

Mercy and Grace; Hebrews 4:14-16

- I. Temptation
 - a. Yes, it is something we all struggle with
 - b. Even though we have Satan's playbook, we still get caught up in sin
 - c. 1 John 2:15–17 (ESV); ¹⁵ Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. ¹⁶ For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world. ¹⁷ And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.
 - d. You would think, knowing exactly how Satan will attack us that we would be able to withstand him – we can, but we don't
 - e. James 4:7 (ESV); Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.
- II. It is a war
 - a. There is a war raging inside us
 - i. The temptation to do what fulfills our selfish desires
 - ii. The desire to obey God and live a life dedicated to Him
 - b. This war started in the garden with Eve's temptation
 - i. Cain, the Tower of Babel
 - ii. The flood, "every intention of the thoughts of his (man's) heart was only evil continually"
 - iii. It is interesting that God seems to have had enough and kills all mankind except for Noah, his wife, his sons and their wives
 - iv. Genesis 8:21 (ESV); And when the LORD smelled the pleasing aroma, the LORD said in his heart, "I will never again curse the ground because of man, for the intention of man's heart is evil from his youth. Neither will I ever again strike down every living creature as I have done.
 - v. And even though Noah was righteous, he was not sinless
 - vi. Genesis 9:20–21 (ESV); ²⁰ Noah began to be a man of the soil, and he planted a vineyard. ²¹ He drank of the wine and became drunk and lay uncovered in his tent.
 - c. We can keep looking at example after example and we will come to the same conclusion – mankind has a sin problem
 - d. God knew that going into His creation – from the very beginning He knew
 - e. Right after Eve was deceived God gives us His plan – words of encouragement and comfort
 - f. Genesis 3:15 (ESV); I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel."
 - g. God knew that we were not equipped for the war – that we could not win this war without Him
 - i. Deuteronomy 18:18–19 (ESV); ¹⁸ I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers. And I will put my words in his mouth, and he

shall speak to them all that I command him. ¹⁹ And whoever will not listen to my words that he shall speak in my name, I myself will require it of him.

- ii. The book of Deuteronomy is Moses' last speech to Israel before he goes up on the mountain to die – we must remember Moses was not allowed into the promised land because of his sin
- iii. We also have to remember Israel's multiple sins starting at their departure from Egypt up to their entrance into the promised land
- iv. Deuteronomy 29:5 (ESV); I have led you forty years in the wilderness. Your clothes have not worn out on you, and your sandals have not worn off your feet.

h. God knew that sin required death – our death

III. Mercy and Grace

a. Our death was not something God was willing to subject us to

b. Neither the sin nor the person has any bearing on God's mercy and grace

- i. I had a conversation with someone about God's forgiveness and he said to me, "you'd be surprised at what God does not forgive at your baptism"
- ii. I'm not sure about the god he serves, but the God I serve promised us redemption, cleansing, forgiveness of all our sins when we are washed in Jesus' blood
- iii. The God I serve promises continual forgiveness as long as I am walking in the light – as long as I remain steadfast, unwavering in my faith and hope in the Lord Jesus
- iv. I may not be equipped to win the war, but Jesus has equipped me for the battle
- v. I may not win every battle
- vi. Romans 7:19 (ESV); For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing.
- vii. Our New Testament has plenty of examples of people who fell into temptation – Peter denying Christ, Paul ravaging the church, Peter and Barnabas giving into the Judaizers
- viii. Almost every letter written combats some kind of sinful behavior or false teaching, admonishing the churches

c. I may not win every battle but Jesus has won the war!

- i. Ephesians 2:1–6 (ESV); ¹ And you were dead in the trespasses and sins ² in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— ³ among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. ⁴ But God, being rich in **mercy**, because of the great love with which he loved us, ⁵ even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by **grace** you have been saved— ⁶ and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,

d. We have been saved, we have been redeemed – no matter our past

- i. Romans 7:24 (ESV); Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?
- ii. “Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!”
- iii. I often hear people say, “I’m not good enough,” “God knows what I have done, how can he want/love me”
- iv. God loves you because of who you can become, not because of what you are/were
- v. God didn’t pick Paul because he was ravaging the church – He picked Paul because of the evangelist he would become!
- vi. If Jesus would have waited for Paul to become ‘good enough’ most of our New Testament would be very different
- e. You will never be good enough – that is why we have God’s mercy and grace

IV. Draw Near

- a. Hebrews 4:14–16 (ESV); ¹⁴ Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. ¹⁵ For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. ¹⁶ Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.
- b. Resist the devil and he will flee
- c. Draw near to Jesus and receive mercy and grace