



Sermon-Based Study Guide
Good Shepherd Presbyterian Church

Matthew 6.13a

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I. Introduction to this Study

This week we continue our summer series Pray Like Jesus, turning our attention to the petition, "Lead us not into temptation."

II. Connecting with One Another

Think back to high school. Can you recall any particular tests? What do you remember about them?

III. Study the Text

a. Read Matthew 6.5-13a (ending on the word "temptation").

How do you understand the first line of this sixth petition? What does it mean to you to pray, "Lead us not into temptation"?

b. Warren Wiersbe writes, "The request for bread deals with our present needs and the request for forgiveness with our past sins. Now we have before us the request for guidance and protection, which involves our future activities." Similarly, R.C. Sproul notes, "We are to ask the Father to spare us from the temptations and the spiritual attacks that can lead us into new sin."

Reflect upon your spiritual journey for a few moments. How has God spared you from temptations in the past?

What temptations to sin do you need God to spare you from today?

Who in your life are you able to openly discuss these temptations with? If you don't have anyone, pray that God would bring a few close spiritual companions into your life.

c. Read Matthew 3.13-4.11.

Have you ever noticed before that Jesus is tempted *immediately after* His baptism? One of the highest spiritual moments is followed by one of the lowest!

Jewish author Ben-Sira once wrote, "If you come to serve the Lord, prepare yourself for testing."

How have you experienced that same dynamic in your own life?

d. Read Matthew 8.23-27.

Addressing this passage, Willimon and Hauerwas write, "The Christian life is no safe harbor, secure from storms and struggle."

What storms or struggles have you experienced in your spiritual journey?

How have you seen the Lord rebuke the wind and the waves, bringing "complete calm"?

What wind and waves are you currently experiencing?

In what ways have you attempted to calm the wind and the waves by yourself?

- e. Willimon and Hauerwas further note, "Christians are those who ask to be saved... So when the church has opinions about how you spend your money, how you have sex, how you vote, this is salvation. You are not simply being saved from personal greed or licentiousness, you are thereby being made a member of God's people."

What do you think about this statement? Do you agree or disagree? Why or why not?

- f. Read Ephesians 6.10-17.

What do you think Paul means by "principalities and powers"?

Why do you think Paul encourages believers to "stand" instead of advancing in battle?

How does this passage illumine the phrase "Lead us not into temptation"? How does it equip us to respond to such temptations?

It has been said that the principalities and powers of the evil world "always masquerade as freedoms that we have been graciously given or as necessities that we cannot live without."

How have you seen this to be true?

- g. Reread Matthew 4.1-11, noticing how Jesus responds to the tempter.

Jesus' response to the first temptation is to quote Deuteronomy 8.3.

Following that, the tempter quotes Psalm 91.11-12, prompting Jesus to quote Deuteronomy 6.16.

After the third temptation, Jesus quotes Deuteronomy 6.13.

What can this passage teach us about how to respond to the evil one during times of temptation?

In what way does Jesus use the Word of God as the Sword of the Spirit? (see Ephesians 6.17)

- h. Returning to the phrase "Lead us not into temptation", one bible scholar has argued that Jesus has a very specific kind of temptation in mind. After explaining that Jesus' ministry took place in between two violent rebellions against Roman imperial oppression in His homeland (against Augustus in 4BC and Nero in 6AD), John Dominic Crossan asserts that by "temptation" Jesus meant "temptation to overthrow Rome by force."

Read Matthew 26.31-56, especially noting verses 41 and 51. John's gospel notes that Peter wielded the sword (see John 18.10).

What do you think? Could it be that Jesus invites his disciples to pray that God would not lead them into temptation to overthrow Rome by force?

- i. Recalling Paul's instruction to the Ephesians to "stand," read 1st Corinthians 10.12-13.

How does this help you understand this petition, "Lead us not into temptation"?

- j. Willimon and Hauerwas (again!?) help us conclude our study:

In praying to God to deliver us we acknowledge that God is greater than any foe of God. The power of evil must be admitted and taken seriously, yet not too seriously. Perhaps that is why, though the Lord's Prayer honestly focuses upon trial, temptation and evil, it never mentions Satan by name. Evil is a threatening power, though a defeated one. Though the battle rages, we know who has won the war.

IV. Pray

- a. Pray that God would deliver you from and protect you in times of testing - and be specific about the things you need deliverance from and protection in!
- b. Lift up the many students going back to school in the coming weeks, that God would deliver them from and protect them in times of testing throughout this school year - and that they would be bold witnesses for Christ on their school campuses,
- c. Ask God to surround you with other brothers and sisters in Christ who can support you in times of testing.