

# REPENTANT IN TEMPTATION BRINGS US VICTORY IN JESUS

S295R 0125 23W

To get our victory over temptation is a very important matter in a true Christian life [ so it is necessary that we are always willing to repent if we have given in to a temptation.] Everything we need and desire in this life can depend upon how we meet a temptation to obtain that need in a wrong way (and our eternal Life is directly involved).

God uses the temptations we go through successfully to perfect our faith, to increase and perfect our knowledge of Him, to bring us to a place of being perfectly contented to trust Him for everything in this life, and toward our preparation for eternal life. God uses the temptations and trials we go through (when met in His way), to perfect everything concerning us, our spiritual life, our body, our home life, to perfect us in our financial matters and everything else; and most importantly to prepare us to meet Jesus and receive Eternal Life.

Satan will always tempt a person to covet things (which can be to covet or desire to have something that someone else may have. However, to covet something we want to have, has no part in 'God's plan for all believers to be trusting on Him' (all who want to progress in a life of faith), and a "growth in holiness apart from which no one will see the Lord)." It is something that many of us may need to be repentant of, to open the way for each one to receive from God and GET SOMETHING IN GOD'S WAY' (within His 'plan of trust').

(Hebr.13:5-6) "Let your conversation be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said "I will never leave you nor forsake you." So we may boldly say: "The Lord is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?"

A person new in the Truth would have a natural inclination to tell someone else what they need, instead of telling God in private, personal prayer. That is because the human heart in its natural state will always be tempted to covet things it wants to have. It is an area of 'self-life' that is still in a person's heart, that tempts us to covet unnecessary things (or to covet something that we may need). For instance, if we needed money and we knew of someone who had plenty, we would like to get some of that for us to meet a financial difficulty that we face. For us to fall to that temptation of telling someone else what we need (or to even hint that we are in a hard place and that we need something), would be sin, because the Bible says, "Let your conversation be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have."

We must trust God to enable us to resist that temptation to fall into sin of coveting things that we need or want. Also, to have a 'repentant spirit' in our heart, about those times when we had given in to Satan, and we had fallen to that temptation. Then we can have 'victory in Jesus' via 'GETTING SOMETHING IN GOD'S WAY'!)

Receiving victory in temptation according to God's 'plan of trust' has God's blessing in this life, and of more significance, to 'GET SOMETHING IN GOD'S WAY' is a big forward step in our 'spiritual growth' and preparation for Eternal Life. What could possibly be more important to us than our own eternal interests (and God's plan makes it easy for us to get all things within His 'plan of trust'). However, the 'pride of self' in our heart will hinder us from receiving things through God's 'plan of trust' (just as it hindered the prophet Jonah). That is the lesson God had to teach Jonah, and He also has to teach us that same lesson, by allowing us to be tempted in order to expose the sinful nature of our heart (which we must trust God to remove if we want to inherit Eternal Life).

Scripture assures us that temptations we face do not come from God, but that He 'permits' them to come about, to teach us 'spiritual lessons' of faith and trust on Him. (James 1:13-15) "Let no one say when passing through trial, "My temptation is from God;" for God is incapable of being tempted to do evil, and He Himself tempts no one. But when a man is tempted, it is his own passions that carry him away and serve as a bait. Then the passion conceives, and becomes the parent of sin; and sin, when fully matured, gives birth to death."

That tells us with no uncertainty that the self-nature is still in our heart, and it is the sin that brought on the trial that we go through. (Vs.16) "Do not be deceived, my dearly-loved brethren"..(in other words you must trust God to remove a sin of self, because "sin, when fully matured, gives birth to death." (The opposite case and solution is, 'repentance in temptation' 'equals victory in Christ')."

(James 1:12)“Blessed is he who patiently endures trials; for when he has stood the test, he will gain the victor's crown -even the crown of Life-which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.” (John 14:15) Jesus reminded the Jews) “If you love me, you will obey my commandments.”

Part of our calling to Christ, is to endure temptations and tests of our faithful obedience to words spoken by God, and written down for us to follow, just as Jonah needed to be tested by God to remove ‘pride of self’ from his heart, which hindered him from obeying God’s Word (and to teach him faithful obedience when God spoke to him). Jonah had to learn to see things from God’s standpoint of faith on His spoken Word, and that is why we have temptations to meet to prove our faithful obedience to God’s written Word.

God’s plan of trust is given (Phil.4:6)“Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God;”(which should include our sincere daily request for God to remove ‘self’ from our heart. ‘Self-life’ in our heart tempts us to get things in our own way, rather, than take a chance on us being ridiculed for trusting God to receive from Him. (That was the pride problem that kept Jonah from obeying God’s plan until he repented, because it was willful sin’ on Jonah’s part to turn aside from God’s directive and follow the inclination of ‘self’.

When we turn aside from God’s plan of trust laid out for us in His Word, that is ‘willful sin’ on our part. We may get something we want in our own way, .. but the spiritual growth we forfeit by doing that, is of greater loss than we could even imagine, because it effectively hinders our ‘eternal interests’. (Hebr.12:14) “Persistently strive for peace with all men, and for that ‘growth in holiness’ apart from which no one will see the Lord.”

God in His great mercy will also give us opportunity to repent of ‘willful sin’, just as He preserved Jonah’s life and gave him that opportunity. He was willing to repent when God gave him that opportunity, and he responded to God’s convicting work by saying that God had shown him that “they that observe lying vanities” (that means who listens to the devil’s lies)... “forsake their own mercy.”

God did not give us the command “Let your conversation be without covetousness,” so that we might always be in a hard place financially. Instead, when our every human dependance is out of the way, then God (with all His wealth of money) will take the place of our human places of dependance. When we stop willfully sinning, by telling or hinting to others that we have a need, there will no longer be any difficulty in having our every need fully supplied.

The late Pastor referred to willful sin that is so prevalent in most ‘religious organizations’, where their workers spend a good part of their time trying to get money from those who have money. They do not merely hint that they need money and would like to have it given to them, but they almost demand it. That is as much sin against God as if they stole the money—for disobedience of one command of God is as serious as disobeying any other of His commands.

Jonah is an example of someone who got into trouble through ‘willful sin’ (and he was in worse trouble than we have been). He was in a place where he had no Bible to help him, and he could not beg, borrow, nor steal to help his situation; a worse place than ‘Israel in the wilderness’. He was lying helpless in the stomach of a fish, because he refused to go to Nineveh and preach God’s sermon of just eight words “yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown.”

When Jonah first received Word from God to bring His message to Nineveh, the devil knew that people in that city would repent, so he deceived Jonah to hinder him from going there. The devil told Jonah that if he went there and said that, those people would repent and be delivered. Then people would say that Jonah was a false prophet.

Jonah listened to the devil’s lies (just as he tempts us to listen to his lies, instead of believing the promises of God). It seems that Jonah began to question himself “should I really go to Nineveh and chance losing my reputations; I couldn’t stand to have people call me a ‘false prophet’,... or, maybe my guidance is wrong in the first place?”

He should not have questioned the guidance part, because (Jonah 1:1-2 says) “the word of the Lord came to Jonah”, “saying, Arise, go to Nineveh that great city, and cry out against it; for their wicked-ness has come up before Me.” ( He should not have questioned God’s spoken Word just as we should not question God’s written Word for us.

The Bible says that Jonah fled “from the presence of the Lord” (and he boarded a ship bound for Tarshis). “But the Lord sent out a great wind on the sea, and there was a mighty tempest on the sea, so that the ship was about to be broken up.”(vs.4). Jonah was quick to acknowledge what brought on the trouble, and he told the crew that their only hope of survival was to throw him overboard. “And he said to them (vs.12)

“Pick me up and throw me into the sea; then the sea will become calm for you. For I know that this great tempest is because of me.”

Jonah was really saying, that he would rather die than lose his reputation as a prophet, which was clear indication of the ‘self’ and pride in his heart. He would rather commit suicide than admit to his ‘willful sin’ of rebelling against God’s Word.

We should take notice of how merciful God was toward someone who willingly sinned against Him (and even more-so, realize how mercifully God deals with us in the best way He can, to save us from our stubbornness and disobedience). God dealt lovingly with Jonah to preserve his life in a raging sea (Jonah 1:17) “Now the Lord had prepared a great fish to swallow Jonah. Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights. (2:1-2) ”Then Jonah prayed to the Lord his God from the fish's belly. And he said: "I cried out to the Lord because of my affliction, And He answered me. "Out of the belly of hell (Sheol) I cried, And You heard my voice.”

Jonah had sinned against spiritual ‘light’ that he had received from God. He turned his back on God; and did just opposite to what God intended for him to do; he hindered God’s purpose concerning one hundred and twenty thousand people at Nineveh. (If we knew of someone who did that, we might say that they deserved whatever trouble would come upon them. Jonah no doubt thought “I am going to die now, but the ‘self-nature’ in his heart was telling him, ‘but you saved your reputation’. He was willing to commit suicide, rather than to trust God to take him through a temptation of doubt from the devil (and for God to also save his reputation).

We need to realize that when we do something for Scriptural reasons, God will protect our interest and He will control the other people involved. With God in control, there won’t have to be any hard feelings, resentment, or loss of reputation (as the devil always tries to picture to our mind). Most people of the world would rather die trusting on the doctors (‘be a dead fool’, the late Pastor said), than to trust on God and be a ‘live Christian’.

Jonah was in the fish’s belly for three days waiting to die, but instead of dying he became stronger. (We should ask ourselves). Do we have the same God today? The answer is we have a wonderful God whose mercy, meekness, and lowliness, is the best part of His personality, and He offers Himself to us in all His long-suffering and gentleness.

God Word tells us to forgive seventy times seven times, and He will forgive seventeen hundred times if needs be. That is the kind of God we have, and His mercy is (Psalm 103:17) from “ever-lasting to everlasting”.(and, vs.11) “For as the heavens are high above the earth, So great is His mercy toward those who fear Him;”. (To fear God means to love and obey Him).

After three days Jonah began to deal personally with God in prayer. (Jonah 2:2-7) “And he said;” “I cried out to the Lord because of my affliction, And He answered me. "Out of the belly of Sheol I cried, And You heard my voice. For You cast me into the deep, Into the heart of the seas, And the floods surrounded me; All Your billows and Your waves passed over me. Then I said, ‘I have been cast out of Your sight; Yet I will look again toward Your holy temple. The waters surrounded me, even to my soul; The deep closed around me; Weeds were wrapped around my head. I went down to the moorings of the mountains; The earth with its bars closed behind me forever; , Yet You have brought up my life from the pit, O ‘Lord’, my ‘God’. “When my soul fainted within me, I remembered the Lord; And my prayer went up to You, Into Your holy temple.” Jonah sincerely repented of a rebellious heart attitude (as we must also repent to receive our victory in Christ). Jonah confessed what he had learned from God dealing with him (Vs 8-9), "Those who regard worthless idols"(means, observe lying vanities, or who listen to the devil’s lies),..“Forsake their own Mercy. (He realized that listening to the devil’s lies was cause for his trouble). “But I will sacrifice to You With the voice of thanksgiving; I will pay what I have vowed. Salvation is of the Lord.”

Jonah repented and learned how to pray in order to receive instant deliverance from the great trouble he was in (because of his stubborn rebellion against the Word of God). He repented much like Job did, after his ‘outwardly religious’ life had landed him on an ash-heap with his body covered with boils. God permitted that to come upon Job to bring him to confession and repentance (in order to save his soul from eternal destruction).

Thus, Jonah turned back to God and prayed to Him out of the belly of the fish. Talk about going into your room, shutting the door and praying privately to God, with all human ‘plans of deliverance’ laid aside final. (There is wonderful deliverance over the power of Satan, when people look to and depend on God alone). ( ( There was not anybody else for Jonah to turn to for help, and it would not do much good to tell his troubles to the fish.

David was in a similar terrible condition (physically weakened and spiritually discouraged), and nobody to help him or encourage him, but that's when he started to deal with God personally. Psalm 34: tells us about God answering David's prayer. (It is a good thing when there is no one else but God to tell our troubles, because it will make us flee to God). (vs. 4) "I sought the Lord, and He heard me, And delivered me from all my fears." (6-7) "This poor man cried out, and the Lord heard him, And saved him out of all his troubles. The angel of the Lord encamps all around those who fear Him, And (He) delivers them."

(Jonah testified) "Out of the belly of Sheol I cried, And You heard my voice." [ Thanks to God for His mercy and love, to save a soul (for both Jonah and David). With God, we are always given an opportunity to repent and turn back to Him. They both learned (from dealing personally with God in prayer), that there is no place from which God cannot deliver us, if we let Him.

Their testimonies should give us spiritual strength. While we are looking at our experiences, our difficulties, feelings, and troubles, we become filled with doubt and despair. But thanks to God's mercy, love, and unfailing divine power, no matter what terrible predicament we may seem to be in, .. it just takes one sincere look to God to change things immediately for us.

Jonah (just like a widow at Zarephath) had to learn that looking at seen circumstances, and listening to the devil's lies, was the cause of the trouble he was in. By saying "Those who observe lying vanities forsake their own Mercy", he was admitting, 'Lord, I see the cause of my trouble is that I have listened to the devil's lies, and I was deceived to do what he told me to do.' ( God in His mercy had dealt with Jonah, however, and when he looked to the Lord and turned to Him in a personal, private prayer, he testified in a repentant spirit' "But I will sacrifice to You, With the voice of thanksgiving; I will pay what I have vowed. Salvation is of the Lord."

Praise God for any person who will repent and trust God for victory, and who will praise and glorify Him by faith that they are delivered. Some people are deceived to think that things will get better by worrying (but sadly, they are greatly mistaken). The real fact is, it gets better by praising and glorifying God. Jonah's faith became stronger each time he praised God for deliverance, for he then said, "I will pay that, that I have vowed."

He meant, 'I now know that my rebellion from pride of self in me was the cause of my trouble, but now I am going to trust You for victory, Praise You for everything You have ever done for me, and, I thank You now for the victory out of my trouble. I make a vow to live up to my surrender of 'self-will' in my heart and 'go through with You no matter what comes.' 'Salvation is of the Lord!'

Just as God promised, He was at Jonah's side in that fish as He is at our side at all times, and He is just as willing to help us as He was in the belly of that fish to help Jonah. After Jonah repented, confessed his sin to God, and vowed to re-surrender his life to do God's will, God just had to speak the Word and Jonah was instantly delivered from his serious trouble. We all have that same merciful God by our side, from whom to receive our 'victory in Christ', 'when we repent and turn back to God in faith.'

§§§§§§§§

## The First-Century Gospel Church/Philadelphia

S295R 'REPENTANT IN TEMPTATION' (1/25/2023) MAIN POINTS:

1... For a person to covet something that someone else has, instead of being contented with what God can and will provide, is a 'willful sin' of the self-life in our heart (which must be repented of), if we want to progress in a life of faith on God, by GETTING THINGS IN GOD'S WAY (within His 'plan of trust').

2... The example of Jonah's 'willful sin' of 'rebellion against God's Word', is used, to emphasize the consequences of our falling to a temptation to accept the devil lies, instead of listening to and believing what God's Word says,...also, to emphasize how merciful God is with us by giving us all an opportunity to repent of our 'rebellious attitudes'.

3... (In summary) being repentant in our trials and receiving victory over temptation (through God's 'plan of trust'), has His blessings in this life, and it enables us to see 'spiritual growth' in our preparation for 'Eternal Life'.

\*\*\*\*\*