

LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION

Mt 6:13; Jas 1:2; Mt 26:39; Ps 141:4; II Cor 12:7-10; I Peter 4:12-13; Mt 4:1-11

I. DEFINING *PEIRASMON* (Greek): “TESTS or TEMPTATIONS”

- A. “God tests man by means of suffering or in some other way”
- B. In “a secondary or neutral or evil sense, I tempt”

II. SPARE US FROM TESTS and TRIALS TOO HARD FOR US

- A. Acknowledging that God disciplines those He loves and deems it proper to test us as part of our salvation process—C.S. Lewis in *Problem of Pain* & illustrations such as toothaches
- B. Proper, normal to want to avoid sufferings, sicknesses, failures, persecutions—bishops in Early Church
- C. Job’s example classic
 - 1. Challenge—losses: family, livestock, health, reputation
 - 2. Response
 - a. Job defends himself from “comforters” who basically say his sins caused his trials
 - b. God asserts His ultimately mysterious ways
- D. Paul’s example instructive—“thorn in the flesh”—II Cor 12:7-10
 - 1. Physical? perhaps vision difficulties
 - 2. Adversaries? perhaps critics, foes in church
- E. Peter’s admonition (I Peter 4:12-13)—“fiery trials”
 - 1. Persecutions predictable—“blessed are you” said Jesus (Mt 5:16-17)
 - 2. “Rejoice” as I, Paul “fill up in my flesh what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ” (Col 3:1)

III. “DON’T LET US YIELD TO TEMPTATION” (NLV), learning from Jesus in wilderness

- A. **Pleasure:** turn stones into bread
 - 1. Personal: Hedonism/Epicureanism
 - a. “Let us eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we shall die.”
 - b. Seeking immediate satisfaction rather than ultimate goods
 - c. Consumer culture constantly tempts us
 - d. Sexual Revolution slowly shapes us—“If it feels good, do it.”
 - e. Money forever alluring—“the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil” (I Tim 6:10, NKJ)
 - 2. Corporate: collectivism promising utopian satisfactions—recurrent building Tower of Babel
 - a. French Jacobins’ revolutionary endeavors: Temple of Reason; calendar; “citizens;” slaughter
 - b. Utilitarianism: “greatest good for greatest number” & Pragmatism: “whatever works”
 - c. Socialism: utopians & Marxists & Fascists & 20th century bloodbaths
 - d. Progressivism: soft totalitarianism, socialism—Woodrow Wilson illustrated U.S. current
 - e. “Social Gospel” churches illustrative throughout 20th century
- B. **Prestige:** dramatic acts making one a celebrity, getting attention—“look at me”
 - 1. Personal—self-esteem, self-actualization, solipsistic fantasies
 - a. “Star”—stand out in athletics, academics, drama, preaching, etc.
 - b. Status—position in community, school, church, social media
 - 2. Corporate
 - a. Member of elite team, school, church
 - b. One of “inner ring” running the organization (CSL)
- C. **Power:** all others bow down, submissive to one’s will
 - 1. Personal
 - a. Physical—oppressing weaker, muscular intimidation
 - b. Positional—manipulating subordinates (e.g. military, educational, clerical abuse)
 - c. Personality—exuding charisma—charming to exploit (*How to Win Friends and Influence People*)
 - d. Financial—bribing, threatening, manipulating (fully evident in LBJ’s career)
 - 2. Corporate—leaders & supporters wielding societal power
 - a. Monarchs—Henry VIII; “imperial presidency” evident in Joe Biden; governors Polis & Newsome
 - b. Aristocrats—Venice Doges; media elites; bureaucrats (Fauci; FBI; IRS)
 - c. Oligarchs—Bill Gates & Jeff Bazos; Twitter & Facebook; Rockefeller & Ford Foundations
 - d. Democrats—Gracci brothers in Rome; demagogues in U.S. history
 - e. Ecclesiastics—self-serving popes, bishops, superintendents, pastors