



# **Message Transcript**

## **How to Defeat Temptation**

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Pastor Jeff:

Our Father in heaven, we give you all the glory, honor and praise for who you are. And Lord, we thank you for your living and active word. And Lord, our prayer today is that you would speak directly to us in our area of need. That you would be able to help us to grow into the likeness of the Lord Jesus Christ. Lord, we believe that every time your word is faithfully and accurately proclaimed that you speak and so our prayer to you this morning is Lord speak for we are ready to hear. And so now for all those who have gathered who desire to hear the Lord speak directly to you, who will believe what he tells you and who will by faith put into practice what he shows you, will you agree with me very loudly this morning by saying the word amen?

Congregation:

Amen.

Pastor Jeff:

Amen. As you know if you've come to church, the greatest news on the planet is God the Father sent his son to be the savior of the world. That God sent Jesus to do for us what we can never do for ourselves. Because the Bible makes clear that we're not bad people. The Bible makes clear that we are dead people.

The Bible makes clear that we've all sinned and fallen short of the glory of God and so God had a rescue plan. And one of the great themes of the entire Bible is what God's plan was. And his plan from eternity past was to send his son Jesus to become incarnate flesh, to fulfill the law, to restore glory to his father, and then at the end of his

life die on the cross in your place for all your sins and then three days later, he rose from the dead. He began to offer life to anyone who would turn from their sins and trust God. So when we gather, we always need to be reminded of this fact. If it's your first time into church or you've come every single week, you need to know the best news on the planet is that Christ died for you. And through repentance and faith, you can have a relationship with God. Not by getting religious, not by doing good things, but by believing in the fact that Jesus Christ paved the way for you to have a relationship with the Father.

And when you come into that relationship, the Bible calls that new birth. You've been given a new name as a saint, you've been given a new identity, and then God desires you to walk out what he has worked in through his holy spirit. And even while many of us in church would celebrate the fact of the gospel being the fact that Christ died for our sins and rose from the dead and we can have a relationship with him, too often we stop there. We think new birth is the end rather than just the beginning. Which is one of the reasons I love the book of James, because James gives us very practical theology or practical application that if you're saved, if you've trusted in Jesus as your personal Lord and savior, how do you walk this out? How do you live this life that God requires?

Because I find that for many Christians that love the Lord, that believe that Jesus died for their sins, that have repented of their sin and are banking their entire eternity on Christ saving them, too often hit the easy button when things get hard. When trials come, we hit the easy button and try to get out. And the other area we try to get out is

when temptation arises. And sometimes when temptation arises and we give into that sin, we're too often easy to say, "Well, everybody sins and I know God forgives me."

How many believe that even as a Christian, when you sin that God's willing to forgive you again? Let me ask you again. Colorado Springs, I'm watching you. How many of you believe that even as a believer, if you sin, God will continue to forgive your sins? All right. Amen. But just because that's a theological truth doesn't give us permission to go ahead and sin all the time just hoping God forgives us. That ruins the whole point. God wants us to grow into the likeness of the Lord Jesus Christ, which is why James wrote this book.

I know last week when I preached on trials, I had so many people come up and say, "Pastor Jeff, such a timely message." Do you know why? Because trials are always a timely message. Because you're either in one, coming out of one or getting ready to go into one. And when it comes to how to defeat temptation, it's a practical application as well. Because all of us are being tempted at all times to sin. Just humor me a little this morning. How many this week were tempted to do something that would go against God just at least once during the week? All right. This is a practical lesson.

And so while we talked about how trials are God authored or God allowed seasons in our life to grow our spiritual maturity, to grow our dependence, to grow our insight, to grow our vitality and there's all sorts of blessings that come from that, even though we don't like trials, we're called to remain under them, endure them, be steadfast in them. Oftentimes when We're going through a trial, guess what happens?

That's when Satan oftentimes speaks the loudest about causing us to sin. And lies to us and said, "If you're God's so good, then why is he putting you through that? And why do you care so much anyway? Because if Jesus really died for your sins, he'll forgive you anyway and just don't worry about your sin. Just do whatever you want to do." And that's the lie that the enemy puts. So today I want to talk to you about how to defeat temptation in your life. Because this is so practical that some of you even while I'm preaching this message, are going to be tempted about how you're going to sin this afternoon after hearing this message. And some of you won't even make it to your car until you'll be tempted to sin. And for those of you who make it all the way until Monday, I promise you he'll look for an opportune time to come into your life because temptation is ongoing.

So today we want to talk about how to defeat temptation and to do that, we're going to be in the book of James chapter one verses 13 through 18. James chapter one, verses 13 through 18. Let me read it because there's just a few verses here and then we'll unpack these together. Here's what the word of God says. "Let no one say when he is tempted, I am being tempted by God for God cannot be tempted by evil and he himself does not tempt anyone but each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. Then when lust is conceived, it gives birth to sin and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death. Do not be deceived my beloved brethren. Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above coming down from the father of lights with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow. In the exercise of his will, he brought us forth by the word of truth so that we would be a kind

of first fruits among his creatures." And there in those short passages, God gives us an understanding about how to defeat temptation. And I want to highlight three truths today that will help you defeat temptation in your life. Temptation will come when it comes. How is it that you not only deal with it but defeat it?

And let me give you the first truth as we get started this morning. The first truth you need to understand is the origin and reality of your temptation. You need to understand the origin and the reality of your temptation. Notice verse 13, he says this. "Let no one say when he is tempted." Who is no one? You. Me. The person sitting next to you. Don't say this when you're tempted. This is what you shouldn't say when temptation comes your way. Let no one say what James is about to tell us. Let no one say when he is tempted, I am being tempted by God. Don't say that God's doing this in your life. Why? He says, "Let no one say he is being tempted by God for God cannot be tempted by evil and he himself does not tempt anyone." Why? God is perfect. God can't be tempted to do wrong. God can't be tempted to sin. God can't be tempted to do evil. That's what makes the temptation of Jesus so important is he's the one biblical character throughout the entirety of scripture that when being tempted by Satan, he doesn't sin. Why? Because there's nothing in his nature of sin. Yes, he has flesh just like us. Yes, he's been tempted in every way like us. But what? Without sin.

We have sin stained flesh. There's something inside of us that when temptation comes there's something inside of us that says, I think I like that. I think I want that. Maybe I should go after that. Not God. God is not the one who's tempting. So while God is the one who's authoring or allowing trials in your life, challenges in your life,

difficult circumstances in your life, God is not the one bringing temptation into your life. So don't say God's tempting me. God's not tempting any of his creation, and God himself cannot be tempted by evil. It doesn't get any more clear than that. So you can't say, "Well God made me do it." You can't say, "Well if God loved me so much, he wouldn't make me like this. Why would God give me this appetite if he didn't want me to overeat? Why would God give me this sexual appetite if he didn't want me to act on it? It's God's fault. He's the one that made me like ..." Let no one say when tempted, God did it. Are we clear here? The origin is not God. The origin is your enemy.

The Bible says in first Peter 5:8 that you have an adversary. That's an enemy. The devil that prowls around like what? A roaring lion looking for someone to devour. The enemy has all sorts of game film on your life. The enemy is the one that plants temptation in your life to try to get you to bite down hard on it. That's his job. That's what he does. Look no further than the third chapter in the Bible. God creates everything. Everything's perfect. God makes it just the way he wants. He says that everything in the world has been given to mankind for them to enjoy. It's a blessing. It's beautiful. They have everything they need. God just tells them one command afterwards. Just don't eat off the tree of the knowledge of good and evil because the day you eat off that tree you'll die. Other than that, do anything you want. The world is your oyster. And who shows up? Our enemy in the form of a serpent. And what's his first question? Did God really say that? What's he doing? He's getting them to think about the fact that God is not good. He's getting them to think about the fact that God's holding out on them. He's getting them to think about the fact that maybe God

isn't who he says he is and that maybe God isn't as good as God claims that he is.

That's where temptation comes from.

It does not come from God. And if you succumb to the temptation, you're going to see the process of what happens and it doesn't lead to your good, it actually leads to death. That's where it goes. So when temptation comes, you need to understand God is not doing this. That's why even when Jesus taught his disciples to pray, how did he teach them? Our Father who art in heaven, hallow would be thy name. Let your kingdom come, let your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. And what? And lead us not into temptation. Lord you're the one that doesn't want us to go into that realm. Lord, lead me away from those places that would tempt me, God. Take me in a way that's righteousness, Lord. You create the path that keeps me away from all that. Because God doesn't tempt anyone.

Now you say, well what about Jesus and the temptation in the wilderness? Because the spirit lead him out to be tempted. Why? Because he's God and he was demonstrating to the world that's the one fully human, fully divine being that does not sin. That's why. But here's how we pray. Lord, don't lead me in the way of temptation. Lead me in your way because you don't tempt me to sin. That's not what you would have for me. And here's what we see here. Here's what we see here. Let no one say this. It's not God that is tempting it. This is the devil. He's giving us solicitation for evil. It's an invitation to destruction. He comes knocking on your door at just the right time and he knows right when to plant just the right kind of bait. He studied you. He knows



your life. He knows what you're susceptible to. He knows the kind of invitation he can give you and the way in which he can present it in such a way that it will be enticing to you to potentially take the bait.

And when you take the bait, you go towards sin and evil. But it's not God doing it. Make no mistake about it. The origin is not God. He is not the author of sin. He is not tempting any of his creation to sin. But notice this. There's a reality of temptation. And let me just be clear on this. Jesus was tempted in every way we are yet was without sin. Temptation is not sin. Some people feel guilty because they're like, "I'm feeling so tempted." That's okay. You're going to be tempted. The Bible says that when you get saved, God has transferred you from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of his beloved son in whom we have redemption and the forgiveness of sins. What you need to understand at the moment of your conversion, when you said, I want to leave my life of sin and I want Jesus Christ to save me and I want to be part of his kingdom and his family and you joined team Jesus and you're in the realm of the beloved son and Jesus Christ is your king and your Lord, guess what happens? The enemy knows he's lost his grip on you for hell. He knows he can't have you. So the lies that he tells you is not to keep you from Jesus. The lies he tells you are to keep you from being the fullness of what Jesus wants you to be.

And so as a Christian you have to realize that when you became a Christian, you didn't get put on the love boat to cruise off to eternity with this beautiful cruise. You got put on a battleship where now the enemy is lying to you. That's why I find sometimes for people that grew up in the church, that thought they were saved because they were

pretty good or they did all the right things. And these kinds of people when they come to Christ will say things like, "I really don't have a testimony. I didn't do bad things like you." The testimony is that you were dead and Christ made you alive. And what happens for a lot of people like that is when they come to Christ, they think they've always been in Christ and then things get really hard and they find themselves sinning even more after becoming a Christian and they think, what's wrong with me? There's nothing wrong with you. You have the enemy who's lying to you. He's giving you even more temptation. He's laying even more things in your life. Why? Because he doesn't want you to experience the fullness of who Jesus Christ is.

But make no mistake about it, God's not the author of that, but there is a reality to it. If you're a Christian for any period of time, the enemy is going to be relentless in putting certain temptations in your life. And here's what you can know. They're specific to you. It's easy to look objectively at other people and be like, how could you fall for that? You call yourself a Christian and you did that? But we don't talk about ourselves that way. For us, we say, well I struggle. Everybody struggles a little bit. But for you, you better stop it. That's the reality and the origin of temptation. It comes from the devil himself and the purpose is to take you off track with God.

Just think about it like this. If you talk about an athletic team or a business or something like that, if you have a good coach or you're in a good business, you have a good coach, they're going to take you through difficult times and trials to prepare you for your competitor. Or if you're in a good business, you're going to test your product

so you can make sure that it's better than your competitor's project. And You're going to give yourself a grade. I think we're ready. I think we're doing pretty good. We're ready to go. But what's your competitor's job? Your competitor's job is to expose every part of your weakness. When you compete against another team, their job is to expose all the weakness they see in you. When you're a business and you're comparing ... If you make automobiles or you make widgets or whatever you make and you think they're the best, your competitor's job is to expose ... Like, well here's the weakness of that vehicle and here's the weakness of that widget, here's the weakness of ... So when God takes us through trials, he's growing our spiritual muscle. He will allow the enemy to tempt us but God is not tempting us and God is not testing us and God is not trying to get you to sin, but it's our enemy of our soul, that's trying to expose our weakness.

He's trying to show, yeah, God says you're all that, but look at you, you're not. And then if you do take the bait and you sin, what does he do? He lies to you even more and says, "See now, you think you're a Christian, you call yourself a Christian and you live like that. Now God's disappointed. He's mad. He's all those things." Satan is the author of temptation. Satan is the one that's bringing it and it is a reality. But just because you're tempted doesn't mean that you have to sin. And just because you're tempted doesn't mean that you're in sin. You need to know that. That's number one. Number two is this. You not only need to know the origin and reality of your temptation, you need to know the process and the danger in your temptation. There's a whole process that takes place. It's the same for everybody and there's a danger to it. Notice

what the word says starting in verse 14. "But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. And then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death." So he gives us the process of how this temptation turns into sin and how sin leads to death.

The Bible says that the wages of sin is death. What you earn for your sin is death. All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. Every single one of us has a track record of temptation that the enemy's laid in our life. We've gone through, we've succumbed to the temptation, we've sinned, and we've experienced death in that area of our life. That's true. And what the Bible says is unrepentant sin, ongoing, I have no desire to change sin, I'll just continue to sin leads to eternal separation from God. But even on this side of heaven, if you succumb to a temptation in that area of your life where you are sinning, you will experience death in that area of your life. And that's what he wants us to know. And he uses the gestation period. He uses a birthing analogy as to how this works. And notice what he says. Let no one say when he is tempted, I'm being tempted by God. We already went through that. But notice verse 14. But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust.

Now let's talk about the word lust. Most people think lust is sexual temptation that we give in to, but lust just means desire. It's contextual. It can be a good desire, it can be a bad desire. Here's what lust is. Lust is trying to fulfill a godly desire in an ungodly way. That's what lust is. Money's a good thing, but you can lust after money and try to fulfill it in an ungodly way. Sexuality is God-given. That's a good thing. But you can try to fulfill it in an ungodly way. Anything that's good that God created, it's trying to see it

realized in a way that doesn't honor God. Getting an A on your test is a good thing, but cheating to get an A on your test is trying to accomplish it in an ungodly way. Anytime you're taking a shortcut, that's a lust. That's when I desire this outcome, but I'm willing to do anything I can to get there. That the end will justify the means. That's a lust. And that's how it works out.

And what does the Bible say? Not only is Satan the author of temptation, but what does he work with? He partners with you. He knows your desires. He knows what you want and he's willing to tell you that he can give it to you. But I'm here to tell you Satan cannot provide for your future. He just lies. He opens the door this much and says, "If you follow me you can have this. This is what you want, right? Doesn't it look good?" What he never tells you is the cost of what he's offering. He never tells you the price that you're going to pay. God loves you enough to tell you if you take a shortcut to go after things that I don't design for you, there is a price that you will pay. It will result in sin. Sin leads to death. Death is guilt, shame, remorse, feeling horrible about yourself. All those things are a result of taking the bait where Satan said you can have all this but it's not done in God's way.

I could put pictures up on the screen today. I could show you a gorgeous new house. I could show you a car. I could show you property. For single people I could show you a person, a beautiful man, or a beautiful woman. I could say, would this be a blessing if it was yours? And the answer shouldn't be yes or no. The answer should be well, that depends. Because a house for somebody may be a huge blessing. Maybe somebody's paying for the house for you. Maybe you have the resource or means to

afford that house and steward well. But if that house costs you 90% of your monthly income to pay for the house, that's not a blessing, that's a burden. You're going to go into debt. It's going to be horrible for you. So while that could be a blessing for someone, it could be an absolute burden for you.

So is God the one who is providing what it is that you want? And so often what the enemy does is he's going to tell you his way of providing is better than what God's already given. Or his way of providing is better than what God can give. In Genesis three, they had the whole world. And what did Satan have to offer? He could only offer them one thing. The one thing God said not to. Hey, how about this fruit? Did God really say? And what do they do? That wasn't sinful in and of itself. They can't control that. But then they begin to do what? Satan asked the question, not for them to say yes or no, but for them to begin to do what? To think about it and question God. "Well maybe it would be good and maybe it is good. Hey, God knows both good and evil, you don't. I know both good and evil, you don't. God's holding out on you. Man, look at this. It's good. If your God was so good, why wouldn't he give this to you? If your God was all providing, why couldn't you have this? Why is God saying no to you?" Why did God say no? Because God didn't want the human race to die.

So what's he do? He offers them something that God said no to. They went to fulfill a desire, which is what? Nourishment. Eating. Did God provide an appetite? Sure he did. But God provided the means to fulfill and satiate that appetite. They went the devil's way and guess what happened? When they went chomp, chomp, everything changed. Our whole world changed. The way you and I function today changed. Why?

Because they were offered something to fulfill a godly desire, hunger, in an ungodly way. And what do they want? Hey, I want to be like God. God's holding out on me. And that's exactly what happens to us. And notice what happens. So you need to be aware of what your desires are because that's oftentimes where Satan is going to plant things. If you're looking for a new job, that's oftentimes where Satan's going to plant things. If you're looking for a wife or a husband, that's oftentimes ... Satan is always trying to place counterfeits in front of you for what godly desires are so that you'll take a shortcut and do it his way.

And notice what happens. When you have that lust then it conceives. Well, how does lust conceive? You ruminate about it. You think about it. When Jesus was tempted coming out of the wilderness, he didn't think about it. Offered stones to become bread. Didn't think about it. Man does not live by bread alone, but from every word that comes out of the mouth of God. Hey, throw yourself off the temple. Your God will save you. Yeah, but it says don't put your Lord God to the test. Yeah, but you can have all the kingdoms of the world. Yeah, but worship the Lord your God and serve him only. Get behind me. He didn't rationalize it. He didn't conceive it. The problem is not the temptation. The problem is when you ruminate about the temptation and you think about the temptation and you focus on the temptation. That leads to sin and what does sin lead to? Death. It kills that area of your life.

As a pastor, I've had the unfortunate experience of talking to people that have had affairs in their marriage. And when I talk to someone I realize the day they had the

affair is not when the affair started. See, what happens is the enemy opens a little bit of the door and said, "Why don't you get to know them a little better? Why don't you do this?" And then you start conceiving things. And you start thinking about, well maybe yeah. That's when it all starts. That's sinful. Because then when you go there that conceives and when you conceive, it will give birth to sin. It's like when a woman's pregnant, you may not know it, but you're going to know it in about nine months. It's coming. So when you see what's happening, you realize if you're going to ruminate about the temptation, you can't beat the temptation. You need to reject the temptation outright.

So can we just talk about a couple since the church usually doesn't talk about these things? Let's talk about sexuality for a minute. Because that's one of the big ones in a church. Whether you're single or whether you're married. Why? Because we live in a sin saturated culture where everything is about our sexuality and now they're even trying to get our children at the age of five to discover what that's all about, which is garbage. But what happens? What's the enemy do? He lays out temptation? He tells you if you're single, are you serious? Are you serious that God would want you to keep yourself pure and remain pure for somebody else? You'll be the only virgin in the entire world because he lies. And he says, "Listen, you follow God, God will forgive you anyway. And how are you really going to know if this is the right one unless you engage?" And by the way, I'm not just talking to the men. Do you know why I'm not just talking to men? Because Hollywood tells you women the same things and now we got 50 shades of everything and you got all this stuff going on too.



And so what the enemy does is he places an image in your mind so that you can begin to ruminate and think about it. And even if you "don't act on it" with another person, here's what Jesus says. Anyone who lusts after someone that is not their spouse has already committed adultery in their heart. So what is god's design? Well, we got to go back and look. Who created gender? God did. How many did he create? Two. Male and female. What was his design for sexuality? Was it good? Yeah. He wrote a whole book called The Song of Solomon about it and how satisfying it is. And what's God's design? It's so powerful, it's so strong, it's so good, God created a container called marriage to house it. And in that marriage ... Here's god's design for it. That a husband would work to please his wife and their wife would work to please her husband. It is self-sacrificing. It is giving to one another. It's not about self gratification. It's not about what I can get from somebody. That's the world's view of sexuality. And even in marriage, if you live that way like, what can you give me, and I deserve this, and you need to meet my need, that's sinful. Because God designed everything to be what? Giving.

And we get into all sorts of aberrations today and talk about every single one that's not of the Lord. But take pornography. What's the problem with it? Well the problem is the devil opens up a door and says, this is what you really want. You want to satisfy that desire. Well you can't satisfy the desire that way because the only way you can satisfy the desire is with a spouse. Otherwise, it's not satisfying. So he says you can take the short way out and just go for it and do it. And then guess what he does? When you sin and then you start feeling bad about yourself, then you hide it.

Nobody can know about this because I'm so shameful. Or if you're in a church like ours, that's authentic, then maybe you can talk about it but then you say things like this. Yeah, I struggle with porn or I struggle with blank, or I struggle with ... God can't help you with your struggles, but God can help you with your sin. Jesus did not die on the cross for your struggles. Jesus died on the cross for your sin.

You say, well how's that sin? I'll tell you how it's sin. If you're single and you're into porn as your satisfying factor, here's what God would call you. Okay, ready, ready, ready? You're a fornicator in your heart and God can heal and forgive fornicators. If you're married and you "struggle with porn", you're not struggling with porn. In your heart, you're an adulterer and God can forgive and redeem adulterers. But you have to call yourself by the name of the sin which you're sinning. And too often in church we use the word struggle as an excuse to continue on the bad behavior that we continue to have. I struggle with porn. Not for 30 years, bro. No, you don't. You want it. That's your problem.

It's interesting to me when I study the life of Jesus, when he goes to a blind person and says, "What do you want me to do?" Why would he ask the blind person what do you want? Because he wants the blind person to say, I want my sight. Why does he say, do you want to get well to a man who's laying on a bed who's been an invalid for his whole life? Of course he wants to get well. But maybe he doesn't. Because I find that there's some people in the church, they don't want to get well. They just want to use Christianese and get in a group and make themselves feel good like they're pretending that they want to get well when they have no desire to actually

change.

And I'm not just talking about porn. I'm talking about food addictions, eating too much. I'm talking about being anorexic, not eating enough. And by the way, I realize depression and anxiety and all that, I think there's physical things that go into that chemically as well so I don't want to call everything by this. But we live in a generation where we're so comparative on social media and everything, no wonder the whole world's depressed. Because everybody's better than you. And there's no way you can measure up to the perfection of what you see on TV or in social media or anything else. And so we say, well we struggle with that.

Here would be Jesus' question. Do you want to get well? Because here's what I do with sinners. I redeem sinners. If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and you believe in your heart he was raised from the dead, you will be saved. But the Bible goes on to say this in First John. If you say you have no sin, what? You deceive yourselves. The truth is not in you. But if you confess your sin, God is faithful and just to what? Forgive your sin and what? Cleanse you from all unrighteousness. If you do what? Confess your sin. That means call it what it is. It's not just a struggle, it's a sin. Name the sin. Now we have a hard time doing that in church, don't we?

Now let's just take a quiz. How many believe in here they're a sinner? How many definitely believe the person next to you is? Okay. See. Then why is it that we have a hard time confessing our sin to one another? James is going to tell us later in the book, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another that you might be healed.

But not in church because we can't tell people because they might know I'm a sinner. They already know and so does God. And I'm not saying you air your dirty laundry with everybody and tell the whole world all your stuff just so you feel cleansed, but there should be a couple of people in your life that you can be candid with or talk to and say, "This is in sin my life. I want it gone and I want God's help." And when you confess and forsake those things, that's when you feel the love of Jesus come in and say, "You don't have to remain there anymore. I forgave that on the cross and I can redeem you from whatever sin you have." Isn't that good news? You're not doomed to repeat it all over the place.

Now I'm not a huge outdoorsman. Let me say that again. I'm not an outdoorsman, but I know enough about fishing to know how good anglers catch fish. They know just the right kind of bait on just the right kind of hook to go fishing at just the right time in the right area of the lake to drop their lure just the right depth so that the fish that they're looking to get has no clue and all it sees is food, not realizing it's going to bite down and get tied onto a line. And the enemy works the same way in our life. He knows just the right time, he knows just the right bait, he knows just the right season, he knows just the right way. For some of you in your marriage, it's like repeat cycle. Like you're going to get angry about the same thing. Why do you think that is? Because he knows just when to place the right word and the right response and the right thing in your life so that you're doomed to repeat it over and over and over again. And if we can pause long enough to say, "God, I don't want this anymore. I don't want this. I want your best for me."

You say, well how do I know that I'm giving into this? Here's a word you can know that you're part of the problem. Blame. When you start blaming God, you start blaming ... The devil made me do it. He didn't make you do it. You fully willingly participated. When you start blaming God, you start blaming the devil, you start blaming other people, you blame your parents, you blame your coaches. When you're living in blame, here's what you can know. You're biting into the temptation and it's totally on you and you're unwilling to confess what it is. Because we make up all these excuses for ourselves. We would never do them for anybody else but we do it for us. Like the guy that prayed like, "Lord, I know you don't want me to eat unhealthy food, but if you give me the front parking space of the donut shop I'll know that's of you." And on the 13th trip around the parking lot, unbeknownst to me there was that space. That's how we think in our own life. We make excuses for why it is that we can sin that we'd never do for anybody else. And the enemy loves that.

And then he tells us, keep it a secret. Don't tell anybody. Keep it a secret. Don't tell anybody. Hey, keep it a secret. Don't tell anybody. Can I just tell you something? You can be assured of this according to the Bible, your sin will find you out. Will find you out. I've had the fortunate experience of knowing several people I've looked up to in the ministry whose sin found them out. Because what happens is this happened at 18, this happened at 22, but they never felt a safe spot and they didn't get clean with the Lord and it's trying to keep a beach ball down underneath the water. At some point in time it's coming up. And even if you can say this, I'm just going to take this to the grave with me, I got bad news for you because the first person you're going to see

when you take it to the grave and you die is Jesus. Don't take it to the grave, take it to the cross. He already took it to the grave. Amen.

You can be freed up and totally redeemed. So he's giving this birthing process when your desires that you have that are good desires, instead of going to the Lord, you follow Satan's leading to take a shortcut to get it done sooner or get it done cheaper or get it done in a way that doesn't cost you anything and then you sin. And people say, well, when you sin you've broken fellowship with God. Perhaps. But God doesn't break fellowship with you. The Bible says nothing can separate you from the love of God. Even when you sin, God's right there. You've turned your back on him. God is not going anywhere. And what the enemy does is he lies when you sin and you feel like God's gone somewhere. Because of the sin in your life and the darkness in your life, you start feeling like maybe I'm not a Christian anymore. Maybe God doesn't love me. No, maybe you're wrong. God loves you with an unconditional love that even when you sin in the family, you're still his child. You're still his daughter, you're still his son. He's right there. He's saying, come to me in all your sin. That's what I'm really good at is forgiving sin. Means therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

When you sin should be the time that you boldly come before the throne and say, "I did it again. Lord, help me out. I know I'm not perfect, but I want to get well and I want to do this right and I don't even know how to do it, but Lord can you help me?" And his answer will always be a resounding, sure I can. Because the process takes you through this period and then it leads you into temptation and that's dangerous because

that leads to death. I've watched people kill their families. I've watched people kill their singleness. I've watched people kill their jobs, their careers, all these things because they've taken a shortcut. And even if you said, that's me, I killed it, can I just tell you good news? God is able to restore the years the locusts have eaten that even if you've "blown it" too many times, God's able to redeem what you've blown. That's the beauty of our Lord. He'll take beauty from ashes. Your life's totally messed up, God's like, "You don't have to stay there. I'll help you. I'll help you. I just want you to learn from this." That's the beauty of our God. You don't have to wait on this side of heaven. Be like, well one day when I die, it'll be really, really good. No. It can be really, really good now. Just come to him and confess and do it.

So now you know the origin and reality of your temptation that comes from the devil. You know the process and danger of the temptation. Let's talk about the third truth. Let's talk about the cure and the victory over your temptation. The cure and the victory. Is there any hope? I'm going to tell you absolutely 100% yes. Any sin you sin God can totally redeem. Say how's he do that? First of all, he says in verse 16, "Do not be deceived my beloved brethren." Do not be deceived my beloved. Do not be deceived my beloved sisters in Christ. Do not be deceived my beloved brothers in ... Don't be deceived. Temptation's real. Don't be deceived. If you're not aware, you'll succumb to it. Don't be deceived.

Don't lie to yourself and say's he's not talking to me today. I'm talking to you. I'm talking to myself. I'm preaching to myself. This is true. Don't deceive yourself into believing that temptation won't get to you. Don't believe yourself into deceiving yourself

that I'm strong enough for that temptation. I can get through it. If you were strong enough, Jesus would not have needed to die on the cross. And every time you say I'm strong enough to get through this, you negate the cross. You say, "Well the cross wasn't that important for me. I know he needed to die fully for her sins, but for me he just needed to die for some of my sins because I'm helping him on the other ones." No. The cross tells us that we needed Jesus not only to be freed from our sins, but to be continually delivered in them and from them so that we can grow in the freedom of Christ. Amen.

So what's the cure? What's the victory we have? Notice what he says in verse 17. The context of this comes in the context of temptation. "Every good and perfect thing given is from above, coming down from the father of lights with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow." In the context of temptation, remember this. God is good and all the time. Amen. Three of you participated. Thanks. Let's say it so we mean it. God is good.

Congregation:

All the time.

Pastor Jeff:

And all the time.

Congregation:

God is good.



Pastor Jeff:

He is. That's the cure. Because here's why we sin. Because we don't think god's good enough. If You're single and you're short-changing your life it's because you don't think God's good enough to provide and you've boughten into the lie that the devil saying to you, you're never going to get married, you're never going to have kids. And so you're like, well if that's the case, then I'm going to take matters into my own hands. Well, why do you think that's the case? The devil doesn't know the future. The only future he knows he's going to be thrown into the lake of fire. That's it. Amen.

He's got no bearing over your future. He can't tell you how bad it's going to happen. Our God says every good and perfect gift is from him. For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord. Plans to prosper you, not harm you. Plans for hope and the future. That's the plans I have for you, says God. If you're not believing that, you're not believing the God of the Bible. Psalm 84 says, "No good thing will God withhold from those who walk uprightly." God is not going to keep good things from you. So when you're tempted to sin, a worship service is about to break out. You can either worship God's goodness, God, I don't have what I think I need, but you know my desire and I'm trusting you to bring it, or you can worship the enemy and say, "I'll just take a shortcut. I'll take whatever you got right now. I'll take your chump change and I'm just going to take it from you."

And if you take it, it leads to death. If you take it, it leads to sin. If you take it, it leads to guilt and shame and destruction. Because what does Satan want to do? Steal,

kill and destroy. He hates you. He hates you. He's on a destructive path in your life. But don't be deceived. God's good. And he's never changing. Notice this. There's no variation or shifting shadow. It is not possible for God to sin now, it's never been possible for God to sin in eternity past and it's not possible for God to sin in the future, which means this. He's never going to change his mind and he's always going to be good.

You can bank on that. He's always got your best. He always wants your best. He always wants to help lead you to where you need to go. God is good. He's not holding back things from you. If there's something you desire, ask God. He'll meet all of your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ. And if there's a reason that God doesn't give it to you now or chooses not to give it to you at some point in time, let me tell you why. It's because it's for your own good and he loves you. And sometimes when we don't receive the things that we desire here's what we think. Well if God were really good ... This is what you hear. Here's the lie. Ready? If your God was so good, then why ... And then you can fill in the blank for whatever Satan lies to you about.

He tells everybody the same stuff. He tells everybody the same stuff. But God is good. Remember that God's good when you're going through temptation. Remember too that God is never changing. Remember too that God is abundant so present your request to him. Notice what he says in verse 18. "In the exercise of his will, he brought us forth by the word of truth so that we would be kind of first fruits among his creatures." As male and female you're the crown of all god's creation. The sun, the moon, the stars, the planets, everything that God created, the universe, the earth, all

that's in it, all the animals, all the rivers, lakes, seas, everything God created. You and I are the crown of his creation. And when we live obediently to him, we demonstrate to him in all of his glory that we believe who he says that we are. Isn't that good news? I mean when we shortchange ourself, we believe the lie of the enemy.

We're saying, God, I want that rather than all of your goodness. I want that rather than all that you would have for me. He's good, he's abundant, he's truthful. He brought us forth by his word. This word is true. The more you know of this word, the more successful you're going to be in your temptation. The more you know of this word, the more you're going to be able to handle money, the more you're going to be able to handle family, the more you'll be able to handle sex, the more you're going to be able to handle whatever topic is there. The more you know of this word, the more wisdom you're going to have in how to conquer it. And by the way, all of us have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God so there's no one in here that has a perfect track record. There's only one who does. Jesus Christ.

Matthew chapter four, you can read about it. Every time the devil came to tempt him, what'd he do? He quoted the word. The enemy has an allergic reaction to the word. It's kryptonite to him. He can't stand it. When you stand on the word of God when the enemy's trying to tempt you, if you resist him, the Bible says he'll flee. He can't handle this. He can't handle you standing on this. And what happens is during temptation, when you stand on this and he flees, guess what? You become even more strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. You're more of a benefit to yourself. You're more of a benefit to the kingdom. You're more of a benefit to those who are

around you. And we read through the Bible and we know the story of King David and what an awesome guy he was and all the psalms that he wrote and the way he defeated Goliath and the way he was king of Israel and probably the best king that they've ever had.

But we read through the story and we're like man, this guy could be the Messiah. If we didn't know the ending, maybe it's David. I mean this guy's awesome. Until we get to Second Samuel chapter 11 and what happens? At the time men go out to war when David should have been going out to fight, what was he saying? "Eh, I don't want to do what I'm supposed to do. Here's what I want to do. I want to climb the stairs of my palace because I know I have the highest height in all of Jerusalem and I know just the right time to hike up and I know just the right direction to look because I know just the right time that the women are going to be bathing." And Satan planted a seed in him like look over there and look at her. And oh by the way, you're the king and you can summon her and you can do whatever you want because you're the king and you're the man and God loves you and nobody's ever going to know about it and you're going to get away with it. So what does David do? He summons Bathsheba into his chambers and we know what happens.

And then when he realizes what he's done, what's he try to do? What Adam and Eve did and trying to hide, he tries to cover it all up. Tries to put her husband Uriah on the front line to get him killed. Oh, good. Now nobody will ever know. God always knows doesn't, he?

Congregation:

Yes.

Pastor Jeff:

Sends Nathan the prophet, tells a little story about a little U lamb that got killed and somebody that had a lot that took that little U lamb from somebody and David's like ... He's like, "What should he do, man? That man should be killed." And what's Nathan say? "You're that man. God knows what you did." And notice what Nathan the prophet does, speaking the word of God in Second Samuel chapter 12 verses seven and eight. Nathan said to David, "You are the man thus says the Lord, the God of Israel. It is I who anointed you king over Israel and it is I who delivered you from the hand of Saul."

Here's what he says. Look at my track record. All your prominence, I gave it to you. Every good thing in your life, from me. All your enemies I delivered you from, that was me. I did it all in your life. I also gave you your master's house and your master's wives into your care. And I gave you into the house of Israel and Judah. And if that had been too little, I would've added to you many more things like these. What was God saying? I would've done anything for you. Why'd you sin. All you had to do was ask me. All you had to do was seek my abundance and my goodness and the fact I'm not willing to withhold. Why did you take a shortcut? Why did you do that? And even though God did good things in David's life for the rest of his life, he was never quite the same king anymore was he? Dealt with all sorts of heartaches and hardships as a

result of that sin.

Here's what God's saying. I will give you the desires of your heart. If they're God-honoring desires and I place them there, I'm the one that has to bring them to fulfillment. And if I haven't, maybe there's something inside you that you haven't been able to ask me about, that I can tell you about you so that I can get ready to unleash that into your life. And this is what God wants us to do. God wants us to do this in such a way that we not only know what he wants us to be, that we not only gain strength, but when we fail, what does God want us to do? Come to him. Don't stay away from him. There's people that don't even show up in church on Sunday because of what happened on Saturday.

How could I go in there? I mean the house of God would burn down if I showed up. No, the blood of Jesus would cover your sin if you showed up. Amen. That's what it's all about. It's not about putting on heirs for other people or pretending you have it all together. It's about coming before the Lord and saying, "Lord, I've sinned again and I need your forgiveness." And the beauty of the Lord is that he does great things when we turn from our sin. I love this verse in Proverbs chapter 28 and verse 13. It says, "He who conceals his transgressions will not prosper." You sin and you hide it, you're not going to prosper. You're not going to prosper the way God wants you. You're never going to be free. But he who confesses and forsakes them will find compassion. Confession and forsaking, you find compassion.

I agree. Lord, this is the sin and I want out of it and I need your help. And when you do that, guess what? That's when you find compassion from the Lord who sees

your need and does great things. I mean this is true of everybody. This has been true of every generation. If you know the origin and reality of your temptation, that it's the enemy that's trying to feed you this, if you realize the process and the danger in your temptation that there's far more at stake than just your life with God but everybody you come into contact with and that you can't avoid it if you don't seek the Lord. And you know that the cure and the victory for your temptation is Christ. I mean, the Bible says that we're already seated in the heavenly realms with Christ. We're not fighting temptation so we can get victory, we're fighting temptation from a position of victory.

In Christ, you already have the victory. In Christ, you've already been made new. In Christ, you already are a new creation. In Christ, you already have access to all of his power. In Christ, you can be completely freed up and forgiven. That's why I felt like today the best way to end our service was to take communion together. Because these elements that you hold in your hand are representative of what brings us all together as a body. The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. And as you're on each campus and as you're holding these elements in your hand, and as you're hearing this song sung over you before we come back up and do our last worship song, I want you to think about all that Christ has forgiven. I also want you to think about all that Christ is willing to forgive. And if you have that unconfessed sin in your life, maybe just between you and the Lord right now, you say, Lord, you know what it is.

And even as I was listening to this message, I was thinking about sinning that, and apart from your help this afternoon, I'm going to go that way. But Lord, I want free. I don't want to go that way. Lord, teach me that you really want good in my life

and I want to go after the good you have for me and I want it your way. Because if you take a short change step to try to get it done, it'll never be lasting and satisfying. If you follow God's way and you do it his way, there'll always be fruitfulness. Amen. It's the body and blood of Christ. It's not this message so You'd feel guilt and it's not this message show you try harder. It's this message so you could be reminded that Christ is the one who forgives sins. Amen.

Father in heaven, we just give you glory, honor and praise. And Lord, as we hold these elements in our hand, we want to be reminded of the fact that Jesus Christ left heaven to come to earth to redeem us so that we wouldn't have to try, knowing it would be ineffective, but so that he could be the one who saved us, he would be the one who redeems us, he would be the one who continually refreshes us anew all over again. We give you glory, honor and praise for that. In the mighty and matchless name of Jesus, amen.