

00-03-26a

For our scripture reading this morning as we continue our worship together, turn with me to Psalm 77. Psalm 77. As we see Joseph in some of his darker hours, we recognize the fact that there is something that is sustaining him.

There is a reason why God gives grace to Joseph, even in the midst of adversity. David is well aware of God's grace during times of trial, and so is Asaph. And this is a Psalm of Asaph, actually, according to the superscription.

And it is titled in the New King James, The Consoling Memory of God's Redemptive Works. Psalm 77.1 I cried out to God with my voice, to God with my voice, and He gave ear to me. In the day of my trouble I sought the Lord.

My hand was stretched out in the night without ceasing. My soul refused to be comforted. I remembered God and was troubled.

I complained and my spirit was overwhelmed. Selah. You hold my eyelids open.

I am so troubled that I cannot speak. I have considered the days of old, the years of ancient times. I call remembrance my song in the night.

I meditate within my heart, and my spirit makes diligent search. Will the Lord cast off forever? And will He be favorable no more? Has His mercy ceased forever? Has His promise failed forevermore? Has God forgotten to be gracious? Has He in anger shut up His tender mercies? Selah. And I said, this is my anguish, but I will remember the years of the right hand of the Most High.

I will remember the works of the Lord. Surely I will remember your wonders of old. I will also meditate on all your work and talk of your deeds.

Your way, O God, is in the sanctuary. Who is so great a God as our God? You are the God who does wonders. You have declared Your strength among the peoples.

You have with Your arm redeemed Your people, the sons of Jacob and Joseph. Selah. The waters saw You, O God.

The waters saw You. They were afraid. The depths also trembled.

The clouds poured out water. The skies sent out a sound. Your arrows also flashed about.

The voice of Your thunder was in the whirlwind. The lightnings lit up the world. The earth trembled and shook.

Your way was in the sea, Your path in the great waters, and Your footsteps were not known. You led Your people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron." This is a great

record of the sequence of events in the soul of someone who is troubled by circumstance, troubled by adversity. And at first, your trouble is uppermost in your mind.

And you say, you know, I know I'm a believer. I know God is there. And I'm trying to remember His faithfulness.

He says at the very beginning, I cried out to God with my voice. I remembered God in verse 3. But He's troubled and His soul refuses to be comforted. Have you ever been in a situation where something is troubling you and you know better and you know you should have peace and all of the other fruits of the Spirit, but your soul just refuses to be comforted? And you keep talking to your soul and your soul says, well, I know all of that, but... And it just keeps going back like a dog gnawing on an old bone.

And so, he says in verse 4 that this produces insomnia. His eyelids are held open. And he's so troubled he cannot speak.

He can't even put it into words. I've considered the days of old, the years of ancient times. I call to remembrance my song in the night.

I meditate within my heart and my spirit makes diligent search. And this is one of the turning points from getting out of that vicious circle that we often find ourselves in where we find ourselves troubled. We try to remember promises and principles and to have our soul be comforted and it isn't.

And then we feel doubly guilty because not only are we troubled, but our resources and our soul don't seem to be adequate to the task. And then we feel bad about that. But he says in verse 6, I call to remembrance my song in the night.

And what are songs about in Israel? When do they sing songs? They're songs of deliverance. They celebrate God's deliverance. And so, by calling to mind a song in the night, this is my quarrel with some of our Christian music today is that they are not songs that focus on and call to mind the attributes of God.

It is God's strength, God's mighty arm, God's deliverance, God's faithfulness, God's grace that ought to be the subject of our songs. My favorite example of this, Barbara Streisand several years ago had a song out on the radio and the main line of it said, I love the way He makes me feel. And it was a love song.

Supposedly, she's in love with this guy, but the whole song is about how great she feels because of him. And it's a very self-serving kind of love. And sometimes our love in the church finds expression in that way where we celebrate much more the blessedness that we feel and the joy that we feel and the comfort that we get.

And it's all about I love the way He makes me feel. And that is certainly a thing to appreciate, but if you want to have a song in the night that's going to bring comfort to

the soul, it's going to be a song of deliverance. It's going to be something that gets our eyes off of ourselves because it's just as easy to dwell on our troubles as it is to dwell on our blessings.

But when we turn our eyes upon Jesus and look full in His wonderful face, then the things of this earth will grow strangely dim in the light of His glory and His grace, as the song says. Will the Lord cast off forever? Will He be favorable no more? And you'll notice, this is the turning point in this vicious circle because now He doesn't say, will my troubles go on forever? Will I never cease to be delivered? Will I continue to have my eyelids open in the night? Now He's got His eyes on the Lord. He says, well, is the Lord going to cast off forever? The answer to that would be no.

There are so many examples in Scripture where God does not cast off His people whom He foreknew, as Paul talks about in Romans. Will He be favorable no more? Is it conceivable that God would never again extend grace or mercy? But see, now the issue is God. Is God going to allow this situation to continue indefinitely? Is God never going to turn things around for me in grace? And now He is recognizing the fact that these circumstances are in the hands of God.

And it depends on God, not on Himself, not on people, not on social issues or the economy or anything else. Has His mercy ceased forever? Has His promise failed forevermore? And of course, the implied answer to all of these questions is no, of course not. Has God forgotten to be gracious? Has He in anger shut up His tender mercies? And then Selah, that wonderful stop that you find in so many of the Psalms, means this is a place to stop and think about that.

It's unclear. Nobody really knows exactly what this meant. I wonder if it might be hog's eyes like we have in modern music where it means go back and repeat that again.

Some people say, well, it's a stop to pause. This might have been where the singers stopped singing and the instrumentalists played for a while. But the effect would be the same in either case.

Obviously, what has just been said is so important that the psalmist wants us to dwell on it. Go back and repeat it again. Stop at this point and meditate on it.

And this is the point of meditation here. What is the Lord's character? What is His pattern? What is His nature? What is the basis of relationship with Him? It's His grace, His mercy, His faithfulness. He will be gracious.

So then when you resume in verse 10 and He says, this is my anguish. Here is my problem. I've got a problem.

It's real. It's troubling me. But I will remember the years of the right hand of the Most High.

What does the right hand symbolize? Sit thou at My right hand. The right hand is the place of honor, the place of favor, and the place of blessing. This is where you seat the person that you most care for and admire and wish to honor.

And He says, you know, in times past, I've had those things. I will remember that. This is what Job does, doesn't he? When he says, shall we receive the good things from God and then fall all apart when bad times come? He said, I will remember those things that God has done in the past, knowing that He will yet again.

I will remember the works of the Lord. I will remember your wonders of old. And once again, all of these things, you say, well, I've got to get my eyes off myself and off my troubles and on to the Lord.

Well, okay, how do you do that? Well, he first thinks about the character of God. God is not going to have His mercy cease. He's not going to cast off forever.

He's not going to forget to be gracious. He's not going to be angry and never be merciful again. So character of God is the first thing.

Now he's going to remember the works of God in the past. Things that God has done in His own life in the past. Things that God has done historically.

I will meditate on all your work and talk of your deeds. This is the pattern of God. Does it make any sense that God would suddenly change? This is the application of that theological doctrine of immutability.

Is God changeable? Is He going to be gracious and then because of His own obscure and unknown will, the ways of God are past finding out? Well, He's just decided not to be gracious anymore. It doesn't make any sense. You are the God who does wonders.

You have declared Your strength. You have with Your arm redeemed Your people, the sons of Jacob and Joseph. And the mention of Joseph here in verse 15 is significant.

Joseph had his times of trouble. His eyelids were open in the night, but God is the Redeemer. And just remembering that story of Joseph, he's the symbol of going through trying times because there is a greater object in view in God's plan.

Then in verses 16-19, you have this troubled sea imagery, which we see so often in the Old Testament, representing the forces of evil, the chaotic, uncontrollable forces that often buffet us and the winds that can toss us if we don't have a rudder, if we don't have an anchor in the soul. It talks in the New Testament of being carried about by every wind of doctrine, every wind that blows. But these waters see God and are afraid.

The depths tremble. And whatever the chaotic, unidentifiable forces of evil are that may be at work in our life, when they see God, He is mightier than they. He will control them.

He will quell them. We're going to have some special music during the break this morning. And this is the theme of that.

The clouds poured out water. The skies sent out a sound. Your arrows flashed about.

This is a poetic representation. Thunderstorm, lightning. The voice of your thunder was in the whirlwind.

The lightnings lit up the world. The earth trembled and shook. Your way was in the sea, your path in the great waters.

Who is mighty enough to travel the sea as though it's a smooth road? Only God. You led your people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron. And that is the ultimate picture and reminder in Israel of deliverance.

What situation could be worse than the slavery of Egypt? And what deliverance could be greater than the deliverance that God gave to Israel through Moses and Aaron? So this gives us a pattern and an example to follow when we find ourselves troubled. It can be something large. It can be something small.

But when we are having difficulty and the fruit of the Spirit is not hanging on the branches of our soul, how can we escape that snare and that vicious circle where we know better, but we can't seem to break free? This gives us a great example. We sang the song this morning, Sweet Hour of Prayer. And the hymn writer there talks about how he has oft escaped the tempter's snare through that hour of prayer.

Taking these things to the Lord, you'll notice that this individual here, where Asaph cries out to God, takes his troubles to the Lord. And that's another important part of deliverance from that type of problem. Let's continue our study now of the life of Joseph over in Genesis 39.

We're at what I find to be one of the more interesting sections in Joseph's life. And a few little surprises in here in this section this morning. We saw where Joseph had been taken into the house of Potiphar, that everything he did prospered.

Potiphar promoted him so that everything except his most personal issues were all handled and left in Joseph's hand in verse 6. And then it says in verse 7 that after these things, his master's wife cast longing eyes on Joseph. And they used to tease about different things in seminary. You hit a particular thing and they'd say, boy, that'll preach.

You can spend a lot of time on that subject. And if you think about it, an awful lot of the sin and evil that happens in life is a result of somebody casting their eyes on something that produces a temptation, that there's an overwhelming desire for something. For example, the first sin.

If you go back to Genesis 3, the original fall of man, you have Eve in chapter 3. She encounters the serpent and so forth. But in verse 6, when the woman saw that the tree, and looking at the tree, she saw that it was good for food. She saw that it was pleasant to the eyes.

She saw that it was a tree desirable to make one wise. She took of its fruit and ate. And the original act of disobedience was linked to that casting the eyes on the fruit and giving favorable consideration to that opportunity.

And of course, ever after, you have that... because a lot of the things that attract us are things that we see. You may never have had the thought of wanting something, but then you see it. Somebody else has it.

You might be living in a mobile home and you're perfectly happy and you're content with your apartment or your mobile home or whatever it might be. I used to live in a mobile home, so I can think about that. In fact, I used to live in a travel trailer.

I tried living at Fort Sill in the bachelor officer's quarters. And after about the third time that I went down to use the common washer-dryer setup and found that people had been laundering diapers and things in there and hadn't even bothered to clean them out before they threw them into the... And I thought, I've got to get out of here. And I bought a travel trailer and parked it in a mobile home park on a lot and was just blissfully happy.

But it was one of these you pull behind a regular car. It wasn't large. It was 24 feet.

But just having your own space, you don't have to share with anyone. Had a little refrigerator and everything in there. And it was great.

I really enjoyed it. But you can go to visit somebody that is stationed the same as you are. And they had the foresight and the wisdom and the economic sense to invest in a house.

And over their three-year tour or four-year tour, they may build up some equity and be able to sell it and live at a profit or something. You can be dwelling in a mobile home and be blissfully happy. But then you go to a social occasion at someone's house and you look around and you say, oh my goodness, look at this house.

Look at the space they have. Look at the yard. Look at the neighborhood.

You get a ride with somebody and ride in their car and you think, wow. And suddenly your car that you've been perfectly happy with suddenly seems shabby and tattered around the edges. And this comes as a result of the eye gate.

We were content until some perception gave us a different perspective. And that idea of perspective is what the eyes represent. What is our view? What is our perspective? It's

not just seeing something.

It's the impression that it makes. How do we measure that? Can we put it in perspective? Can we be objective about it? Can we see the true value of things that God provides? In the area of cars and houses and things like that, I was able to pay cash for my little travel trailer and I didn't have a house payment. I didn't have the insurance and a lot of the other expenses.

Now that I'm a homeowner, I know about all the other things. What if you get a crack in your foundation? What if you get termites? You've got to have the exterminators out. What if you have to rebuild a wall? What if you have to... I've had all those experiences, but I've been near them.

I rented a home that got eaten up with termites and my goodness, I felt sorry for the owner because they had to tear out two entire walls and rebuild them from the inside out, and that's expensive. But with these things, and even if everything is fine, even if it's wonderful to just have all kinds of money laying around and have wonderful cars and big houses and all these other things, is your happiness based on your circumstances? What if the moth comes in and chews or rust corrupts or thieves break in and steal? If your happiness begins to be tied to your circumstances, then when the circumstance changes, your happiness is gone. And what a great thing to be able to rest our happiness in the security we have in God's grace and things may come and things may go.

We have periods of prosperity. We have periods of adversity. But to have a solid rock on which our house is built in the soul means that when we have little, we can appreciate the things that we do have that can't be bought.

There's a wonderful old gospel song. There's a lot of good truth in old gospel songs. It talks about the fact that mansions can't be bought in heaven.

Everything is free, we're told. You may have a lot on this earth, but it's your eternal status that really counts. So, it's a matter of perspective.

But here, when it says that Potiphar's wife cast her eyes longingly on Joseph, not only is this an indication of bad times in her soul, but this is a web into which Joseph is in danger of being drawn. And when you think about the eyes and temptation that goes with that, Genesis 3 we already saw with Eve looking at the fruit. Genesis 6, remember the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were beautiful and they took as wives all whom they chose.

And that's a fascinating passage. We looked at it in detail when we were in chapter 6. But these, in my understanding and my best interpretation of that passage, these were the unfallen angels. These were not Satan's demons trying to pollute the seed of humanity.

It was not some satanic plot. It says that God had sent angels to oversee humanity, to give them some knowledge. Probably told them how to invent the wheel and how to plant crops and how to do all the things that they needed to know in the early days when there was no history and there was no experience.

And it says there that the sons of God, and we don't use that term for fallen angels. This is the term that's used for the unfallen angels. But these angels that are mentioned also in the New Testament that kept not their first estate, they have a separate punishment from God and a separate destiny.

They are reserved in darkness. Why? Satan's demons aren't reserved in darkness and chains, but these angels are. It says they kept not their first estate.

And in Genesis 6 you see that they had been detailed to come down and supervise early human civilization. And it's interesting when it says they saw the daughters of men that they were beautiful and they took wives. This is a marriage.

This was not rape. This was not forcible taking. This involved negotiation with the fathers and the payment of a bride price.

And why is it that man suffers as a result of this? When he gets down in our English, King James says, My spirit will not strive with man forever, for that also he is flesh. Nevertheless, his days will be 120 years. It's been a very cryptic verse, and a lot of work has been done on it.

But when God says strive, it says my spirit will not strive, that word is dean, which is where we get Dan, which is judge. And this is to oversee, to administrate. And I think that because it's been misunderstood, what that verse was originally referring to is that God's spirits, His ministering spirits, are not going to judge man forever partaking of flesh as they did.

Because when He issued them fleshly bodies and put them down among men to oversee them, this resulted in this fall of these angels. And so He says they're going to have another 120 years to get things straightened out, and then the flood is going to come and all of that and all of the fruit of those mixed marriages gets wiped out in the flood. But the point is these, in my estimation, were unfallen angels, but they saw the daughters of men and they compromised.

Apparently they had instructions from God that you are to be among them, but we are in the world, but not of it. This was a similar instruction to these administration angels. But they thought, well, it will be okay.

We'll marry. We'll do it right. We'll pay the bride price and not have any forcible taking of these women.

And, of course, to marry a daughter of men, the father has to agree. And the men are complicit in this. And that's one of the reasons the judgment of God comes not only on the angels who are reserved in chains, but also mankind who apparently knew as well that this was not supposed to take place.

But the whole point here is how did this get started? How did unfallen angels fall? Looking with the eyes. So, we want to be careful that when we look and when we see that we've got the wherewithal in our souls to maintain a perspective and not be led astray. In Job 31, you remember Job's famous words when he's maintaining his righteousness and he says in Job 31.1, I have made a covenant with my eyes.

Why then should I look upon a young woman? Job says one of the reasons I've been able to maintain my righteousness and not be deserving of discipline that might be an explanation for these bad times that come upon me is I've made a covenant with my eyes. Why then should I look upon a young woman? For what is the allotment of God from above and the inheritance of the Almighty from on high? Is it not destruction for the wicked and disaster for the workers of iniquity? Does He not see my ways and count all my steps? I know that I'm under God's observation. So I've made a covenant with my eyes not to look upon a woman.

He says down in verse 9 of that same chapter, If my heart has been enticed by a woman or if I have lurked at my neighbor's door, then let my wife grind for another and let others bow down over her. For that would be wickedness. Yes, it would be iniquity deserving of judgment.

That would be a fire that consumes to destruction and would root out all of my increase. I would deserve the loss of all of my blessings. And He doesn't say if I go in and commit adultery.

He says if my heart has been enticed by a woman, if I've allowed my heart to be enticed, if I've lurked at my neighbor's door, just unseemly contact is the beginning of this. And we know of course what the Lord says over in Matthew when He talks about if you look at a woman to lust after her over in Matthew 5.28, this is the equivalent of adultery. And it's looking.

That is the incipient sin itself. And so we want to have some insurance against that. If you look at Psalm 119.37, turn away my eyes from looking at worthless things.

The psalmist prays, revive me in your way. All of this particular section, the hay section here of Psalm 119, you know this is an acrostic. And each section, the verses in that section begin with that letter, the Hebrew alphabet.

And He says, Teach me, O Lord, the way of your statutes, and I shall keep it to the end. Give me understanding, and I shall keep your law. Indeed, I shall observe it with my

whole heart.

Make me walk in the path of your commandments, for I delight in it. Incline my heart to your testimonies and not to covetousness. Turn my eyes away from looking at worthless things.

And revive me in your way. Establish your word to your servant, who is devoted to fearing you. Turn away my reproach, which I dread, for your judgments are good.

Behold, I long for your precepts. Revive me in your righteousness. What a great prayer to pray, along with bringing our cares and our concerns, as we saw in our Scripture reading.

We can ask God to lead us in His way and to turn our heart. And this is in itself an expression of the desire and the volitional decision to seek the things of God and not the things that tempt us. So this longing of the eyes that we see here in Genesis chapter 39 on the part of Potiphar's wife, if you step back and look at the value of this story in our own thinking, isn't this like temptation? Temptation is often pictured as a woman.

When you get over to Proverbs 6-7, and of course I could get all in trouble with the politically correct crowd, but this is what the Bible does. The woman who entices, who has the ankles and all of the other enticements going there in Proverbs 6-7. But you also have wisdom pictured as a woman.

Wisdom calls at the gates and cries out to the young man to turn in to her doorway and not to the doorway of the woman whose lips drip honey, but the end is bitter as wormwood and death and destruction follow. Well here, if you think about Potiphar's wife, there is nothing else working against Joseph at this point. God is blessing him, all of his efforts, even though he's a servant.

He is a very privileged servant. He's working for one of the king's right-hand men and things are going well. But here is the voice of temptation.

And she says, Just two words in Hebrew. And it's a very interesting thing because if you think about the subject of temptation, I'd like to suggest to you six quick points on temptation. First of all, temptation is attractive.

Potiphar's wife, and you can picture this, it's implied in the passage. Potiphar is a very powerful man in Egypt. He's one of the handful at the very top of the ladder next to Pharaoh.

And he probably has a very beautiful wife. And she's got more than just her authority in the household to entice and work against Joseph. So temptation is attractive.

It wouldn't be a temptation if it wasn't attractive. If someone said, Go over here and shovel out horse stalls. That doesn't appeal.

I've done that. Believe me, that's about the least appealing. When I want to think of something unappealing, I spent a whole summer shoveling out stables, shoveling out stalls where horses had been penned up all winter long and had been fed and left in there day after day and week after week and several feet thick, literally feet that horses had to walk uphill to get into their stalls because it had built up so far and had been so long since they were cleaned.

I won't even go into the details, but let me tell you, you can shower all you want. You can't escape that. I've often wondered if that's not what it's like to work in a morgue, maybe, where the formaldehyde, you just can't get rid of it.

Anyway, this is not that kind of thing. Temptation holds out something attractive. The reason the eyes perceive and this lust kicks in, it's attractive.

It looks good. The devil doesn't come with his little red suit and forked tongue and pointed tail and everything saying, oh, come down the path of evil. This usually looks like something really great.

To be alert to temptation and to guard our eyes and our footsteps, we have to first of all recognize that sometimes it's going to be disguised as an angel of light. It's going to look like a good thing. So the first point is, temptation, by definition, is attractive.

And a lot of times the things that are going to attract a believer who's seeking to walk the narrow path are going to look like another step down the narrow path. And we really have to be alert. We had a study once that's worth going back and reviewing on watch and pray.

How many times does the Bible say watch and pray? What is the disciples' last exhortation from Jesus Christ in the garden? Watch with me. Pray with me. Watch and pray.

Be alert. The devil prowls like a lion, seeking whom he may devour. You read the Tarzan books like we've been reading for the girls in their nightly reading.

And one of the constant themes is how alert you have to be in the jungle. You have to listen to every sound and watch for every clue because if you don't, you can wind up being food for some vicious animal. And this is the picture the Bible gives us.

Watch and pray. Be alert. You don't know the hour at which the thief is going to come and try to steal what you have in your soul.

And a lot of times, it's going to be something attractive, something that looks good on the surface. And if we're not alert, we can be led astray. So that's point number one.

Temptation is attractive. And it's kind of a self-evident thing, but nevertheless. Secondly,

temptation is possible.

When you think about Potiphar's wife and the possibilities there with Potiphar being off down in the court of Pharaoh and the trust and the control that Joseph has in the household, he could engage in a liaison with Potiphar's wife and get away with it. It's possible. It's convenient even.

It's a workable thing. And this is one of my arguments where I strongly differ with what might be considered to be classic theology, even conservative theology when it comes to the Lord Jesus Christ. You've probably heard the Latin phrase *possi non peccari, non possi peccari*, able not to sin.

Jesus was able not to sin and not able to sin. And the illustration has been given that humanity is like a copper wire that can be bent and cannot be straight anymore and that that would be the equivalent of sinning. But if you have the hypostatic union of Christ where the copper wire has been soldered or welded to a steel bar that's unbendable, then he's, in the copper, in the humanity, he's able not to sin and in the steel bar, he's not able to sin.

And you have this conundrum and it goes way back. Well, let me just give you a more, what I consider to be a more realistic illustration. If someone walked up to you, you're standing outside your house or your apartment complex or wherever you live, and they say, I will give you 500 million dollars if you will lift this building over your head and crash it to the ground and destroy everybody's stuff that's in it.

500 million dollars. Here's the check. Your name is on the pay-to-the-order of line.

Just pick this house up and crash it to the ground and just kill anybody that's in it. Well, that would be an evil thing to kill and destroy. It violates all the different laws of establishment.

But it's impossible. You don't have the physical ability to pick up a building. So how much of a temptation is that if it's impossible for you? There is no crisis of conscience.

Well, should I pick up the building? I wonder, 500 million. I can buy all of these people their own place if I crash it to the ground. There's no rationalization.

There's no pull. There's no temptation there because it is not possible. I would submit to you that the temptations of Christ are meaningless because if *possi non peccari, non possi peccari*, is true, because if Jesus is not able to sin, then He is not tested in all points like as we are because it's impossible.

I don't feel a temptation when it is impossible for me to do. Somebody says, go down here to Buckner Baptist Benevolence is where I work. If you'll embezzle a million dollars out of Buckner's account, I'll give you 500 million.

I'll favor you in some way. It's not possible. I don't have access.

Buckner doesn't have a million dollars. It's just not possible. So it doesn't matter what enticement they dangle in front of me.

It's not a real temptation because it isn't possible. So the second point is temptation is possible. It's something that looks like it can be done.

And this temptation of Joseph with the access, with the privacy in this large a household and the access and the trust that Joseph is privy to, this is a doable thing. He can do this and probably get away with it. It is possible.

And the temptations that come to us are sometimes not only possible, but in some cases they look reasonable. They look like, well, maybe I can compromise here and things will actually turn out for the good. Temptations are attractive.

Temptations are possible. Thirdly, oh, and by the way, talking about the Lord Jesus Christ, when I realized that the temptations of the Lord Jesus Christ were real, that it was possible, it was a potential that Satan could have lured him, that he could have lost it in his anger with the people and his frustration and the grace of his Father. And nobody knows the grace of the Father like the Lord Jesus Christ.

And to see it spurned and rejected and turned aside by the people that God had in grace sustained for 1,400 years, His righteous indignation could have gotten the better of Him. There are a thousand different ways. And when the Bible says that He was tested in all points like as we are, I believe it.

And what sustained the Lord Jesus? I can't identify with someone who is sustained because they're welded to the steel bar of deity. Because Jesus was God, He could not sin. It was impossible.

I'm not welded to deity. And so in what way can I follow His example and be comforted and encouraged by His earthly life and ministry? He's not like me. If because He is deity, that's what keeps Him from giving in to sin.

Well, that doesn't help me. All the filling of the Holy Spirit in the world isn't going to keep me from sinning and make it impossible for me to sin. We're all given the gift of the Spirit and regenerated and so forth at the new birth, but it doesn't prevent us from sinning.

So, it distances the Lord Jesus Christ and now He becomes an impossible ideal that we can never meet. But when you think about the fact that Jesus Christ could have sinned just like you and I, what did He rely on to keep from sinning? It's the very same thing that we rely on. Now He is a meaningful example.

He is one worthy to be praised. And my admiration for the Lord Jesus Christ went up a thousand percent. Obviously, you appreciate the Lord in salvation and all the things that He did in love, but my appreciation for Him as my... you know, a disciple follows a master and you want to be like Him.

And I have so much more to identify with because He had real temptations just like mine. And He is an example of how those temptations can be overcome and can be avoided by the same things that God has given to me, the Word of God and the Spirit of God. His example of prayer.

Jesus Christ, you can't turn a page in the Gospels without finding the Lord in prayer and in communion with His Father. That's a thing I can do. His knowledge and constant thinking about the Old Testament Scriptures that He had in His soul, I can do that.

Thy Word have I hid in my heart that I might not sin against Thee. Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path. All of those sections, you know all the two verses in Psalm 119 talk about the Word of God.

This is what sustained the humanity of the Lord Jesus because He emptied Himself. The doctrine of kenosis goes a lot further than some theologians will allow. And when it says that He did not consider equality with God a thing to be held onto and grasped, that's what that verb means.

He let go and set that aside and He was not sustained by His deity. When He knew what was in men's hearts, it wasn't His omniscience. It wasn't any attribute other than the ministry of God the Holy Spirit, which has functioned to many other human beings who knew what was in men's hearts.

Prophets and others that have had supernatural knowledge was given to them by the Spirit. And Jesus Christ, He said, everything that you've seen me do, you will do this and more. He told His disciples before He left.

Well, it's through the Spirit of God and the Word of God that those things are done. And our ability to resist temptation, we can rely on the very same things. And the Lord Jesus Christ is a wonderful example to study because He's real and His temptations were real.

None more compelling than looking down at the people who put Him on the cross. And when He says, Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do, you cannot find a greater example in the human race of objectivity. If the Lord Jesus Christ can ask forgiveness and recognize that the people who are putting Him on the cross, who have spit on Him, who have ripped out His beard, who have turned Him over to the Romans to be flogged, to be nearly beaten to death and then crucified, to look out on that crowd of self-righteous, mocking individuals and ask God to forgive them, is an almost incomprehensible level of communion with the Father and understanding of God's plan

and objectivity under pressure.

But it's not based on the deity of Christ. He did that in His humanity, sustained by the Spirit of God and the Word of God, the very same things that we have. And it's a powerful, powerful thing to keep in mind for us.

Temptation is attractive. Temptation is possible. It holds out a possibility.

It can often be unreasonable. What is Joseph's response when Potiphar's wife says, lie with me? And he thinks, you know, she's an attractive woman. This is possible.

We could do this and get away with it. But what is his response? He refused in verse 8 and said several things. Look, my master doesn't even know what's with me in the house.

He's committed all that he has to my hand. This would be a violation of trust. This is something that ought to curb people's flirtations and dalliances and looking at things that they shouldn't when they're married or when they know they're going to be married or they think they might be married.

Because if you think about it, even as a teenager or a young adult or whatever phase of life we find ourselves in, if we haven't yet met our opposite number, this is one of the things that helped me when I was a teenager and a young man and in the Marine Corps and off out in all the things you see when you go overseas and go to ports and so forth, there is a lot of what on the surface looks to be attractive, possible type of things. People go overseas in the military and think, who's going to know? I'm half the world away from everybody I know that would look down on me for this. But if you think about the fact, even if you're single, there's someone in your future.

Are you going to be unfaithful beforehand and suddenly say, I do, and become a faithful person? You can be faithful to someone before you even meet them. You can be thinking about them and realize that to engage in fornication before marriage is a sin against that future person because that's going to be something that's a part of you. And you have a lot of believers who are single and they're praying, Oh, Lord, bring me a right opposite number.

And their whole desire is, Oh, I want someone who's beautiful and has a soul of beauty and who's this and that and the other. And they're constantly thinking about all the attributes that they want in this other person and don't stop to think, well, if that other person is as great as you fantasize, they're going to also be looking for someone that has quality of soul and that has integrity and character and a love for the Lord and inner beauty and character, faithfulness. Well, are you becoming that person? Rather than longing and pining, why not concentrate on being the fulfillment of someone else's hopes and dreams and do that through the things that God can do in our soul? But this is one of

the things he brings up.

He says, this is a violation of trust. I have a covenant. It's either spoken or unspoken between Joseph and Potiphar.

Potiphar entrusts Joseph with these things and to do this would be a violation of his trust. People place trust in us. People look to us with an expectation that we're going to act with character and integrity and to sin.

And by the way, what is the penalty for adultery legally in God's law? If you go to Deuteronomy 22 and some of these other passages, it's death. But Joseph doesn't say, oh, this is a capital offense. I'll be worthy of death.

And a lot of times, the legal penalty for something isn't enough motivation. This is like when they put the Surgeon General's warning on cigarettes. You can get cancer and die.

That often is not a compelling reason for people to stop smoking. You can show them all the lungs from people that had their autopsy done because they died of lung cancer. The penalty for a wrongdoing often is not sufficient motivation.

The knowledge that something is wrong doesn't give us the power not to do it. That's the point. Knowing that something is wrong doesn't empower us.

It usually just makes us feel twice as guilty. So Joseph doesn't say, well, you know the penalty for that is death. He never brings that up, although that is a pertinent factor.

What does he say? It is a sin six different ways. It's a violation of Potiphar's trust. How can I do this great wickedness? It is a great evil.

It is a sin against the institution of marriage. It is a sin against the authority structure in this household. And it is a sin against God.

He does never bring in the penalty. But you notice Potiphar's wife, this has no impact on her in verse 10. She speaks to Joseph day by day.

In Hebrew, this is just yom yom, day day. Day after day after day after day. She says the same thing.

And these arguments of Joseph, she says two words, lie with me. He gives all of these answers in two whole verses. And it doesn't faze her.

And a lot of times we find that all of our talking to ourselves and trying to get our own souls straightened out has no effect. And temptation, it's unreasonable. It doesn't listen to reason.

It doesn't listen to practical arguments. It just has its desire and that's where it is. So

how can we deal with something like this? Well, we're going to have to pause here and take our break.

When we come back, we'll continue our study of temptation and the life of Joseph.