

Last week we discussed **Matthew 6:12, 14-15** – “And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors...For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.” **C. S. Lewis** said: “When the thing (forgiving someone) actually happened ...my feeling was “But it’s so easy. Why didn’t you do it ages ago?” ...like learning to swim. There are months during which no efforts will keep you up; then comes the day and hour and minute after which, and ever after, it becomes almost impossible to sink.” What is **Lewis** saying?

Matthew 6:13 - “And lead us not into temptation...” What do you think **Jesus** is telling us to pray here?

The phrase “**lead us not into temptation**” is a petition to God to protect us from severe trials or situations where we might succumb to evil and abandon our faith. Rather than implying that God tempts anyone, this request asks Him to guide our steps away from circumstances we cannot handle. Have you ever felt strong during times of temptation? Have you ever prayed for strength? While the Lord’s Prayer was recorded in Greek in the New Testament, Jesus spoke and taught in Aramaic, which shares deep linguistic roots with Hebrew.

- **The Aramaic/Hebrew Concept:** In ancient Hebraic thought, the word for temptation or testing is *Nissah* or *Nesiona*. In the Old Testament, this same word often describes a “testing” that proves someone’s faith or exposes their character.
- **The Hebraism:** Asking God “not to lead us” into testing is a Hebraic idiom. It essentially means: “When we face trials, Lord, lead us away from them,” “Don’t let us fall,” or “Guide us so we can escape the test without failing.” (See reverse.)



Charles H. Spurgeon (1834-1892) was an English Baptist evangelist and suffragette (a member of early 20th-century militant women’s organizations who advocated for the right to vote in public elections). Spurgeon remains highly influential among Christians of various denominations, to some of whom he is known as the “Prince of Preachers.” He authored hundreds of works, with his most popular being **All of Grace, Lectures to My Students, The Treasury of David**, and his daily devotionals **Morning and Evening**.

“Weakness is our strength: and our strength is weakness.” What is **Spurgeon** saying here? How can this be?

“Cry unto God that he try you not beyond your strength; and in the shrinking tenderness of our conscious weakness breathe out the prayer, “**Lead us not into temptation.**” Then if he does lead you into the conflict, his Holy Spirit will strengthen you, and you will be brave as a lion before the adversary.” What is **Spurgeon** saying here? Who gives us strength?

As we have discussed, God does not lead us into harm or temptation. “Do not abandon us in the time of trials” is what we are asking. This is a statement of humbleness and humility. If you don’t need God during times of trouble, who do you rely on?



Thomas a' Kempis (ca.1380 - 1471) was a German-Dutch mystic and author of **The Imitation of Christ**, one of the best known Christian devotional books. His name means Thomas of Kempen, Germany, being his home town.

“We cannot conquer simply by fleeing, but by patience and true humility we become stronger than all our enemies.” Who are our enemies?

“Little by little, in patience and long-suffering you will overcome them, by the help of God rather than by severity (degree of seriousness) and your own rash ways.” What is **Thomas** saying about overcoming sin?

“Often take counsel when tempted; and do not be harsh with others who are tempted, but console them as you yourself would wish to be consoled.” How should we react when tempted by evil and how should we react to others being tempted by evil?

“The beginning of all temptation lies in a wavering mind and little in God, for as a rudderless ship is driven hither and yon by waves, so a careless and irresolute man is tempted in many ways.” An “irresolute man” is someone who is hesitant, uncertain, or unable to make a firm decision. **Thomas** says temptation does not begin with God, but rather with our wondering minds.

How are we to control our wondering minds so that we are not led into temptation? What “decision” is **Thomas** referring to?

Thomas continues: “Someone has said very aptly: “Resist the beginnings; remedies come too late, when by long delay the evil has gained strength.” ...for the enemy is more easily conquered if he is refused admittance to the mind and is met beyond the threshold when he knocks.” **Thomas** is saying meet the enemy before he gets to the door. If you have an evil thought, nip it in the bud and don’t open the door of your mind to evil. Whether it be lust, greed, contempt, conceit, envy, or vanity to name a few, redirect your mind to God for his strength and healing. Have you ever experienced using God to help you before opening your mind’s door?

Thomas says: “We should not despair, therefore, when we are tempted, but pray to God the more fervently that he may see fit to help us, for according to the word of Paul, God will make issue with temptation that we may be able to bear it.”

Just as the apostles were tempted, we are to not complain and despair about our sin. Can you humbly turn to God instead?



N. T. Wright (1949 -) is a British New Testament scholar and retired Anglican bishop. His most popular books are **Surprised by Hope, Simply Christian, Simply Jesus, The Resurrection of the Son of God, and How God Became King**.

“We are thus to become people in whose lives the joy and pain of the whole world meet together once more, so that God’s new world may at length come to birth.” How do our struggles relate to God’s bigger plan?

“We are part of that great movement whereby the hopes and fears of all the years are brought together and addressed by the living God. And as we hear the gentle and powerful address to our own hopes and fears, we are called to become, in our turn, the means whereby that same address goes out to the wider world...”

How can our struggles with good and evil be a part of the eventual downfall of evil and God’s coming new world?

“It is our responsibility, as we pray this prayer, to hold God’s precious and precarious world before our gaze, to sum up its often inarticulate cries for help, for rescue, for deliverance.” What is **Wright** saying here? As Christians, what is the responsibility to this world we have as part of God’s plan for it? Who is the “us” in this prayer and why is it important? Go and pray for you and “us”.

The phrase "lead us not into temptation" in the original **New Testament Greek** is: **καὶ μὴ εἰσενέγκῃς ἡμᾶς εἰς πειρασμόν** (*kai mē eisenenkēis hēmas eis peirasmon*).

Word-by-Word Breakdown

- **καὶ μὴ (kai mē):** "And do not"
- **εἰσενέγκῃς (eisenenkēis):** "Bring/lead in" or "cause to enter"
- **ἡμᾶς (hēmas):** "Us"
- **εἰς (eis):** "Into"
- **πειρασμόν (peirasmon):** "Testing," "trial," or "temptation"

Key Greek Nuances

- **The Meaning of *Peirasmos*:** The Greek word *peirasmos* does not just mean an inward enticement to sin. It primarily refers to an external **trial, testing, or ordeal**. It is a crucible meant to reveal a person's true character.
- **The Permission Idiom:** In Koine Greek grammar, the phrase "**do not lead us**" can function as a permissive idiom. God directly *did* something, when he merely *allowed* or *permitted* it to happen. Instead of meaning "actively push us into evil," it means "do not allow us to be overcome by the trial" or "do not abandon us to the test."

(Discuss.)