

**Matthew 13a**  
**The Time of Trial**  
**Lord's Prayer Series**  
Sunday April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2022

A story is told about a Pastor who parked his car in a no-parking zone because he was short on time and couldn't find a space with a parking meter.

So, he put a note under the windshield wiper that read: "I have circled the block 10 times. If I don't park here, I'll miss my appointment. As Jesus' prayer says, "FORGIVE US OUR TRESPASSES."

When he returned, the Pastor found a citation from a police officer along with his note: "I've circled this block for 10 years. If I don't give you a ticket, I'll lose my job. As Jesus also said, "LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION."

So, does God entice us to sin? Do we have to pray, "Lead us not into temptation" to keep God from enticing us into sin, or is there more to this 5<sup>th</sup> phrase in the Lord's Prayer than meets the eye and ear?

In fact, James 1:14-15 says, "When tempted, no one should say, "God is tempting me." For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; but each person is tempted when they are dragged away by their own evil desire and enticed."

Well like most words there is more than one meaning to the word "temptation" and meanings change through time.

"To the modern ears, the word **tempt** is always a bad word: it always means **to seek to seduce into evil**. But in the Bible the verb (**tempt**) **periazerein** is often better translated by the word **test** than by the word *tempt*. In its New Testament usage, to *tempt* people is not so much to seek to seduce them into sin as it is to test their strength and their loyalty (or faith) and thus their ability for service." Barclay Matthew Vol. 2 page 258

This is why you will see various translations of our verse for today.  
Such as: **Lead us not into temptation**  
**And do not bring us to the time of trial.**  
**Lead us not into hard testing**  
**Do not bring us to hard testing,**

In relation to the early church experience the time of “trial or testing” that they would have been thinking of, would have been to deny their faith in Jesus under persecution.

In the time of the early Church, it was a political as well as a religious statement to say, “**Jesus is Lord**”. Because when a Christian said this, they were also saying, “Caesar is not Lord.” To escape persecution, and often times death, all a Christian had to do was offer a pinch of incense at the altar of the current Caesar, and they would escape death.

But to do this was to deny their faith in Jesus Christ. It was to deny and betray Jesus as Lord. So, it was a test of faith. We as Christians today face similar tests of faith, pinches of incense to Caesar over many issues the most prominent are in terms of Human Sexuality from abortion to our stands on marriage. We don’t get crucified for them, but we do get canceled even by our own.

Many early Christians would NOT let their witness for Jesus be diminished so they paid the price with their lives. The word “**martyr**,” its original meaning was “**witness**”. So many Christians died witnessing for their faith that the meaning of that word also changed.



Speaking of politics, on Palm Sunday, which we celebrate next week, Jesus Christ was once again tempted to be the political ruler of

the Jews and even the world, a proposition the devil had presented him with at the beginning of Jesus' ministry when He was tested in the wilderness.

Remember the Devil told Jesus if he bowed down and worshiped him, he would give Jesus all the kingdoms of the world. That test, that temptation came again to Jesus on Palm Sunday of Holy Week.

It would have been so easy for Jesus on Palm Sunday to start a revolution to be the earthly ruler of the world when he entered Jerusalem as hero and prophet. Many were convinced that Jesus was the earthly Messiah who was sent to kick out the occupying Romans.

He could have easily used this opportunity when 100s of 1000s of Jews had gathered in Jerusalem for the Passover. He could have seized power over the Jews, and with the power of devil even taken over the Roman Empire and become the ruler of the known world.

Luke 4:14 says, **“When the devil had finished all this tempting, he left him until an opportune time.”** When the devil had finished tempting Jesus in the Desert and didn't succeed in turning him from God; he returned again and again to tempt Jesus to turn aside from his identity as the One who was to defeat sin, death, and the devil thru suffering.

As Jesus entered Jerusalem on Palm Sunday to the shouts and palm branches like a returning conquering King the temptation would have been there to avoid the cross, because Jesus knew the pain that was coming.

Jesus in his heart of hearts was praying the phrase we are looking at in His prayer, **“Do not bring me to the time of trial.”**

And God said, “No!”

Now Matt. 6:13, which reads, **“And do not bring us to the time of trial but save us from the evil one.”** has both a present as well as a

future meaning. When I began this series on the Lord's Prayer, I said my intent was to show the incredible depth of this prayer that as we understand it more, we can pray it with deeper meaning and deepen our relationship with God.

The 6 phrases of this prayer are interconnected and explain each other. This particular phrase is similar to the second phrase in that it has both a present and future dimension to it. Remember the 2<sup>nd</sup> phrase says, **"Thy Kingdom come thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven?"** It speaks of us bringing the Kingdom of God here on earth to the best of our ability, but it also speaks of the future when Jesus shall return and Kingdom of God in its fullness will be revealed.

In the present, **"And do not bring us to the time of trial but save us from the evil one."** It is a prayer to be delivered from present hard testing and temptation and the evil effects of the devil. Its future aspect is that it is a prayer to be delivered from the chaos and pain of the Tribulation.

In terms of the interconnection of the prayer, when we try to bring the Kingdom of God to earth by doing God's will it brings opposition and pain. It brings trial. **If you serve, you will suffer!** Jesus promised we would have trouble in this world.

The Apostle Peter wrote, **"Dear friends, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that has come on you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice inasmuch as you participate in the sufferings of Christ,..."**

So, to pray to be instruments of God's will here on earth we are also praying that we may do so in peace. It is to pray that there not be a time of extreme or hard testing; that we might advance the Kingdom in peace.

I wish that that were so, but when we oppose the forces of evil, as we promise to do in our baptismal and membership vows, we engender

opposition from evil. We then can pray like Jesus did in the Garden of Gethsemane to avoid hard testing, but we, also, very much need to remember that God said, “NO” to Jesus.

God said, “NO” to Jesus and took him through a time of horrible trial and testing. Jesus suffered; he was crucified, died and descended to the dead.

But because Jesus passed the test of faith thru trial through the events of Holy Week, he and we were granted eternal life. He is now complete and perfect lacking in nothing. Sin, death, and the devil were defeated by Jesus’ faithfulness in the time of trial. His example calls us to do the same.

James 1:2-4 gives us a promise to hold onto in the time of trial and testing because at times God says, “NO” to us when we pray, “Lead us not into hard testing.”

“Consider it pure joy, my brothers (and sisters), whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance.

Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature, complete and lacking in nothing.”

The testing and trials have a purpose of perfecting us in the faith. I want to share a story with you of a friend of mine and his journey of faith. He wanted a new job. He hated his old job, and his boss was impossible if not cruel to him.

So, he prayed desperately for a new job. Jobs offers were made and rescinded when they learned of my friend’s felony conviction. It was a time of very hard trial. He almost descended into despair, but instead ascended in prayer. He was in one of my huddle groups.

He began to pray for his impossible boss and in the midst of that both he and his boss' attitudes improved. God worked in both of their lives, and it became apparent to this man in search of a new job that God had a purpose in saying, "NO", because he grew in his faith in God. He experienced the power of prayer, and on the other side of the trial God granted him a new job.

This is another example of how the parts of the Lord's Prayer are connected. Remember last weeks, "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us?" At that time his enemy was his boss. As my friend prayed God worked a miracle in his boss's heart. His boss did not become his friend, but he no longer opposed him and belittled him. And when my friend left the boss gave him a good recommendation.

God is fulfilling promises when God says, "NO" to us in terms of trials. Here are promises from the Scriptures for times of trial.

"No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it." 1 Cor. 10:13

And Jesus is with you when you go through these trials and temptations. Hebrews 2:18 says, "Because Jesus himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted."

There is no greater truth, there is no greater reality than the promise that Jesus is with us in life, in prayer, and in trial.

In fact, I want to conclude this message by putting its thoughts to song. I ask you to join me singing #526, *What a Friend We Have in Jesus*. Let the truth of these words soak into your very bones and soul and hold on to these truths in the depths of your hardest trials.

1. What a friend we have in Jesus,  
all our sins and griefs to bear!  
What a privilege to carry  
everything to God in prayer!

O what peace we often forfeit,  
O what needless pain we bear,  
all because we do not carry  
everything to God in prayer.

(Mary plays a few measures while I speak.)

Jesus bore all our sins and griefs on the cross, so we don't have to. We need to bring our pain our grief to God in prayer.

2. Have we trials and temptations?  
Is there trouble anywhere?  
We should never be discouraged;  
take it to the Lord in prayer.

Can we find a friend so faithful  
who will all our sorrows share?  
Jesus knows our every weakness;  
take it to the Lord in prayer.

(Mary plays a few measures while I speak.)

Jesus took his trials, temptations and troubles to the Lord in Prayer, and God met his needs. God will meet your needs.

3. Are we weak and heavy laden,  
cumbered with a load of care?  
Precious Savior, still our refuge;  
take it to the Lord in prayer.

Do thy friends despise, forsake thee?  
Take it to the Lord in prayer!  
In his arms he'll take and shield thee;  
thou wilt find a solace there.

At times we are all weak, heavy laden and burdened with care. And just like a loving Father God will take us in his arms and there we will find peace.

What is God saying to you and what are you going to do? Repent and believe in the Gospel.

May the Stephen Ministers bring forward the Communion elements.

Let us join in the Great Thanksgiving.