

Deliver Us From Evil

Matthew 6:9-13

Pastor John Miller

I'm going to read verses 9 to 13, and if you want to join me and read out loud together as we have every Sunday through this series, let's begin together in verse 9 down to verse 13. "After this manner, therefore, pray: Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be Thy Name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one: For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory for ever. Amen."

An exasperated motorist parked his car in a no-parking zone in London and attached the following message to his windshield. "I have circled this block 20 times, I have an appointment to keep; 'Forgive us our trespasses.'" And when the owner came back to his car, he found this reply attached to his note. "I've circled this block 20 years. If I don't give you a ticket, I lose my job; 'Lead us not into temptation.'"

This morning we come to prayer petition number six. It's the last of the six petitions in the Lord's Prayer, and it is found in verse 13. "Lead us not..."—the negative side—"...into temptation, but deliver us from evil"—or literally, "the evil one." Now I believe this is one prayer; this is one petition. "Lead us not into temptation..."—That's the negative side. The positive side—"...but deliver us from the evil one." So it's one prayer or one petition, but it has two halves.

Do you know, every one of us knows what it's like to be tempted? If you're alive, you have been tempted. Oscar Wilde said, "I can resist everything except temptation." Even Jesus Christ was tempted. Did you know that? The Bible says, "He was tempted in all points like we are, yet without sin." And everyone knows what it's like to yield to temptation, except Jesus. So everyone has been tempted, like Jesus, and everyone has yielded to temptation, not like Jesus. That means, if there's anyone that can help you face temptation, it's Jesus. Amen? He conquered over sin, death, and the grave. And we come to Him today in this prayer, "I am weak, but You are strong." I love that concept. "I am weak, Thou are strong." "I am weak, You are strong."

There is an enemy of my soul, the Devil. He is the evil one in this verse. And I know that he wants to destroy me. There is a devil, and he wants to destroy my life. But "God, You will preserve me." So this is a prayer that summarizes our need for provision, for pardon, for protection, and for preservation now from evil. "God, I know that if it weren't for Your grace and Your mercy, I would be destroyed. So God, I am weak, You are strong, please help me. 'Lead me not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.'"

Now I want to point out the logical order between petition number five, verse 12, and petition number six, verse 13. Go back to verse 12. In verse 12 it says, "Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors." Now "debts" is a metaphor for sin. It's a Jewish metaphor for sin. So what are we asking? "God, forgive my sins, even as I forgive the sins of others." So I come to the

cross to be forgiven; I stay at the cross to be forgiving.

But there's a link between that and the next petition, verse 13. "And..."—notice the word "and"—"...lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one." And this is the point I want to make. Listen carefully. The true child of God is not only concerned with having their past sins forgiven, but also with deliverance of future sins. I want to repeat that. The true child of God is not only concerned with having their past sins forgiven, but also with deliverance of future sins. John R. W. Stott said it like this. He said, "The sinner, who's evil in the past has been forgiven, longs to be delivered from the tyranny of it in the future." It's better to go through life saying, "Lord, protect me; Lord, keep me; Lord, help me; Lord, watch over me; Lord, protect me; I need your help" than go through life saying, "Lord, forgive me; Lord, forgive me; Lord, forgive me; Lord, forgive me." We get in this kind of habit of we just sin, and God will forgive us; He's "faithful and just to forgive us." But it's kind of like walking backwards. "Lord, forgive my sins; Lord, forgive my sins, forgive my sins." How much better to turn around and say, "Lord, protect me from sin." The true child of God is just as concerned with deliverance from future sin as you are with forgiveness of past sin. Believe it or not, I've been waiting months to share that point with you. I discovered it months ago, and I couldn't wait to get to this verse to share this point. If you don't get anything else I say this morning, get this: If you are a true Christian, you not only want forgiveness for your past, but you want deliverance for the future.

You want God to protect you from sin and protect you from the evil one. This is a petition, as a prayer of protection from sin, and a prayer for God to keep us from presumption and from self-sufficiency. It's a prayer saying, "God, help me not to be presumptuous and think that I can handle temptation. And help me not to be self-sufficient and think that I have everything together. I need you, Lord. And from the bottom of my heart, oh God, I'm saying, 'Please lead me not into temptation.' And God, please 'deliver me from evil.'"

Now the first question I want to ask about this prayer is, why is this prayer so important? And I believe that it is vitally important. And I give you four reasons. If you're taking notes, I want you to write them down. Four reasons we should pray this petition, "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one." Reason number one: Because no one is above falling. We are all weak; no one is above falling. In 1 Corinthians 10:12, it says, "Let him who thinks he stands take heed, lest he..."—what?—"...fall." Overconfidence is a very dangerous thing. We all know that in the sports world. A team can go all season winning every game, but sooner or later they're going to get overconfident, and they're going to lose a game. So we need to realize, "Lord, I am weak, but You are strong. Satan is real; he is powerful. But I need You to protect me."

That was one of the dangers that Sampson ran into. Sampson, the man with the long hair and the big muscles. Don't picture him too much in your mind for a moment. First service I started kind of describing him as being on the cover of a weightlifting magazine, and I had to stop and "No, no; let's not go there, okay?" Sampson was like all muscle and had this long hair, you know, and I guess—I'm doing it again; aren't I? Let's just forget about what Sampson looked like. But Sampson thought, "Man, I'm God's man of the hour. I'm God's anointed delivered, and

I'm untouchable." So Sampson's feet—and I'll get there in a minute—but his feet took him where he shouldn't go. Be careful, little feet, where you go. There's a Father up above looking down on you in love, so be careful, little feet. In your case, it's big feet. Where you go. And he started hanging out with this woman named Delilah. Delilah. She started sweet-talking; "Oh Sampson, you're so strong! And oh, Sampson, you're so handsome!" Sampson just got all buttered up. "And oh, Sampson, what's the secret of your strength?" Sampson should have known, "I'm in the wrong place with the wrong person. I need to get outta here!" But eventually—long story short—Sampson said, "It's my hair; If I cut my hair, I lose all my strength." So the soldiers came in, they cut his hair. And Sampson—and this is the point I want to make—he jumped up, and he said, "I will conquer like I have before." He was looking back. "Just like I handled this before; I will throw them off." And he found out he was weak; right? He was impotent. He lost all his strength, because his strength lie, not literally in his hair, but in his Covenant with and his commitment to God. That's where our strength lies and our commitment to God. So Sampson became overconfident. His eyes were gouged out, and he was taken away and became a slave.

Paul said in Ephesians 6:10—the context is spiritual warfare—he said, "Finally, my brother, be strong..."—where?—"...in the Lord, and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the wicked one." So we need to realize I'm not above falling. When you see a Christian fall into sin, your heart should say, "There, but for the grace of God, go I." "God, lead me not into temptation, but deliver me from the evil one."

Second reason this prayer is important is because the Devil is real, and he is powerful. When Jesus tells us to pray, "Deliver us from evil," all Greek scholars agree that that should be rendered, "the evil one." He's talking about Satan. Now we need to understand there really is a devil. And he really doesn't like God, and he really doesn't like you, and he doesn't like your marriage, he doesn't like you coming to church, he doesn't like you reading your Bible, he doesn't like you praying, and he comes to "steal, kill and destroy"; you got that? He's not a good guy. But he really exists, and he is powerful, he is wiley, and he wants to destroy you. 1 Peter 5:8, "Be sober, be vigilant, because your adversary, the Devil, as a roaring lion, walks about seeking whom he may devour."

It started in the Garden of Eden. "Did God really say you can't eat of all the fruit of the garden?" You know, one of the things that Satan loves to attack is the Word of God. As a matter of fact, I would say that's one of his primary attacks. "Did God really say that? Is that really in the Bible? Is the Bible really the inspired, inerrant, infallible word of God? Can you really trust the Bible? It's written by men. You can't really believe that. Did God really say that?" That was his first temptation, and he hasn't stopped since.

We see that Jesus was driven by the Spirit—Matthew 4—into the wilderness to be tempted of the Devil. And what was the first thing that Satan said to Jesus in the wilderness? He said, "Since you are the Son of God, turn those stones into bread." He didn't actually say, "If you are...." Most English translations say, "If you are the Son of God...." The Greek there is actually "Since you are the Son of God, turn these stones into bread." Jesus then, using the

Word, said, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God." And then Satan said, "Well, if you're the Son of God..."—or "Since you are the Son of God, fall down and worship me, and I'll give you all these kingdoms." And Jesus said, using the Scriptures, "Thou shalt worship the Lord, thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve." Whatever we bow to, we end up serving. And then he said, "Throw Yourself off the pinnacle of this temple." Down below the Kidron Valley, down there. And then Satan got really sublet; he quoted Scriptures. He said, "For it is written, 'He will give His angels charge over Thee to bear Thee up, lest Thou dash Thy foot against the stone.'" And Jesus said that "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord, thy God." Every temptation, he used God's Word.

But what I wanted to point out was he comes with subtlety, and he comes with questions. You know, "You're the Son of God; You outta be able to do this, or You outta be able to do that. You know, You don't have to go to the cross. You don't have to follow God's Will." Satan is alive and well on planet Earth. And he attacks the Christians through the world and through the flesh. Our enemy is the Devil, the world and the flesh. In 1 John 2:15, it says, "Do not love the world, neither the things that are in the world, for all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life." By the way, that breaks down pretty interestingly. The lust of the eyes is your possessions, the lust of the flesh is your passions, and the pride of life is your position; you are proud of who you are. Sins of youth, sins of middle age, and the sins of the seniors: pride of life. Satan will come through the world, through the flesh to attack you and to destroy you.

So we should pray, "Lead me not into temptation, but deliver me from the evil one." Let me give you the third reason this prayer is important: Because sin breaks my fellowship with my Father. The first petition, "Hallowed be Thy Name." "Our Father, which art in heaven, hallowed be Thy Name." God is our Father, and when I sin, it breaks my fellowship. I don't lose "sonship"; I lose fellowship. God doesn't kick me out of His family, but I do lose the sense of His presence, and His peace, and His joy in my life. 1 John 2:5-6 says, "This is the message which we have heard of Him and declare unto You. That God is Light, and in Him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship..."—there's our word—"If we say we have fellowship with Him..."—that is, God—"...but we walk in darkness, we lie and we do not the truth." If God is light, and I'm walking in the darkness, what's that say? It says I'm not walking with God. I'm not in fellowship with God. And if I say I am, but I'm walking in darkness, then I'm lying, and I'm not practicing the truth.

So we should pray this prayer because we're weak. We should pray this prayer because Satan is real and strong. And fourthly, we should become—we need to yield—if we yield to temptation, we will not honor God's Name or hallow God's Name, verse 9. We will not advance His kingdom, verse 10. And God's will will not be done "in earth as it is in heaven." So why should we pray this prayer? Because I want to hallow God's Name. "Hallowed be Thy Name. I want Your Name to be glorified." In verse 10, "I want Your kingdom advanced," and verse 10 again, "I want Your will to be done."

Now, anyone who has studied this petition asks this question: Why should we pray, 'Lead us

not into temptation' when the Bible clearly says in James 1:13, "Let no one say when he is tempted that 'I am tempted of God,' for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither does He tempt any man." Now I wouldn't have to really bring up this issue, because you could easily preach it and not talk about it or preach it and not deal with it, but most people, when they study this petition, if they know their Bible, you have to ask this question. "Does not the Bible say God is not tempted with evil?" "Yes." "Does not the Bible say God does not tempt anyone?" "Yes." "Then why are we praying, 'God, do not lead me into temptation'?" Here's the answer. The answer is in the word itself, "temptation." That word translated "temptation"—"Lead us not into temptation..."—is a neutral word. And it can have one of two meanings. And I think the two meanings are closely related. And I think it's important that you understand that. The Greek word translated "temptation" can mean either "a test or a trial," or it can mean "a solicitation to evil." It can mean a test or a trial, or it can mean a temptation to evil. Now in our English language, we normally use the word "tempt" or "temptation" for a solicitation to sin, a solicitation to evil. "Oh, I'm being tempted to commit adultery. I'm tempted to lie. I'm tempted to steal, or I'm tempted to murder someone," we might say. But the word can also mean tried or tested. And I believe both meanings come together in this context. Primarily He's talking about temptation, because He ends the petition, verse 13, "Deliver us from the evil one."

But, you know, as Christians, we will be tested, and we also will be tried. God allows us to be tested and tried for our good and for His glory. If you're taking notes, write that down. "My trials, my trouble, my testings in my life are for my good." You go, "I don't believe that." It's true. God allows them for our good and for His glory. In James 1, it says that when we are tested or tried—and by the way, in the English Bible, it translates that "temptation." "Count it all joy when you fall into different temptations." But there the word actually should be "trial" or "testing." Again, I said, it's a neutral word. It depends upon the context how it's to be interpreted. "Count it all joy when I lose my job?! Count it all joy when I'm sick, or count it all joy when things are going wrong in my life? I'm being tried and tested." That's what the Bible says. "Well, how do I do that?" "Knowing," it says, "that the trying..."—or testing—"of your faith works..."—what? Any of you know? You guys are all going to flunk this test.—"...patience."

We don't like that word; do we? The minute I hear the word "patience" I get impatient. I don't want to be patient. I want my computer to turn on really fast; as fast as lightning, you know? And when I order food, I want it right now. The minute I say what I want, I want it; boom, right on the plate. And then I want to suck it in real quick. We're eatin' the other night, I go, "Man, you guys are..."—tell my wife, "You guys are eatin' slow." And my Dad's with us right now and "You guys are eatin' slow, and she goes, "Well, I like to enjoy my food." I said, "I eat fast and enjoy it." Speed has nothing to do with enjoyment, man.

But we need to realize that God allows these trials into our life for our good and for His Glory. So count it all joy. So we're praying, "Lord, lead me not into trial or testing." That's not going to happen. God's going to allow you to be—because He wants you to grow, He wants you to mature, He wants to be glorified through you life. So God throws you in the crucible, and He heats up the fires. And the dross comes to the surface, and He skims it off. And then He heats it up a little bit more, and "It's getting' hot in here!" And then the dross comes to the surface,

and He skims it off. This is how they refine gold; they heat it up, and they heat it up, and they skim it off, and they heat it up, and they skim it off. And when the Lord is able to look into that crucible and He can see a perfect reflection of Himself in that gold, and only then is it done. And that's not going to happen until we go to heaven. So if you're in the crucible of affliction right now, you're suffering a trial or a testing, what you're praying is, "God, help me to pass my test. Help me to pass this test."

When I was in school—I still almost want to cry, because I hate tests. I loved recess, I loved sports, I love it when school got out, but I hated it—"Oh, we're going to have a test." You know, if there's a test that day, "Mom, I don't feel good. I need to stay home from school." Well John Miller was always flunking the test. And if I flunked the test, I had to pass it again. I had to take it again, and take it again until I passed. So God wants you to pass the test.

Now in a test there's always the potential to pass, but there's a potential to fail; right? If you're tested, you could pass or fail. If you pass, it's like, "Whoa, praise God!" If you fail, it's like, "I told you; I hate tests!" And you have to do it again. So what you're saying to God is, "Lord, I'm tried, and I'm being tested. Help me pass the test, Lord! Help me pass this test!" Which means that when I'm tried and tested, I rejoice, I look forward to God teaching me patience, I pray for wisdom. My life is changing; I'm growing. And then, you're able to look back and you're able to say, "I thank God for the bitter things; they've been a friend to grace. They've driven me from the path of ease to storm the secret place." I thank God that He allowed that in my life, because it produced spiritual fruit in me. He is changing me.

But the word is also used for temptation to sin or a solicitation to sin. It's interesting in Genesis 22 that God did tempt Abraham, the Bible says. It means "test." He said, "Offer your son upon a mountain." But then in the New Testament, we see that we are tempted to sin by the Devil. Jesus was driven into the wilderness to be tempted to sin. So God tests us to bring out our worth, but Satan tempts us to bring out our worst.

So when we pray, we are praying—this is the meaning. "Lord, lead me not into testings where I'll fail. Help me to pass the test. And help me that as I'm going through this testing and this trial and Satan comes and starts to attack me." The reason these words are coupled together in this one word is because whenever you are tested or tried—and please listen to me very carefully—whenever God allows a trial or testing for your good and His glory, Satan comes in and tries to tempt you. "If God really loved you, why did you lose your job? If God really loved you, why are you sick? If God really loved you, why are you struggling in your marriage? If God really loved you, why did your parents die? Or if God really loved you, why did your child die in that automobile accident? If God really loved you, then why is this happening in your life?" He comes in and he whispers. "Did God really say that? Does God really care?" And what happens is we become bitter rather than better. We fail the test, because we yield to temptation. And that's why Jesus uses this word, "Lead us not into..." testing or trial or "...temptation." "Lord, help me to be delivered from the evil one."

Now, when you are being tried and tested—and some of you are right now. There's no doubt in

my mind that some of you right now are going through fiery trials. And in the midst of your trial, Satan is knocking on the door. He wants you to run, he wants you to lie, he wants you to steal, he wants you to commit adultery, he wants you to go get drunk, he wants you to turn back to your life of drug addiction. "Go back and just take some drugs and everything will be okay. If you just steal a little bit of money, no one will ever know." You're going through a trial, and Satan turns it into a temptation.

You have a promise. Write this down. 1 Corinthians 10:13; God has made us a promise, and here it is. God says, "There's no temptation taken you but what is common to man. And God is faithful and will not allow you to be tempted above that which you are able, but will with the testing..."—trial or temptation—"...make a way to escape that you shall be able to bear it."

Now there are at least three elements in this promise you need to grab onto. Number one, you're not alone. Number one, you are not alone. Sometimes when people come to me and they say, "Pastor John, I'm going through this, I'm going through that, and this is happening, and that..." part of me just wants to smile a little bit. "God really loves you; doesn't He? He's really working on you; isn't He?" Now I don't want to see anyone go through suffering, but I do want to see people become more like Jesus. And we always pray that God will take away our trouble. The first time something goes wrong, "Take it away. Take it away." Paul in 2 Corinthians 12 prayed that God would take away his thorn in the flesh. And three times he said, "Lord, take it away." And God said, "No, but I give you My grace. And My grace will be sufficient for you in your weakness." And Paul says, "Okay. Then I'll glory in my weakness, because when I am weak, then am I strong." He found the power of God sufficient grace in his weakness. Now we're asking God to take it away, but God's brought it for a purpose; to refine us and develop us. But know this; you're not alone. Other Christians have passed this way before. Job said, "I know that when I come through this trial, I shall be as gold." God is going to develop you. You're not alone; others have suffered the same way.

And then secondly, we learn that we are able; "...that you may be able to bear it."

And thirdly, we learn that God provides escape. God provides protection. And this is my third point in my message. I want you to notice this. How does God provide that deliverance that He's promised? Now this list could go on and on, but I want to get back to basics. I want to give you three ways that God provides deliverance from the evil one. The first is prayer. The first is prayer. Satan does everything he can to keep you off your knees. Don't let him win. Someone said Satan trembles when he sees the weakest saint upon his knees. The demons know that it is their undoing. So he's going to get you busy, he's going to get you discouraged, he's going to say it doesn't work. "I don't want to pray." That's the first place you go. You fall on your knees. The Bible says in Ephesians that we put on "all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints."

And in James 1:5 it says that whenever we're going through a trial or time of testing, "If any man lacks wisdom..."—if you lack wisdom—How many of you lack wisdom? I do. Then you know what you're supposed to do? Pray. James says to ask God for wisdom. What has God

promised to give you? Wisdom. God has promised to give you wisdom. You pray, and God will give you wisdom; right? This is when we are going through a trial. Like, "God, give me wisdom. I need to know what to do. God, please help me. Please help me to know what to do. I need your wisdom." God's promised to give you wisdom. You say, "Wisdom for what?" Wisdom not to waste the trial. A woman once came to a pastor. She said, "Pastor, would you pray for me?" And she was sick, and her husband was losing his eyesight, and they were out of work, and they needed help, and they were going through all these hardships. And he prayed for her. He prayed for her. And she said, "Would you pray for one more thing? Would you pray that God would give me wisdom? That I not waste this trial in my life?" You see, we stop short of that. We pray, "God, heal me. Lord, give me a job. Lord, save my loved one. Lord, provide me a new car." And we stop and forget, "Lord, if You don't take this pain away; if You don't do this work in my marriage; Lord, if you don't heal my body, give me wisdom to know what you're trying to teach me. Give me wisdom to know what I'm supposed to learn here." So James 1:5, "If you lack wisdom, ask God." And then James 4:2 says that "You have not, because you ask not." "You have not, because you ask not."

So we pray—here's the second thing we need to do. We need to meditate on the Word of God. We need the prayer and God's Word. God's Word is our secret. Psalm 119:11, "Thy Word have I hid in my heart that I might not..."—what?—"...sin against Thee." Psalm 119:9, "How shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Thy Word." Have you hidden God's Word in your heart? Psalm 1 says, "Blessed is the man that walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor sits in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law he..."—what? He "...meditates..."—not medicates—"...day and night."

We have a lot of people medicating but not very many people meditating on God's Word. And by the way, meditating on the Bible is different than eastern meditation, which means that you empty your mind. When I was in high school, all my buddies got into transcendental mediation. I mean, they're doing drugs and meditating; how's that? Smoke a joint and sit in a lotus. They didn't have anything to empty. There's nothing up there. I used to wonder, "What are you guys doing?" "I'm emptying my mind." "It's already empty dude." Empty your mind and clear your head—by the way, is Hinduism. When TM hit the United States back in the late '60s, early '70s—that's Hinduism.

What's Christian meditation? It's just the opposite. You fill your mind, and believe me, we need as much in our minds as we can get; right? "Lord, transform my mind. Fill my heart." "How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to God's Word." "Thy Word have I hid in my heart..."—or my mind—"...that I not sin against You." So when I first got saved, when I first accepted Jesus, I started reading and reading and reading and reading and reading and reading the Bible. I just devoured God's Word. And by that, my life was totally transformed. God's Spirit, working through God's Word, to change God's children into the image of Jesus, the Son of God. How marvelous that is.

So what I'm saying is, back to basics. You say, "Well, I'm being tempted, and I'm yielding to temptation, or I keep falling into sin." "Pray." "I don't have time to pray." "You don't have time not

to pray; you'd better pray. You're becoming a victim. Secondly, read your Bible." Those are the dynamic—I call them the dynamic duo in the Christian life. Prayer and the Word of God. Prayer and the Word of God. Prayer and the Word of God. You never outgrow that. You never outgrow prayer and God's Word. And you feed on God's Word, and it changes your life.

You remember when Jesus was tempted by the Devil? Every response He gave to the Devil was a Scripture. It's called the "sword of the Spirit," the Word of God. He didn't say, "That's not nice, Satan. That's not very nice of you. You should leave me alone right now." He unsheathed His Word, and He used that, and He resisted temptation in His humanity, and He was victorious over the Devil. So we need to submit ourselves to God. "Resist the Devil, and he will..."—what? James 4:7-8, "Submit to God...Resist the Devil, and he will flee." That's a promise from the Bible. Do I want people to say, "I couldn't help myself"? That's not true; you do what you want to do. What you really want to do, you do. Now I know that there are some situations where you become physically addicted, but I believe God's power is greater than anything in this world. The blood of Jesus Christ cleanses from all sin, and the power of Jesus Christ delivers us from the power of sin in our lives. God is all powerful. "Greater is He that is in us than he that is in the world."

But here's my third step. Prayer, the Word of God, and then put feet to your prayers. Now when the Bible says to "submit yourself to God, resist the Devil, and he will flee from you," I believe that submitting to God is obeying His Word. They're synonymous. Submitting to God is obeying His Word. Obeying His Word is submitting to God. You say, "Well, I'm submitted to God." "Well, do you obey His Word?" "No, no; I don't read the Bible." "Then you're not submitted to God." If you're reading the Word, and you're obedient to the Word—not just a hearer, but a doer—then you have submitted in obedience to God. "Work out your own salvation..."—Philippians 2:12 says—"...with fear and trembling, for it is God Who worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure." So God is working in you, but you need to yield to Him. And when you surrender to Him, go "Okay, I pray, I read His Word, and then I put feet to my prayers." In other words, you can't be praying, "Lord, lead me not into temptation" and "Lord, lead me not into temptation" if you have a problem with alcohol while you're walking into the bar. "Lord, as I go into the Fuzzy Frog right now, just 'Lead me not into temptation. Lead me not into temptation.'" By the way, there is no Fuzzy Frog; I just made that up. That's been my illustrative bar for 40 years in my sermons. Somebody's going to go out of here and open a joint and call it the "Fuzzy Frog." "I learned it from my pastor on Sunday." If you've got a problem with alcohol, don't be going into the bar, dodo bird! "But lead me not into temptation. Lead me not into temptation." You're on the computer [typing away], "Lead me not into temptation," and you've got a problem with lust. You're going to a website you know you ought not to go. Don't go there! You can't be praying, "Lead me not into temptation" unless you're willing to put feet to your prayers. That's "working out your own salvation with fear and trembling."

You need to ask yourself these questions. "Where do my feet take me? Where do my eyes take me?" What are you looking at? "Where do my hands take me? Where does my mind take me? Where do my feet, my heart, my eyes, my mind—where do they take me?" How well

this is illustrated negatively in the life of King David, the man who wrote Psalm 23, "The Lord is my Shepherd; I have everything I need." He was on his housetop, walking on the roof—flat roof, by the way. It wasn't going up and down, a big peak. Flat roof. They hung out up there, had patio furniture, and he looks out over into this next courtyard, and there's a woman bathing. David was in the wrong place at the wrong time. He could have gone right downstairs and started reading Psalm 23. "David, it's as easy as get off the roof!" "Well, I'm just kind of hangin' out and seeing what I can see. And Woo! There's a nice little lady right there. Woo!" And he looked at her. And sometimes you can't—I understand you sometimes can't help seeing something you're not supposed to see, but the second look and the third look or the first long look—you need to turn around and say, "I'm going to go inside and play tiddlywinks, or something. I'm going to get off the roof." So his feet took him, he was in the wrong place, and then his eyes went in the wrong direction. He should have turned away. And then his heart lusted, and he inquired, and he took Bathsheba and committed adultery. And then he lied, and he committed murder. And after his sins were exposed, Nathan said, "The sword will never depart from your house."

I forgot to mention this first service, but it just popped into my brain. God forgives your sins, but the scars can remain. God forgives your sins, but the scars can remain, and the damage can be done. God's Name is not honored or hallowed. God's kingdom is now hindered and not advanced. And God's will is not being done in your life. It's from a moment of pleasure you can ruin your life, and ruin your marriage, and you can ruin your family, and you can ruin your kids. It's never worth it. How important it is to get on your knees and open God's Word and to pray, "Lead me not into temptation, please, oh God. Deliver me from evil. I need Your help. I need Your strength." And God will answer your prayers. "A broken spirit and a contrite heart, God will not despise." We're not telling you this morning you have to be strong, and you have to be able; I'm telling you God's strength will enable you. God's promises will protect you. You trust Him, and you look to Him, and you "walk by faith, not by sight."

Don't make provision for the flesh, "to fulfill the lust thereof." If you're on the job, and you're being tempted by a woman or man that's not your husband or your wife, then get another job. You don't go out to lunch, you don't spend time talking on your breaks. You can be nice to them, but you don't hang out with them. Even if you're in a group—if there's somebody in your little group that you're starting—that they're starting to flirt with—or she's flirting with you or you with her—whatever it might be—that's a Serpent that needs its head cut off. Jesus said, "If your right hand offends you..."—what do you do with it?—"...cut it off." "If your eyes cause you to stumble..."—what do you do?—"...pluck them out." Now that doesn't mean literally, obviously. But He's saying take sin very seriously. Don't make provision for sin.

Heard the story of the mother who told her boy not to go swimming. However, when he came home, his hair was soaking wet, and his bathing suit was wet. "Johnny," his mother scolded, "I told you not to go swimming!" "I couldn't help it, Mom," he defended himself. "The water looked so good." "But why did you take your bathing suit with you?" "I took my bathing suit just in case I was tempted." It's like, "Don't go swimming." "Yes, Mom. I'll just take my bathing suit in case I get tempted." You know, that's what a lot of people do. "I'm just going to bring this along. I'm

just going to sneak this in, or I'm going to do this. Just in case I'm tempted. Less the opportunity come up, and then, you know, I'm going to yield to sin—to this temptation." "Make no provision for the flesh."

Now there's a marvelous promise at the end of the book of Jude, and I love that promise. It says, "Unto Him that is able to keep you from falling and to present you faultless before the presence of His Glory, with exceeding joy." I believe that this prayer is a prayer of abandoning self-reliance and self-sufficiency. It's a prayer uttered with a recognition of "I am weak. Satan is stronger than I am. But God, You are able to keep me from falling. And You're able to present me 'before the presence of Your Glory with exceeding joy.'"

Some of you right now are going through a time of severe testing. Some of you are being tried and tested. Maybe you're sick, maybe out of work, maybe you're struggling in the home or in the marriage or relationships or maybe some different adversity or difficulty. Pray this prayer—pray this prayer from the bottom of your heart: "Lead me not into temptation. Deliver me from evil." Ask God to give you wisdom. Ask God to help you. Watch where your feet take you. Watch where your thoughts take you. Watch where your eyes take you. Watch what your hands—and say, "Lord, I want to put feet to my prayer. I'm going to be obedient to You. I'm not going to make provision for the flesh."

Let's bow our heads in a word of prayer.