

The Greatest Temptation

When we are faced with hardships, trials or unexpected misfortunes, it is easy to lose sight of the Lord in the midst of the storm clouds that plague us. In situations of distress, it is tempting to take the easy way out and give in to the pressures of the world. When confronted with our stresses, temptations and problems, it is hard to imagine anything worse than what we are going through. Sometimes, instead of resisting temptation and choosing the right path, we justify ourselves and choose the wrong path. Each temptation we face becomes the greatest temptation imaginable because in that moment it is the only one, the biggest one we can see.

Paul encouraged the church at Philippi, “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross” (Philippians 2:5-8). One of the greatest temptations Jesus faced was being God.

The Book of Matthew records Satan’s temptation of Jesus in the wilderness. First, Satan told Jesus, who had been fasting for forty days, to turn stones to bread so that He could eat (4:3). Next, he suggested Jesus perform an undeniable miracle before the worshipers in the Temple to prove Himself to be the Messiah (4:5-6). Finally, he offered Jesus the kingdoms of the world that were at the time in his possession (4:8-9; cf. John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11).

In each of these instances, our Lord’s physical hunger (lust of flesh) and His desire to be acknowledged as the Messiah (lust of the eyes, cf. John 8:24, the pride of life, cf. Matthew 26:39-44), the temptation was infinitely multiplied because He was God. Not only did Jesus as man feel the hunger, the desire for glory and wish to have the cup of wrath pass from him, He also had the power to do it! We are given several opportunities in life and more power than we realize to interact in the lives of others. When we are tempted to use this to our own betterment without thought to the consequences or to the effect it would have on others, we forget the mind of Christ. Our greatest temptation can become our greatest triumphs if we seek Him; we can escape it (1 Corinthians 10:13).

“Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.” Don’t be afraid to let go of yourself to embrace others. Don’t let your pride get in the way of doing what is right. We are servants. We serve the lowliest of people even if that service results in our deaths. We do this because of the Servant who let go of glory to embrace us and who gave up His own life to claim ours. He is risen!

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