

Our Redeemer Lutheran Church
Quincy, IL
Seminarian Nicholas Seibert

Pentecost 22
Saturday, October 19, 2024, at 5:00 p.m.
Sunday, October 20, 2024, at 9:00 a.m.

✠ SOLI DEO GLORIA ✠

INTRODUCTION

Who here remembers the lovable character Winnie the Pooh? He is famous for his love of honey, so much so that it sometimes gets him into trouble. Pooh adores honey, and while it is delightful, he often struggles to say no when he has had enough. He frequently finds himself in difficult situations because he cannot resist just one more taste of the sweet honey. This may sound familiar to many of you. We all have our own honey in our lives. Take a moment to reflect: what is your honey? Is it titles, money, your phone, or perhaps something else that you know you should limit but find it hard to resist? The objects of our temptations are often good things! However, when our sinful natures take hold, these can be twisted and become something harmful and sinful in the eyes of God.

PAGE 1- TROUBLE IN THE TEXT

Far too often, our God is characterized as one who is distant or sitting in the heavens and staring down at us. Instead, we have a God who is able to sympathize with His people and who has been tempted just as His people have.

The Book of Hebrews, which our text is taken from today, was written to Jewish Christians, who were greatly tempted by the deceiver. The prime example of temptation we find is in the Gospel account of Jesus being tempted in the desert. Jesus had fasted for 40 days and 40 nights and what does Satan say? Come on Jesus, you're the Son of God, turn these rocks into bread so you can eat. Satan

goes on to tempt Jesus to kill himself! To throw himself off the top of the temple because the angels will protect him. Then Satan tempts Jesus to worship him.

Jesus was not alone in his temptations. Many of you have seen the movie “The Passion”. It does a great job showing the temptation and failure of Peter. Jesus is being beaten brutally and Peter is accused in the crowd of being a disciple of Jesus three times! Each time Peter denied Jesus a shot of the brutal beating of the Messiah was shown. Temptation was real for the disciples and the followers of Jesus.

PAGE 2- TROUBLE IN THE WORLD

You as a follower of Jesus find yourself in the same spot as Christians of ages past. Temptation is not something of the past. It is something that you face every day. Satan is at work deeply in the world.

The great deceiver is working in our culture to redefine marriage. It’s tempting to abandon the Biblical truth of marriage and settle for how society defines marriage because it doesn’t hurt anyone’s feelings.

Satan is working hard to make you believe that it’s okay to play God and take lives when someone’s going to suffer or worse a baby is the wrong gender. It’s tempting to give into the loud voices of our society that say it’s okay to kill!

The devil has even seeped into our own identity. He tempts us to be divided and build hate between people. He tempts us to identify in anything other than being a Christian. Our temptations look like raising identities such as Democrat, Republican, transgender, straight, blue devil or raider above being a baptized child of God. Satan works hard to find anything to separate us and cause our identity to be anything but in Jesus Christ.

Maybe these big topics of temptation don't seem to apply to you maybe its subtle ways as when you are out to dinner and notice a slot machine, you sit down and spend more money than you were able. You take money away from your tithing and from helping your neighbors or even worse, providing for your family and not *fulfilling* your vocations.

Maybe you find yourself scrolling innocently online and an attractive person leads you to spiraling down a deep hole of lust.

You see a friend who has just got a new truck, and they post it on social media. Your immediate reaction is too long and desire for your neighbors' belongings and not be content with what God has given you.

Temptations are all around. How, though, are we able to persevere through these hardships and weaknesses in our life?

PAGE 3 - GOSPEL IN THE TEXT

We can learn how to handle our temptations by looking at our assigned text today. The writer doesn't say our temptations will just go away now that we are Christians or baptized. They sure didn't for Jesus.

So what? Why does it matter that Jesus was tempted? The text tells the early Christians what to do now. It says that we are to draw near to the throne of Grace. This is done through the work of the Holy Spirit in Faith. The word of God draws God's chosen people to himself, and God delivers His great gifts to them. He delivers mercy and grace to His people. In Peters temptation, God offers Grace and mercy to him. We see this because in John 21, what does Jesus say to Peter? Feed my sheep! Jesus has forgiven peter and called him to minister to Christians.

That is exactly what Peter did, he became a great leader in the church. The Grace and Mercy of God offered forgiveness for all of Peter's sins.

PAGE 4 – GOSPEL IN THE WORLD

This same promise is for you and your children! The very grace and mercy that God had for His people in the New Testament era, he has for you today! From the cross God out pours all grace and mercy. When you fall to your own temptations, your own honeys in your life, what comfort is there? The cross!! Jesus Christ is stretched out on the cross looking down at you saying "My child! I forgive you! Your sins! They are wiped clean!" In Jesus Christ, YOU ARE FORGIVEN

In your baptism, you say "I'm a child of God, I gladly say it! While the temptations of our life do not stop, God gently looks at us and says, my grace is for you! His grace and mercy are like honey, when you're covered in it, it's hard to get off. Lavish in being covered in the honey of grace and mercy.

CONCLUSION

Temptations are promised to come. They might look different for each of us. For some, its gambling, lusting, False identities. These are real temptations and when they come they will hit hard and fast. Today, I challenge you to fight the good fight against your desires and weakness and flee from temptation. Yet, when you fall, cling to Christ because he was tempted and did not sin. From him flows all mercy and grace that covers all of your sins just like flowing honey.

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