your name  
**Title:** Save us from the time of trial/Lead us not into temptation  
**Passage:** James 1:2-8; 12-15  
**Outline:**

1. Save us OR lead us not?
2. Why pray this if we're told he doesn't?
3. How does temptation work?
4. How might God answer this prayer?

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**INTRODUCTION**

I'm sure you've noticed that there is a difference in the line we come to in the Lord's Prayer today, between our **Bibles** and our **prayer books**...

Our **Bibles** say – '**Lead us not into temptation**'.

Our more recent **prayer books** say – '**Save us from the time of trial**'

So that's where we'll begin this morning – by trying to sort out what is going on **there**...

But there are three other questions to explore with you about this line:

So here is where we are heading:

1. 'Save us' OR 'lead us not'?
2. Why pray this if we're told he doesn't? (lead us into temptation)
3. How does temptation work?
4. How might God answer this prayer? Our behaviour must change... AND not tempted beyond that which we can bear

First

**1. SAVE US OR LEAD US NOT?**

'Save us from the time of trial', or 'lead us not into temptation'?

How come our **prayer books** differ from our **Bibles**? //

Well – there is a dilemma here for translators, for the word in Matthew 6 in the context of the Lord's prayer, can actually mean **EITHER temptation OR trial!!**

The **context** will determine the **meaning!**

It's just like SO many words in English – where the context determines the meaning...

Even the word 'read'... Mum *read* to us every night VS Mum taught us to *read*...

Same word – so the context determines the meaning.

I don't often give you Greek words... but the word used here is *peirasmon*

This can refer to being **enticed towards sin**, or to being **tested** in a **trial**

The word occurs in a number of places in the New Testament... and in some places it is translated '**temptation**' and in other places '**trial**'.

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So the letter of James... 1:2 *Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face **trials** of many kinds*

And then in v13 - *When **tempted**, no one should say, "God is **tempting** me." – same word is **used** – but translated in chapter 1 v2 as '**trial**' and chapter 1 v13 as '**temptation**'*

So – in Matthew 6 – the original reads something like: no you bringing us into **temptation** - or no you bringing us into **trial**

Which should it be?

A number of things that translators look at

How has this been **translated** across **history and in various languages**? Answer – **temptation** or equivalent

Then they'll ask, 'what does the **context** suggest?' – well with reference to the second part of the phrase – 'but deliver us from **evil**' or 'deliver us from **the evil one**' – you *could* argue – that *that* linking evil one with 'temptation', makes better sense than with 'trial' ... as the evil one is actively involved in tempting us.

On balance – given the number of various Bible translations which have stuck with 'temptation' - I am of the opinion that it would have been better for the prayer books compilers to stick with '**temptation**'

1. Because on balance, I think that is the better or more helpful **translation** and helps us understand what Jesus was teaching us to pray
2. Because it is more familiar to those who only come to church once in a while
3. If you opt for 'trial', **which** trial is it... because it says save us from **THE** time of trial... is that the **end-time** trial Jesus talks about **elsewhere?** – or **any general trial??** I'm not **sure**... I think it is just **confusing**...

In my last parish in Noosa, we stuck with 'lead us not into temptation' whenever we said the Lord's prayer, and that is an option for any church.

Second

## **2. WHY PRAY THIS, IF WE ARE TOLD HE DOESN'T??**

James 1:13 says (have a look with me), *"When tempted, no one should say, "God is tempting me." For God cannot be tempted by evil, **nor does he tempt anyone**...*

Well – some background work first...

It is important to understand that you and I will **always** face **temptation** – until we **die** or Jesus **returns**.

When a person comes into relationship with the Lord Jesus, we realise that sin no longer **reigns**... but it does **remain!**

We are involved in an **ongoing battle** with the **evil one**.

He's **lost** the **battle** – **Jesus** is the **victor** – but the **evil one** is actively working to trip people **up** or win them back to his **side**.

Our three battle grounds – and you'll have heard this before – the **world**, the **flesh** and the **devil**

The **world** – all that is attractive in this world but at the same time **destructive** and **deceptive**...

The **flesh** – pushes us on a downward spiral to do whatever our **body** and its **appetites** want us to **do**

And the **devil** – who constantly comes and presents all sorts of things to us saying – 'Wouldn't you like some of **that**, and wouldn't you like to spend your life **here** and **there** and do **these things?**' //

We must realise that even though we have turned to Jesus, we still **fancy** the idea of **sinning**...

Our whole **bent** // is to **sin!**

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Like a gravitational pull to bring us **down**.

And the challenge of living the Christian life is – am I going to obey God’s word and surrender to the Spirit’s transforming work and thereby **fly** and **overcome** the **downward pull of sin** or am going to let my **guard down** – and **dive, dive, dive?** //

So we are constantly in the realm of a **spiritual battle** – a spiritual **warfare**...

And that is surely a good reason to be praying **‘do not lead us into temptation’**...

But of course, the question remains - “Why would we even pray like this, since we just read in James chapter 1 that *God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone.*”

What are we then asking God to do?

Now, part of the problem here is that I think we get just a little **too** analytical.

We zoom in a little **too much**... when we should be taking the broad **drift** of what’s being **said**.

What is the person saying in this **prayer**?

“Lord, **don’t let me muck things up.**”

“Lord, don’t let me trip up. Lord, don’t let me be deceived by the evil one.

Lord, help me so that I don’t even come **close** to temptation. Help me stay out of **harm’s way**.

I can’t **avoid** temptation, and temptation in and of itself is **not sin**, but Lord, don’t let me get **sucked** in by it and **beaten** by it.” //

Now: we know that God uses **testings or trials** in our lives.

He uses them to **prove** us and to **improve** us

So you may recall God in the Old Testament testing **Abraham and Sarah**. They were **old** – **really old**. But God promised them a **son** but told them they’d have to **wait**.

The test was the **waiting**.

And Satan comes along and says – I’m going to turn the **test** into a **temptation**. Abraham decides to take matters into his own **hand**.

And so the evil one **tempts Abraham** to sin – by taking his wife’s **servant** and sleeping with **her** to produce a **son**. That was a **disaster!**

Abraham took a **test** which came from God and succumbed to the **temptation** to do the **job himself**

God may **well test** us... /

... and we may face **temptation** as a result of the **test**

So: when we pray, “Lead us not into temptation,” this is what we’re saying: “God, help us so that we do not let the **testing** which comes from **you** // become a **temptation** from **Satan** to do **evil**.”

We will **never** be free of this until we’re with the **Lord**, so we need to be praying **regularly**, “Do not allow me, Lord, to be drawn into the **power** of **temptation**, where I may be caused to do **evil** and **fall**.”

“Lord, if it please you, do not even lead me into **trials**... without your **presence with** me and without your **power keeping me.**”

Help me not to be **sucked in** by sin’s **deceitful attractions**.

That’s the sort of thing we’re **praying**.

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**3. HOW DOES TEMPTATION WORK??**

The reason this phrase is so important in the prayer is because it reminds us of the **reality** and the **proximity** of temptation.

Back in Genesis chapter 4, the Word of God says,

“Sin is crouching at the door; it desires to have you.”

It’s just **waiting** there to **jump** on you.

And how does the verse **finish**? //

“... it desires to have you, **but you must master it.**”

More of that in a moment...

We cannot claim when we sin, as did Tom Sawyer ‘the devil made me do it’. Remember Aunt Polly’s response? she beats his ears and says, “No, the devil didn’t make you do it. Tom, the reason you did it is because you **wanted** to do it.”

**Every sin, is an inside job. Every time.**

The evil one puts all sorts of things before us and says, ‘would you like some of this?’, but he does not have the power to make us sin.

James 1 – vv14-15 - *each person is tempted when they are dragged away by their **own evil desire** and **enticed**.<sup>15</sup> Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to **sin**; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to **death**.*

So when you get up tomorrow morning, know this: that wherever else you’re going to do, you’re going into **battle**.

And you need to have on your lips, as I do, this phrase: “Lord, lead me not into temptation.”

In other words, “**Protect me**, Lord. I know how **powerful** sin is, and I know how **weak** I am.

I’m asking you, Lord, in this phrase, to help me **escape** from the **trap**.

I’d rather **avoid temptation** than have to **defeat temptation.**”

**4. HOW MIGHT GOD ANSWER THIS PRAYER??**

By granting us **wisdom** and **insight** into the **evil one’s tactics**

By **protecting** us from getting even **close** to sin... moving the fence as it were well away from the edge of the cliff...

By helping us put **out** of our lives things which will bring us close to either temptation or sin

A **trivial example** – I love Cadbury chocolate and regularly decide several times a year that because I want to lose **weight**, I need to **give it up**...

It’s just plain **silly** then when I’m up at the IGA picking up milk, to walk back through the chocolate aisle and pick up a **block**... take it home hoping I’ll never want some!

I’m sure you can see what I’m **saying**....

Don’t put yourself anywhere **near** that which will bring you into a **sphere** of **temptation** to **sin**...

**Temptation** is not in itself sin; **succumbing** to temptation is sin.

But listen **carefully**: it *is* a sin when I place myself deliberately in the **place** of **temptation**, either because I **enjoy** the **prospect** or because I am not **determined** enough in my **desire** to **overcome** it.

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Do you **understand that?**

You say, "Well, I haven't **succumbed** to temptation. I just dance around on the **fringes** of it."

Be **very, very careful, don't do that.**

Because what we're doing is we're **playing** with it, very often, in our **minds**, and it is in our **imagination**s that our **problems** are most forcibly **encountered**.

Don't pray '**lead us not into temptation**' if you then act in the completely **opposite direction** and put **yourself in temptation's way!** //

And the final thing to say is that God in his word has **already** given us at least **some** of the answer to this prayer

1 Corinthians 10:12-13

*If you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall!*

There's a warning... don't become complacent or self-sufficient in regard to how well you are doing...

God continues...

<sup>13</sup> *No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. 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 endure it.*

Such important things to learn here... if you think you're **unusual** in the temptations face or have temptations you have **given into** – you're **not**... People have faced the **same ones** before you and will **after** you.

If you think you just simply weren't able to **resist** temptation – think again – because God – in answer to your prayer – lead us not into temptation – will **not let you be tempted beyond** that which you can **bear**.

And if you think 'I had no choice' think **again** – because the text says – God will provide a way **out** so that you can **endure** it....

...like Joseph fleeing Potiphar's advances to entice him to **bed** with her... he **left** – leaving his cloak behind – because he just needed to get **out of there**... a way out which he took... will you take that way out?? //

Lead us not into **temptation**...

The Lord will

...**help** you see **temptation coming**

...**keep** you from getting **close**

...help you **resist**

...not allow you to be tempted **beyond** what you can **bare**

...and give you a way **out!**

Lead us not into temptation... but deliver us from evil... out of the evil one's **clutches**... away from his power, out of harm's way...

So that we might live **godly and obedient lives.**

May this prayer be on our **lips** and in our **hearts** each and every **day**... //

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That brings us to the end of the Lord's prayer series.... Go back and watch again – use the small group questions to reflect....

And use this prayer as a **model** for your prayer... maintaining the balance of praying for matters relating to God's **honour**, his **kingdom** and his **will** AND matters relating to our **daily needs, forgiveness** and **protection**...

And come before your Father in **heaven**, who through Jesus' death and resurrection has provided **full and free access** into his **presence** and is more willing to **hear** us pray, than we are to **pray** and is able to do **more** than either we **ask** or **imagine**.

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Advent begins next Sunday 27 November

You've heard me say before – Advent is not a countdown to Christmas

It IS a period when we remind one another of the return of Jesus Christ to put all things right – to deal with evil – and usher in his eternal kingdom – the new heavens and the new earth

And that is what our Advent and Christmas series starting next week will be all about

**ADVENT/CHRISTMAS – JESUS IS COMING**

NOV 27	ADVENT 1	Be ready	Matthew 24:36-44
DEC 04	ADVENT 2	Look forward	Isaiah 11:1-10
DEC 11	ADVENT 3	Gladness and joy await	Isaiah 35:1-10
DEC 18	ADVENT 4	Every tear will be wiped away	Rev 21:1-7
DEC 25	CHRISTMAS	The grace of God has appeared!	Titus 2:11-14