

Sunday School
February 26, 2012

"I can resist anything except temptation."

— Oscar Wilde <http://www.goodreads.com/author/show/3565.Oscar_Wilde> , *Lady Windermere's Fan*
<<http://www.goodreads.com/work/quotes/1897835>>

"Between two evils, I always pick the one I never tried before."

— Mae West <http://www.goodreads.com/author/show/259666.Mae_West>

"The only way to get rid of temptation is to yield to it."

— Oscar Wilde <http://www.goodreads.com/author/show/3565.Oscar_Wilde> , *The Picture of Dorian Gray*
<<http://www.goodreads.com/work/quotes/1858012>>

Temptation comes from two sources...So let's understand who we are and the source of our temptation.

Number One: The root cause of my behavior is always my heart. We blame circumstances, but the Bible says we are our own worst enemy.

James 1:13-15

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. **14** But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. **15** Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death.

Hebrews 4:12

12 For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

We are all idol worshipers – Jeremiah 2:13

13 For my people have committed two evils:
they have forsaken me,
the fountain of living waters,
and hewed out cisterns for themselves,
broken cisterns that can hold no water

It's not often the thing we want that is bad; the problem is that we want the thing we want more than we want God. God wants us to know and serve Him. But we take those internal urges that should drive us to God – a desire to be loved, a desire to experience transcendence, a desire for fulfillment – and turn them into an idolatrous desire to satisfy ourselves. Thus, sin is fundamentally about self-fulfillment, hence idolatry.

"Idolatry may not involve explicit denials of God's existence or character. It may well come in the form of an over attachment to something that is, in itself, perfectly good.... An idol can be a physical object, a property, a person, an activity, a role, and institution, a hope, an image, an idea, a pleasure, a hero – anything that can substitute for God."

--Richard Keyes

"Our idols are those things we count on to give our lives meaning. They are the things of which I say, 'I need this to make me happy'."

--Tim Keller

Mark 7:21-23

21 For from within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery,

22 coveting, wickedness, deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride, foolishness. **23** All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person.”

Psalm 51:3-4

3 For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. **4** Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight.

“Why isn’t he [David] crying out for sexual restraint? Why isn’t he praying for men to hold him accountable? Why isn’t he praying for protected eyes and sex-free thoughts? The reason is that he knows that sexual sin is a symptom, not the disease. People give way to sexual sin because they don’t have the fullness of joy and gladness in Christ. Their spirits are not steadfast and firm and established. They waver. They are enticed, and they give way because God does not have the place in our feelings and thoughts that he should.”

--John Piper

This is who we are -- “Seventeen Minutes”

“The noonday devil of the Christian life is the temptation to lose the inner self while preserving the shell of edifying behavior. Suddenly I discover that I am ministering to AIDS victims to enhance my resume. I find I renounced ice cream for Lent to lose five excess pounds... I have fallen victim to what T.S. Eliot calls the greatest sin: to do the right thing for the wrong reason.”

--Brendan Manning *The Ragamuffin Gospel*

Number Two: Satan

Hebrews 2:14-18

14 Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, **15** and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery. **16** For surely it is not angels that he helps, but he helps the offspring of Abraham. **17** Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. **18** For because he himself has suffered when tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.

Five points emerge from verses 14 and 15:

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1 Peter 5:8 – Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour him.

What do we do about it? – John 14:26-27

26 But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you. **27** Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.

Romans 8:5-9

5 For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. **6** For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. **7** For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot. **8** Those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

9 You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him.

Matthew 6:24 No man can serve two masters...

24 "No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other.

John Calvin: "God assigns to believers a race of repentance which they are to run throughout their lives."

Colossians 3:1-17

1 If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. **2** Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. **3** For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. **4** When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

5 Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: *sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.* **6** On account of these the wrath of God is coming. **7** In these you too once walked, when you were living in them. **8** But now you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth. **9** Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices **10** and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator. **11** Here there is not Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free; but Christ is all, and in all.

12 Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, **13** bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. **14** And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. **15** And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. **16** Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. **17** And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Roman 8:13

13 For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.

Isaiah 55:2

2 Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread,
and your labor for that which does not satisfy?

Listen diligently to me, and eat what is good,
and delight yourselves in rich food.

I Corinthians 10:1-14

1 For I do not want you to be unaware, brothers, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, **2** and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, **3** and all ate the same spiritual food, **4** and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank from the spiritual Rock that followed them, and the Rock was Christ. **5** Nevertheless, with most of them God was not pleased, for they were overthrown in the wilderness.

6 Now these things took place as examples for us, that we might not desire evil as they did. **7** Do not be idolaters as some of them were; as it is written, "The people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play." **8** *We must not indulge in sexual immorality* as some of them did, and twenty-three thousand fell in a single day. **9** *We must not put Christ to the test,* as some of them did and were destroyed by serpents, **10** *nor*

grumble, as some of them did and were destroyed by the Destroyer. **11** Now these things happened to them as an example, but they were written down for our instruction, on whom the end of the ages has come. **12** Therefore let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall. **13** No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.

14 Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry.

“While I regarded God as a tyrant I thought my sin a trifle, but when I knew Him to be my father, then I mourned that I could ever have kicked against Him. When I thought God was hard, I found it easy to sin; but when I found God so kind, so good, so overflowing with compassion, I smote upon my breast that I could ever have rebelled against one who loved me so and sought my good.” – Charles Spurgeon

“Our behavior will not be changed long with self-discipline, but fall in love and a human will accomplish what he never thought possible. The laziest of men will swim the English Channel to win his woman. I think it is worth repeating that by accepting God’s love for us, we fall in love with Him, and only then do we have the fuel we need to obey.” – Donald Miller *Blue Like Jazz*