

## Though we have to face temptation it is God's will that all should be saved

Greetings to you! Our theme for today is, "Though we have to face temptation it is God's will that all should be saved." Temptation comes to every single person and how we respond to them makes all the difference. Satan is the one who brings temptations in our lives so that we may go far away from God. His purpose is to primarily makes us fall and make us embarrassed before God. How do we deal with temptation and how can we be faithful till the end? These questions challenge us daily.

Jesus was teaching his disciples as they were arguing among themselves as to who was the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. Jesus took a little child and said that one has to become like little children to enter the kingdom of heaven. He warns his disciples that if these little ones who believe in him are caused to stumble, it would be better for them to have a large milestone hung around their neck and throw themselves into the sea.

Jesus tells his disciples that if anyone causes the little ones who believe in him to stumble, then it would be better for them to have a large millstone hung around their neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea. Little ones usually refers to new believers who are still growing or to children who believe in Christ. Older believers can become a stumbling block to them. Jesus warns us that it would be a terrible thing if we were stumbling blocks to someone who is new and growing in the faith. Stumbling blocks are those who entice others to sin and lead them to apostasy. Jesus uses a graphic image of having a large millstone hung around the neck and jumping into the sea. He says that it was better for one to do that than to make a new believer stumble. He tells them that temptations will come and stumbling blocks will be there but 'woe' to the person through whom it comes. The person who entices others to sin will be culpable for his crime.

Jesus then goes on to teach them about the things that cause them to sin. He says that if their hands or feet cause them to sin then they are to cut it off and throw it away. What Jesus is saying here is not a literal understanding of these words. Because of the importance of obeying God's standard of righteousness, radical action should be taken to avoid the cause of the temptation. The discipleship of the kingdom sometimes requires drastic measures. The literal plucking out of an eye or cutting off of a hand, however, will not at all necessarily rid one of the problem. The culprit lies elsewhere, in the heart, the inner person. This is the language of hyperbole used to make a significant point.

The sin of adultery, like other sins, finds its root in a person's inner thoughts. Thus, to look deliberately at a woman lustfully, i.e., desiring or imagining a sexual relationship with her, is to commit adultery in one's heart and thus to violate the deepest intention of the law as now revealed by Jesus. The idea of sinning in the heart through one's desires is already contained in the ten commandments, where one is forbidden to covet, among other things, the wife of a neighbor (Exodus 20:17; Deut. 5:21). Although in the OT and Jewish contexts lusting after the wife of another man was forbidden, in the present passage 'woman' is probably to be understood more broadly to mean any "woman" and not simply the wife of

another. The importance of the eyes in lusting is vividly caught in the phrase of 2 Pet 2:14: “eyes full of adultery”

Paul says in Rom 8 verse 13 that if we put to death the misdeeds of the body through the Holy Spirit, then we will live. The verb used is one which is normally used to ‘kill someone, hand someone over to be killed, especially of the death sentence and its execution.’ Jesus himself says ‘if anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me’ (Mark 8:34). According to Roman tradition condemned criminals were forced to carry their cross to the place of execution. To carry a cross then is symbolic of following Jesus to the place of execution where we crucify the misdeeds of the body i.e., the use of our body, our eyes, our ears, our mouth or anything else that serves ourselves rather than God or other people

Jesus then goes on to talk about the sheep and the shepherd. The shepherd/sheep imagery is especially rich in its ability to call attention to the value placed upon the sheep. As the shepherd would not lose one sheep, so it is the will of the Father that not one of these little ones perish. If this is so, then the demeanour of disciple to disciple in the community is a matter of grave importance. Human beings must not be allowed to overturn the saving purpose of God. And thus a disciple must esteem every other disciple in the same way that God esteems them all. May we truly overcome the temptations that we face with the power of God’s Holy Spirit and stay faithful to the end.

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