**In the Time of Temptation**

Luke 8:11-13

*But the ones on the rock are those who, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, who believe for a while and in time of temptation fall away*. NKJV

Jesus hits a primary reason some Christians are not able to be sustained in the faith. Many “stony ground” Christians fall away from the Faith because their heart does not have a deep-rooted commitment to righteousness, and they fall to temptation to return to sin. In our world today is a teaching being given to Christians that because Christ overcame sin on the cross, there is no need to be repentant. This idea makes Christians who escaped the world become hard in their hearts and ready to succumb to temptation to live in sin again. Please note that the writings to Christians are filled with passages telling Christians to leave sinful living. Here are some for you to read: Romans 1:27-32; I Corinthians 6:7-11; Galatians 5:10-26; Ephesians 4:17-5:7; 1 Thessalonians 4:3-5; 5:6-8; 1 Timothy 1:10; 4:1-5; 2 Timothy 2:16-19; 3:1-9. Please note that this is not a complete list, but it truly represents the fact that the Lord expects us to resist temptation and let Him bring change (repentance) in our lives.

Examining these lists of temptations, we see that sinful behaviors can be put together in groups: sexual sins; sins of the tongue, and sins against a person or their property are examples. In this lesson we want to look at the temptation to live in sexual sin. Here is the list: adultery, fornication, homosexuality (transgender), prostitution, lusting, lewdness, sensuality, concupiscence, incontinent, lasciviousness, licentiousness. What is important to know is that if we fall into these behaviors, God will forgive us if we repent and turn to living in righteousness. The second reality is that if we persist in these sins, we become “stony ground” and lost. Let’s look further.

Adultery occurs when married people engage in sexual behavior with someone to whom they are not married. A prime example of this is David with Bathsheba. The modern mentality would say, “So what. It really doesn’t matter.” The truth is that adultery always results in harm to someone, particularly the mate of one or both offending parties and any children the families may have. A deep sense of betrayal and abandonment is normal. Divorce often follows. In David’s case, Bathsheba got pregnant. David arranged for her husband to be killed in battle, married her quickly and then pretended she conceived after they married. So, add murder and deception to the problem. The baby they conceived didn’t live. David and Bathsheba were very repentant. God accepted their repentance and granted them another son named Solomon, who became the next king of Israel and an ancestor of the Christ. By repentance they escaped having a heart of stone that would have taken them to perdition.

Another temptation is fornication which occurs when one or both of those engaging in sexual behavior is not married. Fornication is the denial of God’s design for intercourse which, in marriage, is a very evident symbol that the two people have become one. When a child is conceived, a sad thing is that the child will likely grow up with only one parent. This is an offense against the child and the design of God for the family. This sin can also be forgiven when people repent and the person who sinned can be used by God to accomplish important things. Samson is an example. He committed fornication with a Philistine woman named Delilah. The result for Samson was imprisonment, blindness and forced labor. When he repented, God used him to bring destruction on the Philistine enemies of Israel. We don’t know what happened to Delilah. Judah committed adultery with Tamar. She was his daughter-in-law at the time though she was a widow and thus not married. She had previously been married to two of Judah’s sons, both of whom died. Tamar was childless and tricked Judah into laying with her. She pretended to be a loose woman and he lusted for her. The result was that she had twin sons, Perez and Zerah. Both Tamar and Judah became committed to righteousness and God honored their repentance by choosing Perez to be the one though whom the Christ would come. This story is another chapter showing us that with repentance, we can escape condemnation.

Increasingly, we are seeing people living together and engaging in intercourse without marriage. We see people who are married abandoning their vows to have a new flavor in their lives. They deny their vows and behave as though there is no consequence. Without repentance, they will come to justify their behavior and having a stone in their heart, they will be lost.

Homosexuality is sexual behavior with someone of the same gender. This is growing to epic proportions in the United States. In the old covenant it is considered a sin worthy of death. It is a sin because it is a denial of the design of God for intercourse. It is a declaration that the people so engaged believe God’s design is different for them (“God made me this way”) and they are allowed to elevate their sensual lust for someone of the same gender above God’s design. It is a problem in that it denies the design for preservation of humanity. Let it be here plainly stated that Christians are not “homophobic.” We are not afraid of them. We care for them and want their redemption. The reality for this is the same as the reality for all of us. If anyone is going to follow Christ, they must deny themselves. No sexual behavior would be an immediate solution. No where does the Bible say they have to start having sex with the opposite gender. The transgender movement is really a cover for homosexual behavior. If I can decide I as a man want to be a woman and convince myself I am a woman, then sex with a man is now “Okay.” This is not true and is homosexuality hidden under the cover of “I have changed gender” lie. The man will always be a man though he may do drastic reconstruction of his body. His genes still loudly declare: MAN. The same is true for a woman who pretends to be a man. All of this to say to God, “you got it wrong, and I should be a …”

Lusting, lewdness, sensuality, concupiscence, incontinent, lasciviousness, licentiousness are all different words to convey the idea of ***out-of-control*** sexual joking or out-of-control sexual desire even to the point of sex with an animal for personal gratification (Bestiality). You see these in someone who has sexual jokes, looks at pornography, goes to strip clubs, makes sexual comments or leers at someone signaling sexual interest in them. These words convey the idea to be gratified, self-control is lost. These sins are gateways for physical engagement in sinful behaviors.

Letting temptation turn us into stony ground is the way Satan brings us to condemnation. Christ can redeem us if we are willing to get rid of the rocks. *Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? …****And such were some of you.*** *But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.* (1 Corinthians 6:9-11). Thanks be to God for His grace in remaking us in Christ. Don’t be stony ground.