

July 4, 2004
A.M. Service
Patchogue Church of the Nazarene

“God and Your Problems” (Part 2)
1 Cor 10:13 NLT

But remember that the temptations that come into your life are no different from what others experience. And God is faithful. He will keep the temptation from becoming so strong that you can't stand up against it. When you are tempted, he will show you a way out so that you will not give in to it.

There's a story of a business executive who, at the end of a long day of travel, climbs into bed at a hotel. As he begins to nod off, he feels something crawling up his legs.

Leaping up and fumbling with the light, he throws back the bed sheets to discover the bed is full of bugs.

Changing rooms was not enough to satisfy the man's disgust. Upon arriving home, he wrote a complaint letter to the hotel's corporate headquarters.

Weeks later he received a reply directly from the president of the company:

“We are absolutely appalled that a man of your position and reputation should have had such an experience in one of our hotels. We are deeply embarrassed, and we assure you we are working diligently to correct this problem, and it will never happen again.”

After reading the reply, the businessman - feeling quite good about himself - went to file the letter. But a small post-it note slipped out of the hotel's envelope. Picking it up, he saw the words, “Send this man the bug letter.”

Have you been sending bug letters to God? Have you been saying you're sorry when, in fact, you have no real intention to change?

It's easy to say you need to be a better person. It's easy to say you need to be a better spouse or parent or child, or person. It's easy to say you know you need to stop doing something or start doing something. Do you mean it, or have you sent a bug letter to God?

Telling others and God you're sorry doesn't mean anything if you don't intend to change. God can help you with your problems but you must be serious about wanting to change.

Last week we began to look at 1 Cor 10:13 to discuss “God and your problems.” The first thing to know about your problem is that:

1. It Is Not Unique

We blame everyone but ourselves and make all kinds of excuses. But, excuses boil down to this, “I shouldn't be responsible for my actions because *my* problem is unique.” Not

according to Paul: “But remember that the temptations that come into your life are *no different* from what others experience.” Instead of making excuses, take responsibility. Only as you admit your problem, take responsibility for it, and ask God for help will you find that help. The fact that your problem is not unique means that the message of Bible is just as fresh today as it was to the people in Corinth & people who lived before them: God’s forgiveness is available through the work of Jesus and it is the only answer to the problems of this life. The second thing to know about you and your problem is that:

2. You Are Not Alone

Again listen to what the Bible says: “Remember that the temptations that come into your life are no different from what *others experience*.”

- a. Others have faced the same problems you face. The specifics may be different, but the temptations that come into our life are not significantly different from what others experienced.
- b. Others have faced the same problems and have been victorious over them. And if others have been victorious over the same problem you face than you can be victorious over it as well.
- c. Jesus was tempted with the same problems you face, except for two things. His temptations were more intense than yours and He never gave into the temptations. Heb 4:15 NLT - “(Jesus) This High Priest of ours understands our weaknesses, for he faced all of the same temptations we do, yet he did not sin.”

This means:

- 1st. All the resources He had are also available to you and they are found in the Bible. When Jesus said in Matt. 4:4 “People need more than bread for their life; they must feed on every word of God” He was giving us the key to solving our problems. The solution to our problems lies in following Bible. We must accept God’s Son Jesus, receive forgiveness, enter into a personal relationship with God receive His Spirit, turn from our old ways of living, and instead learn and apply the truth as found in God’s Word, the Bible, praying and asking God for His help and believing and trusting Him for it.
- 2nd. Because of Jesus God is always with us. (Heb 13:5) "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you."

Be encouraged! You are not alone. When others around you who do not know Jesus cave under life’s pressures, you can stand and you must stand to demonstrate that God keeps His word.

“But remember that the temptations that come into your life are no different from what others experience... And God is faithful.”

3. *God is faithful*

Up to this point I have been telling you that God can help you with your problems. You may be thinking, "How can he be so sure?" You may be wondering if I am offering more than I can deliver. You may have depended on something else for help before, but in the end it lead to despair. Is this just another false hope? How do I know I am not "overselling" you?

I'm glad you asked! It is hard to believe anyone today and their promises especially when they are trying to sell you something.

Once someone was trying to sell an old car, but having a lot of problems selling it, because the car had 250,000 miles on it.

A friend said, "There is a possibility to make the car easier to sell, but it's not legal."

"That doesn't matter," replied the seller, "if only I can sell the car."

"Okay," said the friend. "Here is the address of a friend of mine. He owns a car repair shop. Tell him I sent you and he will turn the counter in your car back to 50,000 miles. Then it should not be a problem to sell your car anymore."

The seller made the trip to the mechanic. About one month after that, the friend asked, "Did you sell your car?"

"No," was the reply, "why should I? It only has 50,000 miles on it!"

Your real hope in trouble, your only certain hope in despair, is in God – in the God who has kept His promises. For example, He promised to bring redemption for the lost and He delivered! All hope lies in Him, that hope is realized only through God's Son, Jesus Christ. He went to the cross to fulfill God's promise of the forgiveness of sins. God promised to come to earth and did in the person of Jesus Christ. God promised to do something about our sin and the punishment it deserves. And so Jesus came and died for us, and then also delivered on His promise to rise from the dead! There is certainty in Jesus Christ. When He promises, He does so plainly, and then follows through. So when He promises "...that the temptations that come into your life are no different from what others experience. And God is faithful. He will keep the temptation from becoming so strong that you can't stand up against it. When you are tempted, he will show you a way out so that you will not give in to it," your hope is certain. God can not lie.

Don't you see that the answer to all your questions are right in the heart of this promise of 1 Cor. 10:13? Your certain hope for help in your problems is in the words embedded in the middle of this verse, and those words are, "God is faithful." That is something you can count on. You can't trust too many people to be faithful but you can count on this: "God is (and always will be) faithful." 1 Cor 10:13 is a promise of God, so you can count on it, because God does not change He is always faithful.

Perhaps Paul also anticipated that the people reading his letter would think he was overselling them when he wrote this promise. So under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit he tied this promise firmly to the faithfulness of God. Now, if God's faithfulness can fail, so can this promise and I would understand you doubting these words. But if "God is faithful" – as we know He is – then you have no choice but to believe this promise: "the temptations that come into your life are no different from what others experience. And God is faithful. He will keep the temptation from becoming so strong that you can't stand up against it. When you are tempted, he will show you a way out so that you will not give in to it,"

God gives a guarantee. He says, "Based on my own faithfulness, based on my integrity I declare that there is no problem that my child, redeemed by their faith in Jesus, will ever face that is unique or beyond their ability to handle if they meet the problem in My way, using My resources." The beginning of a solution to your problem can take place right now, if you confess your need, acknowledge your own responsibility, choose to turn from the wrong thing you are doing, ask and receive Christ and the hope He offers and begin to do what He wants you to do. Not all of your problems will disappear over night but your attitude toward them will. You can have the desire to be different and the hope that you can be. When you belong to God, when Jesus makes you a child of God, you are not permitted to lose hope. God is love and love never fails, or gives up, or loses faith. These three things will always remain, faith, hope and love.

Throw off all discouragement and despair; Get rid of any excuses, self-pity, or hesitation; and give yourself completely to God and to this promise of His. He is faithful and He promises that your problem is not unique, you are not alone, He will keep the temptation from becoming so strong that you can't stand up against it. (And) when you are tempted, he will show you a way out so that you will not give in to it.

Today, why not tear up your form letters (your "bug" letter) and speak to God from the depths of your heart? If you are serious about change, He will help you... "God is faithful!"