

The battle was intense. He broke out in a bloody sweat, a medical condition that keeps a person from dying when the stress becomes too much. He won the battle when He said, **“Father, not My will, but Your will be done – not what I want but what You want.”** (Matthew 26)

That same intensity was here at the first of His ministry. When it was over, God had to send some **“angels to minister to Him.”**

Every day of His life, Jesus was tempted not to suffer the horrors of crucifixion and bearing our sins. And He could have avoided it at any time. He said in John 10. that His life was not “taken”; it was something He **“laid down with His own free will.”**

An example of this came right after He won the battle in Gethsemane. The soldiers arrived and Peter drew his sword, to fight and die if need be, for Him. Jesus told him to put his sword away and told him if he wanted to, he could ask the Father who could send ten thousand angels to rescue him. He did not do it.

He could have called ten thousand angels
To destroy the world and set him free.
He could have called ten thousand angels
But He died alone for you and me.

Wanting to Do Wrong

Fighting temptation is not a matter of coming to a fork in the road and choosing one. It is overcoming the strong desire to take the wrong road. James 1 says, “we do wrong because we give in to our ‘evil desires’.” Jesus had no evil in Him, but for Him to avoid the cross would be evil.

Satan will tell us that if we “want” to do something wrong, that is a sin, so we might as well do it. The truth is, a Christian is a walking civil war, wanting to do right and wrong at the same time.

This is the way temptation works. Satan does not “speak” to us, he puts thoughts and desires into our mind that we think are ours. Paul, in Romans 7:14-19 said “when he did

wrong, he didn’t want to do it; hated it and did not understand why he did it.” Then, he said it was not “him” that did it, it was **“sin that lives in me”** (7:20). He wasn’t “passing the buck”, refusing to take responsibility. He, like every Christian, knew he had two “*hims*” inside of him – the new nature and the old nature.

Within my earthly temple there is a crowd
There is one of me who is humble
And one of me who is proud.
There is one of me who is repentant
when he sins
And one of me who only sits and grins.
From much corrosive care I would be free
If I could only know which one is me.

We discover the “real us, the new us” every time we refuse to take the wrong road; and every time we take the wrong road and hate it and fight it and come back to God asking Him to forgive us and help us never do it again. Wanting to do wrong is not a sin, doing wrong is the sin. In Galatians 5:8-10, Paul pictures this inner struggle again and says:

“These two forces are constantly fighting each other, and your choices are never free from this conflict.”

Avoiding Heartaches

Most of the suffering I have seen, in my sixty years of ministering to hurting people, does not come from things like cancer. It comes from bad choices, from disobeying God, from doing things we know we shouldn’t do. This creates, dissention in the home, turning to drugs to find peace; broken relationships; etc.

A man in his thirties joined a spa, met an old girlfriend, had an affair and was about to lose his family. He told me about it and said he remembered something I said in a sermon when he was a teenager. It was:

“Sin will always take you further than you want to go. It will keep you longer than you want to stay. And it will cost you more than you want to pay.”