**Dearly Beloved Saints in Christ Jesus,**

**Grace, Mercy, and Peace to you from God our Father and from Our Lord and Savior, Jesus the Christ. Amen.**

Normally I do not preach on one verse out of a whole passage of scripture. But I think the passage that I will be preaching on is beneficial for all of us.

The sixth petition of the Lord’s Prayer, is, ***“And lead us not into temptation.”***

From our confirmation days, we would say, “What does this mean?” Our answer, **“God tempts no one. We pray in this petition that God would guard and keep up so that the devil, the world, and our sinful nature may not deceive us or mislead us into false belief, despair, and other great shame and vice. Although we are attacked by these things, we pray that we may finally overcome them and win the victory.”**

In the final three petitions of the Lord’s Prayer, we ask our Father in heaven for what we need to go to our eternal home, heaven. The truth is that God will deliver us from this sinful world to Himself and bring us to heaven, by forgiving our sins, by leading us not into temptation, and by delivering us from evil. Today we are considering the sixth petition of the Lord’s Prayer, **“Lead us not into temptation.”**

A question I get sometimes is, “Does God tempt us?” Scripture gives us a clear answer. ***“Let no one say when he is tempted, “I am being tempted by God,” for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one. But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death.”*** James 1:13-15.

Here in Scripture, it clearly makes known that God cannot tempt anyone to sin. God cannot even be tempted with evil. Rather God is the source of all good things. If we ever think that God has given us evil things, we might want to realize that appearances can be deceiving.

Lately it has become fashionable to put God on trial. And that is due to political leaders in the 20th century, such as Joseph Stalin, Adolf Hitler, and Mao Tse Tung. Under those leaders, on the low end twenty-five million people died, on the higher end, over one-hundred million died. We also see that evil, in the United States, 2023 statistics estimated that sixty-three million unborn children have been aborted.

These evils and others in the 20th and 21st century have made people suggest that God is to blame for these heinous acts in this world. But we as Christians have to realize that God is not the one to blame for the evil in the world. He is not the author of sin and evil. Instead, He is the author of forgiveness and what is good.

The Small Catechism, tells us the threefold source of evil; the devil, the world, and our own sinful flesh.

The reality of it all, is that it is the devil who tempts us with false doctrine. It is the world that tempts us with false promises. Our own sinful flesh tempts us to have a false faith. The devil is the author of false doctrine. Of the false prophets, Jesus said, ***“You will recognize them by their fruits….A healthy tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a diseased tree bear good fruit.”*** The devil is constantly lying to us. God tells us the truth. Jesus himself called the devil a liar and the father of lies. He also called him a murderer. The devil murders people by constantly lying to them. St. Paul warns Timothy of the ***“doctrine of demons.”*** We need to recognize that all false teaching comes from the father of lies and the murderer of souls.

God sanctifies by His truth. False doctrine is demonic activity on our faith and our soul. When we pray, “Lead us not into temptation,” we are asking God to preserve us from false teachings of false prophets. All false teaching is directed against the saving truth about Jesus.

But we should also recognize that not all false teaching is directly focused on Jesus. The devil is quite clever. The devil actively attacks the Scriptures and the sacraments. It can even be in this manner, “I do not understand this Scripture passage; therefore, it is irrelevant to me.” That my fellow Christians is the devil telling us that.

The devil has actively attacked the scriptures since it was first written down. Genesis 3:1, ***“He (Satan) said to the woman, Did God actually say...?”*** Satan questioned God’s authority from the get go.

If you remember the sixties and seventies of the Missouri Synod, the time of Seminex. Those were dark times of the Missouri Synod. At that time in St. Louis, seminary professors were actively trying to discount the reliability of the Bible’s historical accounts. Creation, Adam and Eve, the flood, the crossing of the Red Sea, and many other historical events were deemed a myth.

But the historical accounts of Scripture are true. For if we do not believe that the fall into sin happened in Genesis three, then the doctrine of original sin becomes obsolete. In Genesis we also learned about the marriage of one man and one woman. If we threw out the story of Adam and Eve, then Biblical marriage would be obsolete. All of the historical accounts of Scripture are true.

The devil also heaves attacks on the Sacraments of Holy Baptism and the Lord’s Supper.

The Bible teaches that Holy Baptism is God’s gracious act of washing away sin – a rebirth by the Holy Spirit, not a work we do, but a gift we receive. Sadly, some Christian groups treat baptism as a work, which robs this precious gift of comfort and power.

But that is the main goal of the devil, to undermine our faith. The devil also attacks the Lord’s Supper by telling people to deny Christ’s real presence in the bread and wine. This robs believers of the forgiveness of sins, eternal life, and salvation that Christ offers through the sacrament, reducing it to a mere memorial.

The devil’s aim is to separate us from Christ, to make us trust in ourselves rather than in God’s grace. Only through the truth of Scripture, the preaching of the cross, and sacraments can we resist his lies and find lasting assurance.

This is the truth that the devil hates. That is why constantly he tempts us with false doctrines.

And then the world tempts us with false promises. Pleasures like drugs, sex, money, and power, all leave us broken and empty. These temptations and many others lead us into deeper sin and spiritual numbness, making us calloused to our sinful condition, and some eventually replace the eternal hope in Christ with hollow distractions.

We should cling to the promise that God will deliver us from this evil place, and bring us to the home, heaven, that was given to us as children of God. That is why being an heir is so important to realize. We have eternal hope in Jesus' death, resurrection, and ascension into the Heavens.

Our sinful flesh is also going to try to distort that idea as well. Our sinful flesh adds to the danger by twisting faith itself. The flesh resists God’s will, seeks self-glorification, and prefers works over grace. It embraces religions that deny Christ and glorify man, leading to despair and separation from God.

So where do we look to overcome all temptations and gain the greatest victory? God directs us to Jesus. Hebrews chapter twelve, verse two says, ***“looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.”***

This passage calls us to fix our eyes on Jesus, our Champion – who endured the cross and now reigns in glory. Jesus faced all temptations of man and won. Even when we fail, Jesus remains as our mediator, interceding for us and leading us to eternal life.

Let this be your peace, Jesus leads us through temptation to the pearly gates of Heaven.

**In the Name of Jesus. Amen.**