

## WHY DO MEN SIN?

PRESENTED BY

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GREEN LAWN CHURCH OF CHRIST

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IF WE COULD SOMEHOW GO BACK AND LOOK INTO THE SCENE OF EDEN, IF WE COULD LOOK IN AND SEE ADAM AND EVE WHEN THEY HAD EATEN OF THE FORBIDDEN FRUIT AND HAD BEEN CAST FORTH FROM THE GARDEN, WE WOULD NO DOUBT SEE THEM AS THEY SAT TOGETHER WITH THEIR HEADS RESTING IN THEIR HANDS AND THEIR EYES SWOLLEN WITH TEARS, ASKING THE QUESTION "WHY?" I KNOW THAT MEN HAVE ASKED THAT QUESTION FROM THAT DAY UNTO THIS, "WHY, OH WHY DO I SIN?" I THINK THE SCRIPTURE GIVES US AN INSIGHT INTO THE REASON. I WANT TO READ TWO PASSAGES, ONE IS TAKEN FROM JAMES, THE FIRST CHAPTER, BEGINNING IN THE THIRTEENTH VERSE: "LET NO MAN SAY WHEN HE IS TEMPTED, I AM TEMPTED OF GOD: FOR GOD CANNOT BE TEMPTED WITH EVIL, NEITHER TEMPTETH HE ANY MAN: BUT EVERY MAN IS TEMPTED, WHEN HE IS DRAWN AWAY OF HIS OWN LUST, AND ENTICED. THEN WHEN LUST HATH CONCEIVED, IT BRINGETH FORTH SIN: AND SIN, WHEN IT IS FINISHED, BRINGETH FORTH DEATH." THE SECOND PASSAGE IS FROM THE FIRST CORINTHIAN LETTER, THE TENTH CHAPTER AND THE THIRTEENTH VERSE: "THERE HATH NO TEMPTATION TAKEN YOU BUT SUCH AS IS COMMON TO MAN: BUT GOD IS FAITHFUL, WHO WILL NOT SUFFER YOU TO BE TEMPTED ABOVE THAT YE ARE ABLE; BUT WILL WITH THE TEMPTATION ALSO MAKE A WAY TO ESCAPE, AND MORE PROPERLY WILL PROVIDE ALSO THE WAY OF ESCAPE, THAT YE MAY BE ABLE TO BEAR IT."

I KNOW THAT WHEN MAN HAS ASKED HIMSELF OR WHEN HE HAS BEEN ASKED OF OTHERS "WHY DO YOU SIN?" THAT HE HAS ALWAYS HAD A MULTIPLICITY OF EXCUSES. HE HAS ALWAYS HAD A NUMBER OF READY ANSWERS WITH WHICH HE MIGHT RESPOND BUT EACH OF THESE ANSWERS SEEM TO SHIFT THE BLAME FROM HIMSELF UPON OTHERS. I SUPPOSE ONE OF THE MOST COMMON ANSWERS IN RELIGIOUS CIRCLES TODAY TO THE QUESTION "WHY DO MEN SIN?", IS THE ANSWER THAT MEN SIN BECAUSE THEY ARE TOTALLY AND BY THEIR VERY NATURE DEPRAVED. THEY HAVE INHERITED THE SIN OF ADAM AND AS A RESULT OF THIS MAN CANNOT HELP BUT SIN. BUT ASSUMING THAT THIS DOCTRINE, AND A HEINOUS DOCTRINE IT IS, WERE TRUE, THIS WOULD ONLY ACCOUNT FOR PRESENT SIN. IT COULD NOT BEGIN TO ACCOUNT FOR THE ENTRANCE OF SIN INTO THE WORLD, FOR IF MEN SIN TODAY BECAUSE THEY HAVE INHERITED THE SIN OF ADAM, THAT LEAVES UNEXPLAINED THE REASON WHY ADAM SINNED. FOR YOU SEE, ADAM DID NOT HAVE A SINFUL NATURE. ADAM WAS NOT TOTALLY AND BY HIS HEREDITY DEPRAVED, FOR HE CAME FROM THE HAND OF GOD, PURE AND SINLESS. THUS WE ASK THE QUESTION, WHAT MADE ADAM SIN? AND WHEN WE CAN ANSWER THAT QUESTION WE CAN ANSWER THE QUESTION WHY EACH OF US SINS TODAY. NOT ONLY DOES THE ANSWER THAT MAN SINS BECAUSE OF HIS NATURE NOT TELL US WHY ADAM COMMITTED THE FIRST SIN AND SIN ENTERED INTO THE WORLD, BUT THE IDEA OF MAN'S BEING FORCED TO SIN BECAUSE OF HIS NATURE DESTROYS THE IDEA OF FREE WILL. IF MAN SINS BECAUSE HIS NATURE MAKES HIM SIN THEN IT STANDS TO REASON THAT SOME OF THOSE WHO ARE TELLING US TODAY THAT MAN REALLY ISN'T RESPONSIBLE ARE TELLING US THE TRUTH. FOR IF MAN SINS BECAUSE HIS NATURE MAKES HIM SIN THEN HE IS NOT EXERCISING FREE WILL IN IT. HE DOES NOT SIN BECAUSE HE WANTS TO SIN. HE SINS BECAUSE HE WAS MADE THAT WAY AND THE RESPONSIBILITY ULTIMATELY TAKES ITSELF BACK, GOES BACK AND RESTS UPON GOD. THIS STANDS CONTRARY TO EVERYTHING THAT THE SCRIPTURE TEACHES. FOR WHEN A MAN IS TEMPTED, JAMES SAYS, "LET HIM NOT SAY THAT HE IS TEMPTED OF GOD, FOR GOD CANNOT BE TEMPTED WITH EVIL, NEITHER TEMPTETH HE ANY MAN." SO MAN DOES NOT SIN BECAUSE HIS NATURE MAKES HIM A SINNER.

SOMETIMES THE ANSWER IS GIVEN THAT MAN SINS BECAUSE SATAN MAKES HIM SIN. IN OTHER WORDS IT'S JUST THE IDEA THAT TEMPTATION IS SO STRONG THAT IT IS IRRESISTIBLE. MAN DOES NOT HAVE THE CAPACITY TO WITHSTAND THE TEMPTATIONS THAT COME HIS WAY. BUT YOU SEE WHEN JAMES IN THE THIRTEENTH VERSE OF JAMES 1, HAD SAID THAT GOD IS NOT RESPONSIBLE, HE ALSO SAID THAT SATAN IS NOT RESPONSIBLE. EVE THOUGHT SHE COULD SHIFT THE BLAME UPON SATAN, FOR WHEN GOD CAME TO EVE AND SAID, "WHY HAVE YOU DONE IT?", SHE SAID, "THE SERPENT, OR SYMBOLICALLY, SATAN BEGUILLED ME. IT IS ALL SATAN'S FAULT, LORD." BUT JAMES SAID, "NO, IT'S NOT SATAN'S FAULT, FOR EVERY MAN SINS WHEN HE IS DRAWN AWAY BY HIS OWN LUSTS." EVERY MAN IS RESPONSIBLE FOR HIS OWN, AND SO WE ARE NOT DRIVEN TO SIN SO MUCH BY SUBTLETY OF THE TEMPTER, OR THE STRENGTH OF THE TEMPTATION, AS WE ARE BY THE AMBITIONS OF OUR INTELLECT, BY THE STRENGTH OF OUR DESIRES, BY THE INFIRMITY OF OUR TEMPTER, BY THE WEAKNESS OF OUR WILL AND DEPTH OF OUR SELFISHNESS AND A NUMBER OF OTHER QUALITIES THAT WE COULD NAME. IN OTHER WORDS WHAT TEMPTATION DOES IS NOT MAKE US SIN. WHAT TEMPTATION DOES IS BRING TO LIGHT CERTAIN WEAKNESSES IN MAN AND GIVE MAN AN OPPORTUNITY TO SIN IF HE WILL GIVE WAY TO THAT TEMPTATION.

OTHERS SAY, THAT IT IS NOT SATAN THAT MAKES MAN SIN, IT IS NOT HIS NATURE THAT MAKES HIM SIN, BUT GOD IS RESPONSIBLE FOR IT. INDEED, THIS WAS ONE OF THE VERY FIRST CHARGES THAT MAN MADE WHEN HE HAD FALLEN AWAY INTO SIN. WHEN GOD CAME UNTO ADAM AND SAID ADAM WHERE ARE YOU? ADAM HAD HIDDEN HIMSELF FROM THE VOICE OF GOD BECAUSE HE WAS NAKED AND GOD SAID, "WHO TOLD YOU THAT YOU WERE NAKED? HAVE YOU SINNED, HAVE YOU EATEN OF THE FRUIT OF THE FORBIDDEN TREE?" AND ADAM SAID, "WELL, LORD, THE WOMAN THOU GAVEST ME, SHE GAVE TO ME AND I DID EAT." NOW WE HAVE SAID, AND I THINK CORRECTLY SO, THAT ADAM WAS TRYING TO BLAME THE WOMAN. "LORD, IF YOU HADN'T GIVEN ME THIS WOMAN, WE WOULDN'T BE HAVING ALL OF THIS TROUBLE." BUT NOTICE THE EMPHASIS HERE WHICH, I THINK, IS UPON THE WORD "THOU," NOT SIMPLY THAT THE WOMAN WAS INVOLVED IN IT BUT THE WOMAN WHOM THOU GAVEST ME. HE IS SAYING "GOD, IT IS ALL YOUR FAULT." HOW OFTEN DO WE RESPOND TO OUR SINS THIS WAY WHEN WE SAY, "I KNOW THAT I HAVE INDULGED MYSELF IN THIS ILLICIT AND FORBIDDEN APPETITE. I KNOW THAT I HAVE EXPRESSED THIS GOD GIVEN APPETITE IN A WAY THAT IS FORBIDDEN," BUT WE JUSTIFY IT IN SAYING, "BUT DIDN'T GOD GIVE THIS APPETITE? GOD IT'S YOUR FAULT." WE SAY, "GOD DIDN'T YOU CREATE ME AND PUT ME IN THIS WORLD WHERE I AM SO VERY NEAR TO ALL OF THESE THINGS? GOD DIDN'T YOU CREATE THESE THINGS AND AREN'T THEY ATTRACTIVE BECAUSE YOU MADE THEM THAT WAY?" WE WANT TO SAY GOD IS RESPONSIBLE FOR OUR SINS, BUT "GOD CANNOT BE TEMPTED WITH EVIL AND NEITHER TEMPTETH HE ANY MAN," SO WE CANNOT SHIFT THE BLAME TO GOD.

THERE IS SOMETHING ELSE WE NEED TO REMEMBER. SOME OF US SAY THAT WE SIN BECAUSE WE HAVE PECULIAR TEMPTATIONS THAT NOBODY ELSE HAS. WE HAVE PECULIAR BURDENS TO BEAR THAT NOBODY ELSE IS CALLED UPON TO BEAR. I THINK PERHAPS THAT THIS VERSE WE HAVE READ FROM I CORINTHIANS 10:13 IS GOING JUST TO BLOW OUT OF THE WATER, SO TO SPEAK, SOME OF THE JUSTIFICATION THAT WE HAVE GIVEN FOR OUR OWN SINS. WE LIKE TO THINK THAT WE ARE IN A BOAT ALL BY OURSELVES. WE LIKE TO THINK THAT THERE ARE SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS THAT GO TO EXCUSE US THAT NOBODY ELSE HAS. BUT PAUL SAID THAT THERE IS NO TEMPTATION TAKEN YOU BUT SUCH AS IS COMMON TO MAN, ALL TEMPTATIONS ARE COMMON TO MAN AND YOU DON'T HAVE ANY TEMPTATIONS THAT OTHERS DO NOT HAVE. YOU ARE NOT A PECULIAR CASE. THERE ARE NO PARTICULAR CIRCUMSTANCES THAT JUSTIFY YOU, WHICH OTHERS CANNOT LAY CLAIM UPON. YOU HAVE TEMPTATION THAT IS COMMON TO EVERY ONE ELSE AND THIS IS TRUE EVEN OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST WHO WAS TEMPTED IN ALL POINTS LIKE AS WE ARE. HIS TEMPTATIONS WERE JUST LIKE OUR TEMPTATIONS AND OUR TEMPTATIONS ARE JUST LIKE HIS TEMPTATIONS, AND THERE ARE NO PECULIAR CIRCUMSTANCES IN YOUR CASE TO JUSTIFY YOUR SIN.

TEMPTATION IS COMMON TO HUMANITY AND IN THIS COMMON TEMPTATION THERE ARE TWO COMMON FACTORS. ONE OF THESE COMMON FACTORS IS AN INWARD DESIRE AND THE SECOND COMMON FACTOR IS SOME EXTERNAL MEANS WHEREBY THIS INWARD DESIRE CAN BE SATISFIED, AND THESE TWO THINGS, THE

INWARD DESIRE AND THE EXTERNAL POSSIBILITY OF SATISFACTION, STAND IN RELATIONSHIP TO ONE ANOTHER MUCH LIKE A POWDER MAGAZINE STAND IN RELATIONSHIP TO A LIGHTED MATCH. THE POWDER MAGAZINE IS PERFECTLY SAFE UNLESS THE FIRE GETS BY IT, AND THERE IS NOT MUCH DANGER TO FIRE UNLESS THE POWDER IS CAST IN IT. BUT WHEN YOU GET THESE TWO THINGS TOGETHER, THEN WATCH OUT, BECAUSE UNLESS YOU HANDLE THEM VERY CAREFULLY THERE IS GOING TO BE A VERY DISASTROUS EXPLOSION.

BUT SOMEONE ASKS, "SINCE TEMPTATION IS COMMON TO MANKIND, THEN SHOULD NOT OUR RESPONSE TO THIS FACT BE ONE OF DESPAIR IF EVERYWHERE WE GO THERE IS TEMPTATION?" "DOES NOT THIS REALLY MEAN THAT IT IS RATHER USELESS TO TRY AND IMPROVE ONESELF? DOESN'T THIS REALLY MEAN THAT IT IS RATHER USELESS TO TRY AND GET AWAY FROM SIN? DOESN'T IT MEAN THAT WE ARE BOUND TO BE A PRETTY SORRY LOT AS FAR AS OUR MORAL SITUATION IS CONCERNED?" BUT THIS IS NOT WHAT PAUL IS SAYING AT ALL. WHAT PAUL IS SAYING WHEN HE SAYS THAT THESE TEMPTATIONS ARE COMMON TO HUMANITY IS NOT THAT IT IS UNIVERSAL AND THEREFORE WE SHOULD SUBMIT TO IT AND NOT WORRY ABOUT TRYING TO KEEP OURSELVES SAFE FROM IT, BUT HE IS SAYING THAT TEMPTATION IS SUCH A VERY HUMAN THING. WHAT HE IS SAYING IS THAT TEMPTATION IS SO NATIVE TO MAN. WHAT HE IS SAYING IS THAT TEMPTATION IS SO SUBTLE THAT THERE IS NO HELP FOR ANYONE EXCEPT IN RELATIONSHIP TO GOD. THAT TEMPTATION IS SUCH A UNIVERSAL FACT THAT THERE CAN BE NO HOPE FOR US IN THE FACE OF TEMPTATION UNLESS WE REMEMBER OUR GOD.

AND THIS IS PRECISELY WHY MAN SINS. MAN SINS BECAUSE HE DOESN'T DEPEND UPON GOD. MAN SINS BECAUSE HE GOES AWAY FROM GOD. EVERY MAN SINS WHEN HE IS DRAWN AWAY BY HIS OWN LUSTS AND ENTICED, AND NOTICE THAT THE BEING DRAWN AWAY PRECEDES THE ENTICEMENT WHICH IS DIRECTED TO OUR PHYSICAL OR OUR MENTAL LUSTS AND DESIRES. PAUL SAYS THAT WE SIN BECAUSE WE DO NOT TAKE THE WAY OF ESCAPE. THE KING JAMES SAYS "A" WAY OF ESCAPE. THE IMPLICATION IS THAT WHEN THE TEMPTATION COMES THERE WILL BE A MULTIPLICITY OF WAYS AND YOU CAN JUST LOOK AROUND AND TAKE YOUR CHOICE. YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE TOO CAREFUL BECAUSE YOU CAN RUN NEARLY ANY DIRECTION AND GET AWAY, BUT THAT IS NOT WHAT PAUL SAYS. PAUL SAYS THAT GOD WILL WITH THE TEMPTATION PROVIDE ALSO "THE" WAY OF ESCAPE. AND NOTICE THE ORDER HERE, THE WAY OF ESCAPE DOES NOT PRECEDE THE TEMPTATION BUT IT COMES WITH IT. WHAT IS THE WAY OF ESCAPE? THERE IS THE WAY THAT COMES WITH EACH TEMPTATION, BUT THE WAY FOR EACH TEMPTATION MAY BE A DIFFERENT WAY. WE HAVE A MULTIPLICITY OF ESCAPES FOR DIFFERENT TEMPTATIONS BUT ALL OF THEM WILL NOT BE PRESENT UPON ANY ONE OCCASION. SOMETIMES THE WAY OF ESCAPE MAY BE NOT TO ARGUE WITH IT BUT TO SIMPLY GET AWAY. INDEED THAT IS THE VERY THING PAUL SAID IN THIS CONTEXT, WHEN HE HAD, IN THE THIRTEENTH VERSE, TOLD THEM ABOUT THEIR COMMON TEMPTATION AND THAT GOD WOULD PROVIDE THE WAY OF ESCAPE, IN THIS PARTICULAR CONTEXT HE TOLD THEM JUST EXACTLY WHAT THE WAY OF ESCAPE WAS. HE SAID "FLEE IDOLOTRY." GOING BACK INTO THE SIXTH CHAPTER OF THE SAME LETTER, HE SAID "FLEE FORNICATION." IN THESE TWO PARTICULAR TEMPTATIONS THE CORRECT WAY OF ESCAPE WAS SIMPLY TO TURN AND RUN FROM IT. WE DON'T LIKE TO THINK ABOUT RUNNING, DO WE? WHEN WE START RUNNING WE START THINKING "COWARD." WHEN WE SEE SOMEONE RUNNING AWAY FROM TROUBLE WE START TALKING ABOUT THE YELLOW STREAK THAT THAT MAN'S GOT DOWN HIS BACK. WE DON'T RESPECT A MAN WHO RUNS. BUT DO WE THINK A MAN IS A COWARD BECAUSE HE DOESN'T STICK HIS HEAD IN EVERY RATTLESNAKE DEN THAT HE FINDS IN A FOREST WHEN HE IS WALKING THROUGH? DO WE THINK A MAN IS A COWARD BECAUSE HE DOESN'T GO INTO EVERY CAVE THAT MIGHT BE INHABITED BY A BEAR? BUT MORE THAN THAT DO WE THINK HE IS A COWARD WHEN HE DOESN'T GO INTO A CAVE HE KNOWS IS OCCUPIED BY A BEAR OR A LION? NO, WE THINK HE IS A MAN OF EXTRAORDINARILY GOOD COMMON SENSE. AND SO A MAN WHO FLEES FROM TEMPTATION IS A MAN WHO KNOWS HIMSELF AND IS A MAN WHO KNOWS SIN, AND HE IS A MAN WHO THANKS GOD FOR HAVING PROVIDED THIS WAY OF ESCAPE AND HE HAS THE INTEGRITY TO TAKE IT.

ON SOME OCCASIONS THE WAY OF ESCAPE THAT GOD PROVIDES MAY BE VERY NEAR THE ENTRANCE GATE, FOR INSTANCE, WATCHFULNESS OVER THE THOUGHTS OF THE MIND. YOU KNOW IF YOU CAN QUENCH THE SPARK YOU DON'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT THE CONFLAGRATION. IT'S THE SAME WAY WITH TEMPTATION. THE WAY OF ESCAPE SO OFTEN LIES IN THE FACT THAT BEFORE IT GETS HOLD OF US WE STAMP IT OUT. WE SOMETIMES LIKE TO TOY WITH IT AND PLAY WITH IT AND WAIT AND SEE WHAT IT IS GOING TO DO. WE SOMETIMES THINK WE WILL WAIT AND SEE IF WE CAN CONTROL IT, BUT THE FIRST THING WE KNOW IT IS OUT OF CONTROL AND IT IS CONTROLLING US. WE NEED, THEN, TO TAKE THE WAY OF ESCAPE WHICH COMES TO US ON THESE OCCASIONS BY PUTTING OUT THE FIRE BEFORE IT GETS HOLD.

SOMETIMES PRAYER IS THE WAY OF ESCAPE THAT GOD GIVES TO US, BOWING IN HIS PRESENCE AND POURING OUT OUR HEARTS UNTO GOD. IN HOW MANY SITUATIONS HAVE WE BEEN WHERE ALL OF THE DOORS OF HUMAN SYMPATHY HAVE BEEN SHUT AND WHERE ALL OF THE POSSIBILITY OF THE OUTPOURING OF HUMAN HELP HAVE BEEN CUT OFF FROM US AND WE DO NOT HAVE ANY HOPE. IN SHORT, HOW MANY TIMES HAVE WE BEEN DRIVEN TO OUR KNEES BY THE OVERWHELMING KNOWLEDGE THAT THERE IS NO OTHER WAY IN WHICH WE COULD TURN? THAT'S A WAY OF ESCAPE THAT GOD GIVES TO US IN THE FACE OF TEMPTATION.

SOMETIMES IT IS THE WAY OF SUBMISSION AND RESISTANCE, THE WAY THAT JAMES DESCRIBED IN THE FOURTH CHAPTER OF HIS LETTER IN THE SEVENTH VERSE WHEN HE SAID, "SUBMIT YOURSELVES THEREFORE TO GOD. RESIST THE DEVIL, AND HE WILL FLEE FROM YOU." HE IS SAYING THAT WHEN YOU ARE TEMPTED THE WAY OF ESCAPE IS SIMPLY TO SAY "NO." BUT WE HAVE TRIED IT SO OFTEN AND WE HAVE FAILED SO MISERABLY, BECAUSE WHEN WE HAVE SAID "NO" TO TEMPTATION THE DEVIL COMES BACK AND SAYS "ONLY THIS ONCE." WHEN HE COMES BACK AND SAYS "ONLY THIS ONCE," WE NEED TO RESPOND, "NO, NOT EVEN ONCE WILL I DO THAT WHICH IS WRONG." BUT THE DEVIL WON'T LEAVE US ALONE. THE DEVIL IS GOING TO COME BACK AND WHISPER IN OUR EAR, "OTHER PEOPLE DO IT." WE NEED AGAIN THE ANSWER OF FAITH TO SAY, "THEN I WILL NOT DO IT." BUT WHEN WE HAVE THUS RESPONDED THE DEVIL IS GOING TO COME BACK AND WHISPER IN OUR OTHER EAR, "IT'S ONLY A LITTLE SIN." WE ARE GOING TO HAVE TO HAVE FAITH TO RESIST AGAIN AND WE ARE GOING TO HAVE TO SAY, "NO, I WILL NOT DO EVEN A LITTLE WRONG," REALIZING THAT THE PLACE TO RESIST TEMPTATION IS AT THE VERY BEGINNING, TO CLOSE THE DOOR BEFORE IT EVER GETS IN.

IN SHORT, WHAT PAUL IS SAYING IN THIS PASSAGE IS THAT WE SIN BECAUSE WE DO NOT FILL OUR LIVES WITH THE GOOD, BECAUSE WE HAVE LEFT OUR LIVES AN EMPTY VACUUM, HAVING REMOVED THERE-FROM THE NEGATIVE EVIL BUT HAVING FAILED TO BRING IN THE POSITIVE GOOD. JESUS TAUGHT IN THE LONG AGO THAT AN EMPTY HEART INVITES EVIL SPIRITS, THAT THE EVIL SPIRITS WHICH HAVE BEEN CAST OUT SHALL COME AGAIN SEVEN FOLD STRONGER THAN THEY WERE. EMERSON MADE, I THINK, A VERY WISE OBSERVATION IN HIS WRITINGS. IT HAD BEEN OBSERVED BEFORE IN THIS MANNER, "AN IDOL MIND IS THE DEVIL'S WORKSHOP." EMERSON EXPRESSED IT THIS WAY, "A MAN'S TASK IS HIS LIFE PRESERVER." HOW MANY TIMES HAVE WE BEEN SAVED FROM DOING THAT WHICH WAS EVIL BECAUSE WE HAD APPLIED OUR HANDS TO DO GOOD? HOW MANY TIMES HAVE WE BEEN SAVED FROM DOING THAT WHICH WAS BAD BECAUSE WE HAD GIVEN OURSELVES TO THE SERVICE OF THE KING OF KINGS?

PAUL IS SAYING UNTO US THAT NOT ONE OF US, I DON'T CARE WHO YOU MAY BE, AND I SPEAK NOT ONLY TO YOU BUT I SPEAK TO MYSELF AS WELL. PAUL IS SAYING THAT THERE IS NOT ONE OF US WHO IS READY TO GO OUT AND TO FACE THE SUDDEN TEMPTATION AND THE GREAT DEMANDS OF LIFE WHO HAS NOT BROUGHT INTO HIS HEART THE PRESENCE, THE CONSCIOUS PRESENCE OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST. PAUL IS SAYING THAT WE SIN BECAUSE WE HAVE NOT CREATED WITHIN OUR HEARTS A HOLY OF HOLIES IN WHICH JESUS LIVES AND FROM WHICH JESUS REIGNS. PAUL IS SAYING THAT WE SIN BECAUSE WE HAVE GIVEN LESS THAN ALL OF OURSELVES TO JESUS CHRIST. O, HOW PAUL KNEW

TEMPTATION. THIS GREAT APOSTLE WHO SAID, "I BUFFET MY BODY DAILY AND BRING IT INTO SUBJECTION, LEST AFTER HAVING PREACHED TO OTHERS, I MYSELF SHOULD BE A CASTAWAY." I AM SURE THAT PAUL KNEW, PERHAPS BETTER THAN OTHERS, THAT THE TEMPTER WITH HIS TEMPTATION CAN FOLLOW US EVEN INTO OUR CLOSET AND THAT THERE, EVEN IN THE QUIETNESS OF MEDITATION UPON GOD, THE TEMPTER CAN ASSULT US WHILE WE ARE UPON OUR KNEES.

PAUL WOULD HAVE US KNOW THAT THE WAY TO ESCAPE TEMPTATION, THE WAY TO ESCAPE EVIL, THE WAY TO ESCAPE SIN IS TO GET ON A HIGHER LEVEL AND LIVE ON A HIGHER PLANE. WE SING, "LORD, PLANT MY FEET ON HIGHER GROUND," AND HOW THAT OUGHT TO BE OUR PRAYER. YOU KNOW WHEN A HUNGRY CAT GOES OUT TO STALK A BIRD AND THE BIRD SEES THAT CAT COMING, IF THAT BIRD REMAINS ON ITS ENEMY'S LEVEL, IT IS GOING TO BE CAT FOOD. BUT IF, SEEING THE CAT COMING, THE BIRD WILL SPREAD ITS WINGS AND FLY TO A DIFFERENT LEVEL, THERE IT IS SAFE. THAT IS EXACTLY WHAT PAUL IS SAYING TO US IN RELATIONSHIP TO TEMPTATION. HE IS SAYING IF YOU STAY ON THE DEVIL'S LEVEL, YOU'RE GONE. IF YOU STAY ON THE DEVIL'S LEVEL, YOU ARE FODDER FOR THE FIRES OF HELL, BUT IF YOU WILL FLY UP INTO THE ARMS OF JESUS, THERE YOU SHALL BE SAFE, AND THERE YOU SHALL BE KEPT BY THE POWER OF ALMIGHTY GOD. WHEN KING ALFRED REIGNED OVER ENGLAND, HE MADE A PROMISE TO HIS SUBJECTS. TO HIS SUBJECTS HE SAID, "YOU WILL BE KEPT SAFE AS YOU TRAVEL IF YOU WILL STAY ON THE HIGH ROAD." THERE WILL BE NO SAFETY IN THE BYWAYS, THERE WILL BE NO SAFETY IF YOU GET AWAY FROM THE WELL TRAVELED PATH, BUT IF YOU WILL STAY ON THE HIGH ROAD, THERE I PLEDGE YOU TO BE SAFE. THAT IS WHAT PAUL IS SAYING TO US. THAT IS WHY WE ENCOURAGE YOU THIS NIGHT TO GET ON THE HIGH ROAD. THAT IS WHY TONIGHT WE ENCOURAGE YOU TO PLANT YOUR FEET ON THE PATH THAT JESUS WALKED, FOR JESUS IS THE WAY. JESUS IS THE HIGH ROAD, AND WALKING THROUGH JESUS, THE WAY, THE TRUTH AND THE LIFE, YOU CAN COME UNTO THE FATHER.

WE HAVE SAID THAT MEN SIN BECAUSE THEY DON'T DEPEND ON GOD AND THAT LEAVES ONE MORE QUESTION. CAN WE DEPEND ON GOD? IS IT POSSIBLE? THE WRITER OF THE HEBREW LETTER, CHAPTER TWO AND VERSE EIGHTEEN SAID "FOR IN THAT HE HIMSELF HATH SUFFERED BEING TEMPTED, HE IS ABLE TO SUCCOUR THEM THAT ARE TEMPTED." HE IS SAYING JESUS HAS BEEN WHERE WE HAVE BEEN AND JESUS UNDERSTANDS. IN THE FOURTH CHAPTER HE SAID, "SEEING THEN THAT WE HAVE A GREAT HIGH PRIEST, THAT IS PASSED INTO THE HEAVENS, JESUS THE SON OF GOD, LET US HOLD FAST OUR PROFESSION." HE IS SAYING, JESUS IS ABLE, JESUS IS ABLE TO SUCCOUR, JESUS IS ABLE TO GIVE STRENGTH. WE CAN DEPEND UPON JESUS CHRIST.

PAUL SAID THE SAME THING. IN THIS THIRTEENTH VERSE OF I CORINTHIANS 10, HE SAID, "BUT GOD IS FAITHFUL," AND WHEN PAUL SAID THAT, PAUL SAID EVERYTHING. PAUL DIDN'T SAY THAT MAN IS STRONG. INDEED HE WARNED MAN NOT TO DEPEND UPON HIS OWN STRENGTH, FOR HE SAID "LET HIM THAT THINKETH HE STANDETH, (THAT MAN WHO THINKS HE IS STRONG, LET HIM) TAKE HEED LEST HE FALL." PAUL IS NOT SPEAKING HERE OF HUMAN POWER, BUT HE IS SPEAKING OF HUMAN POWER DIVINELY ASSISTED. "GOD IS FAITHFUL." YES, IN SAYING THAT, PAUL SAID EVERYTHING, FOR HE SAID THAT WHAT GOD REQUIRES US TO DO, GOD WILL ENABLE US TO DO. GOD WILL ENABLE YOU TO LIVE AS HIGH A LIFE IN HIM THROUGH HIS SON AS YOU WANT TO LIVE. TONIGHT IF YOU ARE NOT A CHRISTIAN, GOD WILL ENABLE YOU TO BECOME ONE. NO, I AM NOT TALKING ABOUT IRRESTIBLE GRACE, I'M NOT TALKING ABOUT GOD'S MOVING YOU AGAINST YOUR WILL TO BECOME HIS CHILD, BUT I AM SAYING THAT GOD WILL ENABLE YOU, AND DOES ENABLE YOU IN THAT HE HAS GIVEN YOU A MIND TO THINK, HE HAS GIVEN YOU A HEART TO BELIEVE. HE HAS GIVEN YOU AN OPPORTUNITY TO RECEIVE AND RIGHT NOW YOU CAN COME TO JESUS CHRIST. IF YOU HAVE OBEYED THE GOSPEL AND YOU HAVE WANDERED AWAY INTO SIN, IT IS NOT BECAUSE OF ANY FAILURE IN GOD'S ENABLING POWER, BUT IT IS BECAUSE YOU HAVE ALLOWED YOURSELF TO BE DRAWN AWAY. LET THE POWER OF THE CROSS DRAW YOU BACK. JESUS SAID, "AND I, IF I BE LIFTED UP WILL DRAW ALL MEN UNTO ME." YOU ARE CAUGHT BETWEEN THESE FORCES TONIGHT. I AM PLEADING WITH YOU AND I AM PRAYING FOR YOU THAT THE DRAWING POWER OF THE CROSS MAY BE THE GREATER POWER, AND MAY DRAW YOU EVEN NOW TO JESUS CHRIST.