

Trials & Temptations

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[0 : 00] James chapter 1 verses 13 through 17.

! And for the sake of context, I'm going to begin reading in verse 2.! So would you stand with me? And let's honor the reading of God's Word.

Now, count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds. For you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him. But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind.

For that person must not suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord, for he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways. Let the lowly brother boast in his exultation, and the rich in his humiliation, because like a flower of the grass he will pass away.

[1 : 17] For the sun rises with its scorching heat and withers the grass, its flowers fall and its beauty perishes. So also will the rich man fade away in the midst of his pursuits.

Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life which God has promised to those who love him. Let no one say when he is tempted, I am being tempted by God, for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one.

But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. Then desire, when it has conceived, gives birth to sin, and sin, when it is fully grown, brings forth death.

Do not be deceived, my beloved brothers. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change. May God add a blessing to the reading of his word. Would you please be seated? Some kids grow up with an imaginary friend.

[2 : 26] These pretend friends can take the form of a person or an animal or even a stuffed animal that the child imagines that they can converse with and will take them on all kinds of imaginary adventures.

Maybe you had such an imaginary friend. Maybe you didn't. But whether you did or did not, there is an imaginary friend or person that we all grew up with.

That imaginary person always showed up or appeared when you were in trouble. And its name was, not me.

Whose trash is this? Not me. Who rubbed the Play-Doh in the carpet? Not me. Who left the toilet seat up?

Not me. Who ate the last little Debbie snack and put the empty box back in the pantry instead of throwing it away? Not me.

[3 : 40] Of course, not me isn't a real person. But a device that we all use to avoid taking blame. A ploy that we use to escape the consequences for the wrong that we've done.

A tactic we implement to excuse our actions in the hopes that wrath will be avoided and someone else will be punished and pay the price instead of us.

You know, we're all born with a blame transference syndrome. It's a disease that's ingrained in our fallen DNA, passed down to us from our first parents, Adam and Eve, a long time ago, as is recorded in the pages of our scriptures in Genesis chapter 3.

Genesis 3 records how paradise in the Garden of Eden was lost, how sin entered the world and the devastating consequences that have resulted from it ever since.

If you recall, God created Adam and Eve and he gave them one stipulation. You can have it all. You can enjoy it all. Just don't eat of the tree of knowledge.

[4 : 54] And then Satan came along and he enticed Eve to eat of it anyway, convincing her to doubt God's word and doubt God's trustworthiness, insinuating that God was withholding something that would make them like God.

And so she ate of the fruit and she gave it to her husband, Adam, and he ate it too. And they sinned and they became aware of their guilt and the shame of their sin for what they had done.

And when God came to them, they hid from him. Just like kids still do today, whenever they break something, their first instinct is to run and hide, to escape facing the consequences for what they did.

But there's no hiding from God. God sees all. God knows all. And so after he calls out to them, calls out to them from their hiding, tells them to come to him, and he asks them for an explanation.

In verse 10, Adam gives one. And it goes downhill from there. This is Adam's excuse. I heard the sound of you in the garden, speaking of God, and I was afraid because I was naked and I hid myself.

[6 : 16] God said, who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat? And the man said, the woman whom you gave to me, she gave me the fruit of the tree and I ate.

Then the Lord said to the woman, what is this that you have done? And the woman said, the serpent deceived me and I ate.

And ever since, we have all been born with a sin nature. And as a part of that sin nature, we have a blame transference syndrome.

We enter sin by exchanging the truth of God for a lie, having rationalized first within ourselves a justification for committing that sin, and then we try to cover up our shame by dismissing it and hiding from its consequences.

But when those attempts fail and we are forced to give an account for what we've done, we try to pass the blame on to someone else or something else in one last-ditch effort to justify ourselves and our actions and implicate someone else.

[7 : 31] But it doesn't work. And ultimately, like Adam, our attempts to avoid taking the blame for our sins will lead us to betray those whom we love, just as he blamed Eve, his wife, and worse, as he did to place blame on our perfectly holy, perfectly righteous, and eternally good creator, God.

James is the half-brother of Jesus. And he's writing to Christians who are facing trials.

They are being persecuted for their faith in Jesus Christ. They've seen their friends and family members imprisoned and some executed for their allegiance to Jesus.

They've been forced out of their homes. They've been scattered to the wind. Yet James reminds them that none of these things have happened outside of the sovereignty of God.

And he exhorts them to have a joyful attitude still. Because God is using their trials to strengthen their faith. God is using their trials to make them more like Christ and less like the world.

[8 : 49] As he prepares them for their true and eternal home in heaven, where they will receive, as he says in verse 12, the crown of life which God has promised to those who love him.

Last week, Evan preached a great sermon on verses 4 through 12. Those verses teach us how we should rejoice in our trials. And if you haven't heard that sermon, I encourage you to go back and listen to it.

But in our text today, James is continuing with that theme of trials. And he warns against the temptation we experience when enduring trials.

The Bible says that all Christians will face trials. Those trials will test your faith and tempt your trust in God.

And so the main idea for this morning's sermon is that trials bring temptations, but God gives us the strength to resist them. Trials bring temptations, but God gives us the strength to resist them.

[9 : 59] And I believe that James' goal for writing this book is to conform God's people to God's word. His goal is that they will be spiritually mature.

And it takes a spiritually mature person to understand the purpose of trials and to understand that though God may test us, he does not, he cannot, he will not tempt us.

Not only when we endure trials, but ever. That's not what God does. So here's kind of where the rubber meets the road concerning trials. If you don't trust the good that comes with them, you will be

tempted and deceived into exchanging the truth of God for a lie instead.

And that path will lead you to blame God for the sinful choices that you made because you refuse to trust him in the good things that he uses trials to produce within you.

As a parent, something that's really important to me as a father is that my kids know that they can trust me. And often it's during their trials that they learn that I am someone they can trust.

[11:15] If they have to get a shot, which is a big deal in our family, or if they have to get stitches, they'll know that me and their mom will be there and will be there to tell them and to remind them that the pain is temporary and it will lead to healing.

And I don't mind if they ask questions. How many shots? What's it going to feel like? How many stitches? Have you had stitches? Does it hurt? But it would pain me if they refused to trust that I knew what was best for them and if they rejected my love for them.

God is an infinitely greater father than I am or ever could be. And he wants you, his child, to trust him. He wants you to not doubt or waver in your ability to trust him.

So trials bring temptations, but God gives strength to his children to resist them so that they will not doubt him in their trials and sin in ways against him that will hurt them and could cause them to hurt others too.

So James 1, 13 through 17, in those verses, God gives us two truths that we must know and believe to resist falling into temptation during trials.

[12:40] That first truth that you must know and believe to avoid falling into temptation during trials is this. God may test you, but he will not tempt you. God may test you, but he will not tempt you.

James begins by conveying that a test or a trial can be taken in two ways. We can face the trial and accept God's help to persevere within it, knowing that he will use it to produce greater Christ-likeness in us, or we can doubt God's provision in the trial and blame him or attack him for how we chose to respond to it, thinking things like, well, God, you put me in this position, and so I couldn't help but act out in the way that I did.

So like Adam, you think, you rationalize incorrectly, God, it's really your fault. In 1 Samuel chapter 13, King Saul is faced with a trial that tested his faith in God.

Back in 1 Samuel chapter 10, verse 8, Samuel the prophet gave instruction to Saul. Saul was to go to Gilgal and wait seven days for Samuel to arrive.

And then Samuel said that he would come, he would offer the sacrifice before Saul and the people, and then Saul was to lead the Israelites into battle against the Philistines.

[14:17] Well, Saul waited seven days, but as he waited those seven days, the Philistine forces arrived in great numbers.

Saul's army began to panic, seeing that they were severely outnumbered, severely outmatched. Some of them decided to hide.

Others were more transparent with their feelings. They were packing their stuff, and they were getting ready to flee. And you can sort of see Saul in this text kind of nervously pacing back and forth, maybe chewing on his fingernails and muttering under his breath, where is Samuel?

Where is Samuel? It had been seven days, but just barely, just barely, and Samuel hadn't arrived yet.

So Saul decides to take matters into his own hands, and he assumes Samuel's role, and he decides that he will offer the sacrifice himself.

[15:28] And just as he finishes, guess who shows up? Samuel, on the seventh day, just as he said that he would, though later than Saul, desire.

Now that week was meant to teach Saul, this young king, to be patient and to depend upon God always, but his actions revealed the opposite.

He was an impatient man, and he was self-reliant. Now listen to the language Saul uses when Samuel questions him over what he's done. In 1 Samuel 13, 11 through 12, Samuel said, What have you done?

And Saul said, When I saw that the people were scattering from me, and that you did not come within the days appointed, and that the Philistines had mustered at Michmash, I said, Now the Philistines will come down against me at Gilgal, and I have not sought the favor of the Lord.

Now listen to this. So I forced myself and offered the burnt offering. In other words, I didn't have any other choice.

[16 : 46] It's the people's fault for scattering like chicken. You know what, Samuel, it's your fault because you didn't come when you said that you would or when I thought that you should have.

Saul rationalizes and he justifies his disobedience and his sin against God. He acted as if sinning against God's command was his only real option.

But the Bible repeatedly says that obeying God's instruction is always the best choice and should be the only choice that we ever make.

Because the one who truly knows God understands God's character. They know that while he may test his people, he never tempts them to sin.

And that's precisely what James is saying in verse 13. Let no one say when he is tempted, I am being tempted by God for God cannot be tempted with evil and he himself tempts no one.

[17 : 47] The Bible says that God and evil exist in different realms that never meet. He has no vulnerability to sin. He is aware of evil but he is completely and totally untouched by evil.

Like how a sunbeam can shine on a dump but is untouched by the trash within it. In his vision of God, Isaiah stood transfixed before him as the seraphim cried out one to the other, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts.

The whole earth is full of his glory. Habakkuk understood God's character and his nature and how he is absolutely invulnerable to sin or temptation to commit evil when he said in Habakkuk 1.13, you who are of pure eyes than to see evil and cannot look at wrong.

Now here's something interesting about verse 13. The same Greek word translated as tempted in verse 13 is the same Greek word translated as tested in verse 12.

So context determines meaning. And the point James is making here is that there's a difference between a test and a temptation and that difference depends on how you choose to respond to it.

[19 : 17] God's tests provide the opportunity for you to endure in faith, to grow strong in faith, to grow up in Christ. But the test becomes a temptation only when your sinful nature makes it so.

There are several episodes in Israel's history that demonstrate this point. James' original audience, if you recall, they're Jewish. They're Christians but they have a Jewish heritage.

They know Israel's history well. And they would have remembered how Israel faced a lot of tests as they wandered in the wilderness after God delivered them from Egypt.

God had sent ten plagues on Egypt to convince Pharaoh to let his people go. And Pharaoh did. But then as they went, remember, he changed his mind. And he pursued them. God parted the waters of the Red Sea and allowed his people to walk through on dry ground to safety.

[20 : 24] And then when Pharaoh's armies tried to do the same, he crushed them. He drowned them in the waters of his wrath. But it's not long after that miracle, and that's a great miracle, is it not?

It's not long after that miraculous deliverance that Israel is tempted to doubt God's provision. In Exodus chapter 15 verses 1 through 2, the nation is observed worshiping God with Moses for liberating them.

But just several verses later, the people are grumbling because the water doesn't taste very good. Can you imagine that? After God provided better water for them and warned the people to listen to him and to trust them to do good, look at what Exodus 15, 25 through 26 says, there the Lord made for them a statute and a rule, and there he tested them, saying, if you will diligently listen to the voice of the Lord your God and do that which is right in his eyes and give ears to his commandments and keep all his statutes, I will put none of the diseases on you that I put on the Egyptians, for I am the Lord your healer.

That's good, I'd be encouraged to hear that, wouldn't you? But just a month later, chapter 16 records Israel's reaction to a shortage of food, and instead of trusting God's provision, they desired to return to Egypt.

In Exodus 16, 3, it says, and the people of Israel said to them, would that we would have died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the meat pots and ate bread to the full, for you have brought us out into the wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger.

[22 : 26] So God in his grace promised to send them manna, bread from heaven. He would do so every morning six days out of the week, and on the sixth day he said, I'll give you double so that you have enough for the seventh day so that you don't have to collect manna, so that you can use that as the Sabbath to worship me.

And so for six days, there's bread. On the sixth day, there's double the amount, just as God said. And then we get to the seventh day, and guess what some of the Israelites did?

They went out looking for more bread. Once again, demonstrating their failure to pass God's test, their failure to trust in God and in his word.

In the next chapter, the people come to a dry place and they demand water, and they fought with Moses, the man God used to deliver them from Egypt and who interceded on their behalf before God.

They accused him of delivering them from Egypt in order to slay them in the desert. They are being rebellious, yet despite the people's doubts and rebellious attitudes, God provides once more in Exodus 17, 7.

[23 : 49] There, that passage records the name that Moses gave to the place where Israel once again doubted God's provision. It says, and he called the name of the place Massa, which means testing, and Meribah, which means contending, because of the quarreling of the people of Israel, because they tested the Lord by saying, is the Lord among us or not?

after all the signs, after all the wonders of God's grace, God's mercy, God's provision, God's faithfulness to keep his word, the Israelites had the audacity to question him, saying in essence, yeah, you helped us in the past, but what have you done for us lately?

Now, here's the thing. Moses was an Israelite. Moses endured the same tests that all the rest of them faced.

He was far from perfect. Moses made mistakes, but when we get to Numbers chapter 10, Moses has an interesting meeting with Hobab, his brother-in-law, and there Moses tries to recruit him to join Israel.

Now, Moses' motivation is he knows that Hobab knows the land where they're going to be going into, and he knows the best places to camp. But he also has a motivation for Hobab to join with Israel in Numbers 10, 32.

[25 : 31] Moses says to him, and if you do go with us, whatever good the Lord will do to us, the same he will do to you. And with that, Moses persuaded Hobab to stay because Moses was convinced that the Lord would do good things for his people.

Remember, by that time, Moses had faced armies, thirst, hunger, complaints, rebellion, and much more.

Yet here we see in him an unshakable faith. And he could say to Hobab in effect, you know, God has promised good things to his people, and you would hate to miss out on experiencing that too. Many in Israel saw their tests as times of trouble, and they grumbled against God. But Moses experienced the same tests, but he saw them from a different point of view.

He was not tempted as they were to doubt God as they experienced, or as he experienced the same trials, because he saw those trials differently as opportunities to trust God and to persevere as they neared the promised land.

[27 : 00] Hebrews 4, 2 says of that generation that wandered in the wilderness, for good news came to us just as to them, but the message they heard did not benefit them because they were not united by faith with those who listened.

They failed not because God enticed them to sin, but because they were unfaithful during their times of testing. They gave into their doubts instead of enduring in their trials, and that doubt led them to blame God instead of trust God.

If you fail to endure a trial or a test, it's not God's fault. If you succumb to temptation in a trial, it is because you allowed your desires to drag you into it.

As James says in verse 14, but each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. Each person emphasizes the pervasiveness of temptation.

None of us is immune to temptation. Every one of us experiences temptation. Anyone who thinks that they are immune to temptation has given in to the temptation and has committed the sin of pride.

[28 : 18] lured has the meaning of dragging away. It's being dragged away by the compulsion of an inner desire.

The Greek term was used for baiting a trap which was designed to attract an unexpected animal into it. You know, a few weeks ago I shared a story about my strength and conditioning coach in college.

He was an old tough guy. Gruff. Gruff is a good word to describe him that we don't use very often anymore. And in the weight room he had these signs posted all over the place and they were sort of like riddles.

One of those signs just said simply this, this isn't Burger King. And if somebody messed up and did something wrong, he would call them out and he would point to the sign and say what does that say?

What does that mean? And you'd have to answer the riddle. Now this isn't Burger King, that was an easy one, right? Because Burger King's slogan is have it your way. And so the point was in his weight room you can't have it your way.

[29 : 31] You're going to do it his way. But another one of those signs said the cheese in a mousetrap is always free. And none of us, most of us, were not on academic scholarships.

So that one took us a little bit longer to decode. But basically the idea is this, right? Put yourself in the mind of the mouse. He sees a free meal.

It looks good. It smells good, no doubt. It thinks it must taste great. And so its senses are enticed and it pays no attention to the peril that its desires are leading it into.

And it takes a bite, tastes good, until it's too late. Snap. Temptation is like the cheese in the mousetrap that entices sinful desires, but will ensnare you in the jaws of sin and death.

The second Greek word translated as enticed is a fishing term that referred to bait. Lures and traps work because the bait outwardly looks appealing.

[30 : 57] It looks good. It smells good. It appeals to the physical desires and appetites of the animal. Caution is thrown to the wind and the animal is lured and baited to the trap, ignoring the hook or the spring or whatever awaits it that's going to ensnare it.

They don't realize it until it's too late. In exactly the same way, we succumb to temptation when our own desires appeal to our sinful appetites.

And we're tempted to ignore God's word. We're tempted to close our ears and our minds off to our conscience and the indwelling of God's spirit which cautions us against what we're desiring.

And here's another interesting thing. In the Greek, the word for desire or lust is used to describe things that aren't intrinsically evil. For example, the same word is used to describe Jesus' desire to eat his last supper with his disciples.

So the wrongness is not so much based on the object that is desired, but the motivation behind the desire for it. It's like when you drive by a new car lot or you drive through a neighborhood where there's a bunch of new construction, new houses, big houses, beautiful houses.

[32 : 33] And all of a sudden there's this desire within you, right, that thinks, boy, I wish I could have that, but I don't get to have nice things because blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, right?

And then you think, well, this is unfair, life is unfair, if this would have happened or that would have happened, that would be my car, that would be my house. Those desires cause you to take your eyes off of what is important in life and they trap you into potentially doing sinful things to acquire them.

Satan, like he did with Eve, tries to make sin as attractive as possible, but there would be no attraction to sin were it not for our own desires, which makes evil more appealing than righteousness to us, falsehood more appealing than the truth to us, and immorality more appealing than obedience to God to us.

And here's the thing James tells us, God's word tells us, we cannot blame Satan, we cannot blame his demons, we cannot blame the world in general for our own desires.

And as James has pointed out, we can't blame God either. The spiritually mature person understands that when they sin, it's not God's fault.

[34 : 04] And they don't say things like, well, the devil made me do it. The spiritually mature understands and realizes and confesses, no, I made me do it.

Our problem isn't a tempter from without, but a traitor from within. We have a problem with this in our culture, don't we?

People blame anyone and anything they can for the actions that they have committed. They say things like, well, I was born this way.

I don't have a choice but to act out on my desires. Or they say I'm a product of bad parenting or a bad neighborhood or a bad culture and I can't help but be the way that I am.

Or I'm oppressed by this system or that system and I can't help but have done the things that I've done. It's not my fault. Now, some good has been done to expose some real oppressions in our culture.

[35 : 09] But a lot of people have realized that there is power to be had in playing the role of a victim. All their problems are someone else's fault.

But the mature believer understands that no one was victimized more than Jesus Christ. And he never played that victim card to gain an upper hand on anyone.

The mature believer also realizes that their sin is their sin. And in understanding their true nature, in understanding their sin, they see their need for a Savior.

And I find this comforting. The Apostle Paul is perhaps the greatest Christian follower of Jesus Christ that the world has ever known.

Certainly there have been great ones. We can lump all the apostles in there with him. But he was a dedicated, steadfast, devoted follower of Jesus Christ. And yet he confesses of himself as a believer in Romans 7, 18-25 this, for I know, he says, that nothing good dwells in me that is in my flesh.

[36 : 35] For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out. For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing.

Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me. So I find it to be a law that when I want to do right, evil lies close at hand.

For I delight in the law of God in my inner being, but I see in my members another law waging war against the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members.

Wretched man that I am, who will deliver me from this body of death. Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then I myself serve the law of God with my mind, but with my flesh I serve the law of sin.

Here's an interesting thing that I've experienced in people that I've met who are spiritually mature. They are acutely aware of their own sin.

[37 : 37] And we can look at them and think, what? You know the Bible backwards and forwards. I know how much time you spend with the Lord in prayer. I know how much you serve him and yet you're so aware of your sin.

That's what a spiritually mature brother or sister is like. They're not looking at others and their sin is worse than mine. Or it's their fault for what I've! No, they own it.

they know that it was my sin for which Christ died. And in doing that they know the Lord and their need for him in a greater way.

In verse 15 James personifies evil saying temptation and desires come together and they conceive and their offspring is death. He says then when desire has conceived it gives birth to sin and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death.

Temptation and sinful desires produce sin and sin grows up and sin becomes apparent too. And the name of sin's child is death.

[38 : 40] You can be sure that just as physical conception leads to birth this kind of conception gives birth to death. When we indulge our sinful desires sin becomes a pattern and eventually a life dominating force death.

And if it's left unchecked unconfessed and unrepented of sin brings death. So there are two potential paths in any test.

Testing met with endurance makes us mature and complete it leads to life as James says in verses 3 through 4 and verse 12. Or testing met with a selfish desire leads to sin and death as we've just read.

death is more than death of the body. Just as faith and endurance lead to eternal life, so selfish desire and sin lead to eternal separation from God in hell.

Eternal death. So what should you do? What must you do when you are tempted to sin in a trial?

[39 : 57] Well, James gives us that next truth. Trust that God's gifts are better than whatever is tempting you. Trust that God's gifts are better than whatever is tempting you.

I'll go through verses 16 and 17 a little bit more in depth next week, but let's read them. Do not be deceived, my beloved brothers. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation in shadow due to change.

So here's what the Bible says. We are all sinners and God is holy. We need a righteousness to cover our sinfulness and Jesus has that perfect righteousness.

One way he manifested that perfect righteousness was in undergoing a similar temptation to that that Adam and Eve endured from Satan.

In Matthew chapter 4, we find Jesus in the desert in a worse state than Adam and Eve. They were well fed.

[41 : 05] They had all of their physical needs met. But Jesus at this point had been fasting for 40 days and 40 nights.

Can you imagine? I know if I haven't eaten in a couple days, that's about as long as I can go without being hungry or hangry, whatever they call it. And so he's in this physical condition.

Satan comes to him and tempts him. And Christ overcame those temptations. And he used God's word to do so. And unlike them and how Adam and Eve passed the blame for their own transgressions on to others, we see in the life of Jesus that he does something completely different. Instead of passing off blame to others, he takes the blame of others to himself. He accounts it to himself.

He credits it to himself. He says, give me that person's sin. I'll take it. I'll suffer for it. I'll endure their shame for it.

[42 : 16] I'll give my life for it. I'll die to atone for them. And not only has he done that, he's given us his perfect obedience and righteousness.

He's taken the blame and he's transferred his righteousness to those who have trusted in him. And so we can resist temptation because Christ has revealed to us that he is better.

we can resist temptation because we have received his word and we can trust in it when our desires tempt us to betray it.

And we have the Holy Spirit who reminds us of these truths. But you must choose to believe God's word and you must choose to believe that God's gifts are better than whatever is tempting you in the moment.

As enticing as it might be, it will lead to bad things for you. So the main point of application is this. Trust God in your trials and turn to him in your temptations.

[43 : 23] Trust God in your trials and turn to him in your temptations. Know God's word. Memorize God's word. Abide in God's word. Trust in Christ always.

You know, as I mentioned when I was praying, if you have, and I'm sure all of you have, been in a position where someone you love is suffering, whether that's a child, whether that's your parent, your elderly parent, and you know they're going through, they're going to go through a really hard physical trial.

And you are in good health. And haven't you had that feeling in that case where you think, if I could just trade places with you, I wish that I could trade places with you.

I wish that I could be in the one in the hospital bed and not you because I'm stronger. I can take it. I can survive it. I can cope with it. I wish it was me instead of you.

And it's tough in those situations because we can't trade places with them, can we? But if you've been in that spot and you felt that kind of love, you've only scratched the surface of God's love for you.

[44 : 48] Because Jesus did come. And Jesus did take your place. Out of love, he said, I will take their blame. I will take their shame. I will take their guilt.

I will die for it in their place so that they will be healed and they will be whole and they will know me and have eternal life. And that's the only way we can be saved from our sins.

Another point of application. I don't mean to keep you for too long, but I think this is important. I think you have to understand this. Amen. And you know I love to use sports illustrations.

One thing that we did in college as pitchers is we had scouting reports. We would read over those scouting reports of the opponent that we were about to play. We knew their tendencies. With two strikes, this guy chases balls out of the zone.

This guy is a disciplined hitter. You're going to have to really hit your spots in order to get him out.

This guy crushes curve balls or fastballs. Don't throw that to him. And so we had these scouting reports and we would read these scouting reports so that when we played our opponent, we knew them.

[45 : 54] We knew their weaknesses. Satan knows your weaknesses. You need to know your weaknesses. You need to know your own tendencies. And you need to decide today, if you haven't already, you know what?

There are people, there are places, there are things that I cannot associate with because in those moments, I'm a weak and my tendency is going to be exploited to weakness and I would give in to that temptation.

And so listen, God has given you what you need to resist it, but you also have a work to do. Know your own tendencies and get out of the relationships, get out of the places, get away from the things that cause you to be weak, where your desires will cause you to sin against God.

Do a scouting report on yourself. Three questions of application. Question number one. Right now, what are you being tempted to believe that sin will provide that God can't?

Right now, what are you tempted to believe that sin will provide that will be better than what God has to give you? Then read Ephesians 6, 13 through 18.

[47 : 17] According to this passage, what tools has God given us to fight against temptation? What tools has God given you to resist, to fight against temptation?

And then finally, read 1 Corinthians 10, 13. What promise does this text provide to those being tempted? And then what causes people to want to blame, rationalize, and not seek out God's means of escape when they are tempted?

Know yourself, know your Savior, and trust in Him always, especially when you are being enticed and lured by deception to sin against Him.

As delightful as that sin might appear, it will end in death and tragic things for you. Resist. Let's pray. Lord, we thank you for this teaching.

And God, we need your help to apply it. Lord, we know that we've received your help. We know that in Christ we have received His righteousness and that He has taken our blame, our sin, our shame.

[48 : 42] He has died to atone for our sins. And we know, Lord, that in Your eyes we are righteous because we are in Christ. But God, as we read James, we know that as believers we have a responsibility to put our faith into practice, to put it to work.

We have a role to play in our own sanctification, in our own efforts to become more like Jesus. And God, You've told us that trials are going to come.

They're a reality in life. There's no escape from them. And in trials there will be temptations. And we'll be tempted, Lord, to think things, to believe things that we rationalize and justify in our minds. We're convincing ourselves that they're true and they're not. So God, we pray that for those who are facing a trial right now or a test right now, for all of us when we will face a test or a trial in the future, that these words would come back to our mind, that Your Spirit would remind us that no matter how enticing that sin might be, no matter what it promises to give us, it's a lie and it's not as good as what You have for us.

And so, Lord, may we endure in faith. And as we endure, may we seek to know You more and glorify You within it. God, we pray that we would be a people who is not enticed and lured away by deceptions that come from within, but that, Lord, we would always be seeking to walk in Your ways and trust in You that Jesus Christ would be preeminent in our life as we seek to live our lives for Him, that He would be glorified in us and in our church.

[50 : 27] In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.