

Houston Congregational Christian Church

Houston, Ohio

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Sermon written and delivered by Pastor James Manuel

Special Note: This text has been written with the idea of trying to show Pastor Jim's delivery style, emphasis and timing.

Scripture: I Corinthians 10: 11-13

These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us on whom the fulfillment of the ages has come. So if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall. No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. God is faithful and He will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, He will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.

Pastor Jim:

May the words of my mouth and the meditations of our hearts be acceptable to you, O Lord, on this your day.

What a beautiful song that Brenda played, "God Will Make a Way." And all the words, if you listen, are so very true because God will make a way. But you know having Christ in your heart, knowing Jesus Christ and coming to accept Him as your Lord and Savior doesn't mean that you will never have trials and troubles and problems in your life.

I was listening to a pastor on the radio this week who was talking about this, and he said, "You know, there are a lot of Christians and a lot of people who believe in God and a lot of people who go to church that believe and they think that just because that they have accepted Jesus and that they are now Christians, that all those things are behind them. They won't have anymore problems or trials and temptations.

But I am here to tell you today that Christians and non Christians alike will both encounter problems throughout their lives. The difference, however, is what Jesus told us and He told his disciples right when they needed it. Jesus said to His disciples in John 16, verse 33, Jesus said "In Me... in Me you will have peace. You see, Jesus said to His disciples, in this world, you will have troubles. So, Jesus is telling us that just because you are following Him and because you believe in Him and you are becoming a Christian doesn't mean that you're not going to have problems. Jesus says right here, "In this world, you will have troubles", but look at the rest of what he says. The good news is that He also says "Take heart, I have overcome the world."

So, you see, that is what Jesus is saying that because we are following Him, that He is going to give us peace in our hearts. With these words, Jesus was telling His disciples to **take courage**, just like He is telling us today to **take courage** because, in spite of all the struggles, all the problems, all the trials that we might have, we're not alone for, you see, Jesus gave us that wonderful assurance that He would never, ever leave us or forsake us. He will not abandon us during our struggles.

This morning I want us to focus on one of the verses that Marilyn read for us in 1st Corinthians, Chapter 10, verse 13. You see, here Paul was saying to the Corinthians; he was telling them to look – no temptation has seized you except that which is common to man. No temptation! So, none of us have ever had any kind of temptation that what's not common to all men. And then the good news is ... look what else it says, it says that God is faithful. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But, look what it says, but when you are tempted, He, God will provide a way out, in order for you to be able to stand up against that temptation or the trials.

You don't hear very many people saying in your daily conversation with them, "I have big temptations in my life. However, you do hear people saying, "I have big problems in my life." Now, we all have problems. We could have financial problems. We could have problems with our job. We could have problems with our family. We

could have problems with our neighbors or relatives. You could have all kinds of problems. It could be stress; could be difficulties, could be mental anguish, it could be a crisis in your life. Whatever the problem might be, any problem that you might have is potentially a temptation to go against God's moral standard. Sometimes you can be tempted to lie. You could be tempted to steal. You could be tempted to be mean to someone, to hurt someone. There are all kinds of temptations that we might have. Just remember what Paul said in verse 13, "Temptation is common to all men."

Sometimes you might even hear someone say when they are going through a difficult time, they might say "You don't understand." Some people believe that nobody has it as bad as they do. But let me tell you ... Everybody, everybody experiences some kind of temptation as they go through life. No one is exempt from being tempted, not even Jesus. If you remember right after John the Baptist baptized Jesus in the Jordan River, Jesus was led out into the wilderness by the Holy Spirit. And it was there in the wilderness that Jesus was tempted by Satan. Jesus was tempted beyond what most of us would ever be able to survive. You see, Jesus was tempted in all points. Just as Hebrews, Chapter 4, verse 15 says, "For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses. You see, God sympathizes with us. He knows what we are going through. He knows our problems. He knows our weaknesses. But, Hebrews tells us that we have one. We have one who has been tempted in every way just as we are. Yet, this one is without sin. You see, Jesus is a lot like us; in that, He was tempted in the full range as He was living here on earth as a human being. So we can be comforted in knowing that Jesus was tempted, and because He was tempted, He has sympathy for us. We can also be encouraged in knowing that Jesus faced temptation without giving in to sin. Jesus showed us how to face temptation without sin. Jesus is the only perfect human being that has ever lived. And yet, throughout our life, throughout your life, you will still hear people say, "But, you don't understand my situation." You don't know my boss; you don't know my children; you don't know my wife. You don't know the situation that I am in. You're right! You might very well have some unique situations in your life, and they're yours. Just like the person sitting beside you; just like myself. We all have our unique problems and trials and temptations. But the good news, the good news is what verse 13 also tells us is that God is faithful. God is faithful! Second Timothy, Chapter 2, verse 13 tells us that even if we are faithless, He will remain faithful. God is faithful. Jesus Christ is faithful to us all the time. He will stay by our side even when we have gone through so much that we don't feel like we have anymore faith left in us. We may be faithless at times, but we have that wonderful assistance that God is faithful. And we have that wonderful promise that Jesus gave us as he was telling His Disciples as he was sending them out on the great commission, in Matthew 28:20, that wonderful good news that Jesus says to them. He says, "And lo, I am with you always, always. That means that He never gives up, He never leaves us. Jesus says "And lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

You see, sometimes we get in such a rut in our lives that we sometimes even refuse to allow God to help us or even we refuse to call on God in our trials and temptations and our problems. But when we do that, I want to show you that the only thing that's happened is that you have broken communications with God. God's not left you. God has not forsaken you. He's not gone anywhere. God's not moved. He's still right there. When we lose communications with God, we're the ones that's moved, not God. We have that wonderful assurance that even though we may turn our backs on God, He will never ever turn His back on us. For, you see, it is Godlike, it is natural for God to act in love. The Bible tells us that God is love. God is love! God cannot but love you and me. Just like light cannot but shine in a dark room. You see, Jesus said, "I am the light of the world and whoever follows me will not walk in darkness." He is the light of the world. We have that wonderful assurance that God is faithful to his word. And, you know, God will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you can bear. The Bible tells us that He's not going to let us be tempted beyond what we can hold up against.

God knows you. He knows each every one of us individually. God knows you so well that He calls you by your first name. He knows your weaknesses. He knows your strengths. He knows what you can bear. No one should ever have the thought that God will bring them to a problem, a temptation, a worry, a concern that's beyond our ability. Because, you see, if God brings us to a problem, He's going to bring us through the problem. God will not allow you to be tempted more than you can ... I remember my mom say many, many times that God will not put more on us than we can bear. And it is so true. God will bring you through it. Temptation in our lives is certain. The Bible tells us that it's not if we are going to be tempted, but when we'll be tempted, because you can be sure that we'll be tempted in this life. Problems are sure to come. The question is "Are we ready?"

Just like the song, God will make a way. God will make a way – In 2nd Timothy, Chapter 2, verse 22, Paul was writing to this young man and Paul said “That we are to flee. Paul was saying to Timothy and all of us today that we are to flee the evil desires of our youth. And we are to pursue righteousness. We are to pursue love. We are to pursue faith and peace along with those who call upon the Lord with a pure heart.

You know sometimes running away from our problems, running away from our temptations, running away from something that sometimes people think is the cowardly way of acting. The wise people, Christians, people that know Jesus Christ, they realize that removing themselves from temptations, physically, is often times the most courageous thing that they can do. That’s what Paul was saying to Timothy. We have to run away, flee from those things that cause you harm. Flee from those things that might put you in harm’s way. The Bible tells us that God will provide us a way. God will make a way where there seems to be no way. God will make a way in ways that we don’t even know about, that we don’t even see.

The Bible tells us that His ways are different from our ways. We don’t understand them, but He will make a way for me and for you. Ephesians 6:17 tells us that we are to take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit and that is the Word of God. That’s what Jesus is telling us to do. That we are to take His words and take the Word of God and use that. As the choir sometimes sings that song “using the Bible as a roadmap,” that’s what we are to do. We are to use the Bible, the Word of God as our rulebook. God will help you to stand up under temptations.

You see, the moment you decide to put your trust in God, He will infuse his Spirit in you. So that the Apostle Paul also said in Phillipians 4, verse 11. He says there “I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.” Think about that. That is a wonderful message that Paul is saying. I can do all things through Him who strengthens me. Sometimes we may think that we can’t do all things, but when we come to the temptations and the trials and the worries and the problems that we have in life, all we have to do is ask. Ask Jesus. Ask God to strengthen you, to help you, for you see, He will help you get through your problems with peace in your heart.

I read a story about a mountain climber who decided to climb Mt. Everest alone. Just before he was to get to the top of the mountain, it became very, very dark. And all of a sudden as he was trying to get settled, he lost his footing and he began falling. Fortunately, the rope stopped him. As this man was dangling there in mid air, his whole life flashed before him. And as he was hanging there not knowing where he was and couldn’t see, he cried out “God, help me!” And then he heard a very quiet, compassionate, loving inner voice say to him, “Do you really want me to help you?” The climber said, “Yes, God, I need your help!” “Do you really believe I can help you?” And the climber said, “Yes, God, I believe that You can help me!” So, this quiet voice then said, “Then, cut the rope.”

In the morning, rescuers found this man still clutching, frozen to the rope, but he was only a few feet away from solid ground. You see, God will and can make a way for us. All we have to do is do what it tells us in Proverbs. It says, trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding. In all ways, acknowledge Him and He will show you the way. He will show you the way. You see, Jesus tells us also in I Peter, Jesus says that all we have to do is to cast all of our cares upon Him for He cares for us. So that’s what God is saying to us. God is saying, “Cut the rope!” Cut the rope! He will show you the way, but first, we have to put our trust, our faith, our hope in Him for He will show us the way.

Let us pray: Father, Almighty God, we thank you, God, for providing a way for us. We thank you, God, for always being there for us and always showing us the way. Helps us God, help us to “cut the rope” so that we can put our faith in You. In Jesus’ name we pray, AMEN.