

**TEXT: 6<sup>th</sup> Petition (NIV84)**

And lead us not into temptation, Matthew 6:13a

And lead us not into temptation. Luke 11:4

**Prayer of the Day:**

God, You tempt no one to sin, so we pray that You would guard and keep us so that the devil, the world, and our own 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, trusting in You alone, we may finally overcome them and win the victory; through Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

**Verse of the Day: The Sixth Petition**

Lead us not into temptation.

*What does this mean?*

God surely tempts no one to sin, but we pray in this petition that God would guard and keep us, so that the devil, the world, and our flesh may not deceive us or lead us into false belief, despair, and other great and shameful sins; and though we are tempted by them, we pray that we may overcome and win the victory.

**Sermon:**

There is a reason they put candy bars in the checkout line. There is a reason that McDonalds hamburgers always look so much better on the television screen or even the pictures over the counter than they do coming out of the bag after you have bought them. There is a reason advertisements for various things will run on certain shows knowing that certain people tend to be watching. There is even a reason that the people in commercials all seem to be in great shape and really happy when a company or organization is trying to sell or persuade you.

It's temptation, and like it or not. It works. So companies tempt you with enticing ads so that you crave their product. They make it look as appealing as they possibly can so that run out and buy it. And while these little temptations are relatively benign and we might argue don't even always amount to sin, there is another one who uses very similar tactics with far different results.

Our first lesson introduced him to us. He is the father of temptation, slyly slithering up to Eve. The temptation was simple, God was holding out on her. She would be better off if she did things differently than God had said. Surely they knew better. God was not going to punish her, she would not die. Like the candy bar at the checkout aisle, it looked good. What harm could it do. Just a bite!

Unfortunately, God had not lied. The soul immediately went from alive and vibrant, perfect and holy, to lost and condemned, dead in trespasses and sins. Far worse than the added calories of the candy bar was the added aspect of sin which multiplied our foes. Satan's job became easier as the world was plunged into decay and what was created in the image of God was now twisted and changed into the image of sinful parents, one generation after another.

Now fast forward through centuries of time. And the fifth petition comes before the sixth. We are defeated before we start as our enemy prowls around like a roaring lion looking for us, tempting us with ever-increasing prosperity.

To much? Brothers and sisters, satans tactics have not changed. You know how easy it is for him to entice you to sin. Revenge always looks as sweet as the fruit of the garden until it rots with its hatred. Lust lusters with the promise of enjoyment until it entangles and breaks hearts and homes. Greed promises success and locks us made scramble for more. And then who do we blame? We pretend it is God who has caused our trouble and toil when the exact opposite is true.

Ah , but God sets us straight in the words of James, <sup>13</sup> *When tempted, no one should say, "God is tempting me." For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone;* <sup>14</sup> *but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed.* <sup>15</sup> *Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.*

No wonder Jesus would have us pray, *"Lead us not into temptation."* And Luther explains, *"God surely tempts no one to sin, but we pray in this petition that God would guard and keep us, so that the devil, the world, and our flesh may not deceive us or lead us into false belief, despair, and other great and shameful sins; and though we are tempted by them, we pray that we may overcome and win the victory."*

Oh fellow Christians, is there any hope? How are we to overcome and win the victory of which Luther speaks? The Gospel Lesson supplies our answer. There we heard of one, just one person who stood against the temptations of the devil and overcame everyone. Jesus rebuffs one temptation after another and this not to shame us for our failure. Far from it! He does it that we might claim His righteousness. He allows us to see it in the pages of His Word, not so that we know just how miserably we fail but just how wonderfully He has supplied us with the victory and so that we might see just how easy it can be to send the devil packing. Jesus doesn't rely on his omnipotence, His undefeatable power as God. He simply relies on the very Word He has given us.

Brothers and sisters, it is because of the cross that our foes have been overcome. As Jesus' holy precious blood buys us back from our slavery to their whims and fancies, as Christ's forgiveness sets us free, their power over us is broken forever. Because it is, you can say "no" to temptation, no to sin, even as satan dangles it before your eyes and does all he can to make it look pleasing and beneficial.

And for all the times we fail. Yes, for all the times we fall for the temptations of the evil one, the cross of Jesus beckons in forgiveness and refreshes our resolve to fight in the knowledge that God will guard and keep us, yes, trusting in Him alone, we will finally overcome and win the eternal victory already secured and assured in the life death and resurrection of Jesus.

Dear friends, there is a reason that they put candy bars in the checkout aisles and make everything look as pleasing and palatable as they can ... at least on TV. But far more dangerous than a few extra calories and a slightly lighter pocketbook are the results of the evil foes who would drag us away from our Father in heaven, away from the forgiveness and grace won and secured by our Savior Jesus. Because we are too weak to accomplish it on our own, Jesus directs us to raise our voices in prayer knowing the victory is already ours, We ask our Father to strengthen and protect us. Yes, Lead us not into temptation ... for only with God beside us shall we triumph over temptation. Amen