

Scripture

¹² **Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.** ¹³**Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone.** ¹⁴**But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed.** ¹⁵**Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death.**

Commentary

'**Blessed is the man**' is showing blessings now upon this person, at this present time. '**Who endures temptation**' is an ongoing issue, not a problem dealt with only one time. His continued effort to endure, brought by his own will, as buoyed by God, is his own responsibility after Salvation. (**Phil 2:12**) He is blessed now, and he will enjoy too the reward when the Savior grants him his Crown of Life. The report is given in his ability to persevere; because it is fueled by God above, it is an evidence of his relationship with God in action. And in that God's work through Jesus is seen playing out in the believer's life, one can also expect Jesus to be true to the greater promise of Eternal Life with Him one day. Salvation is free, but our Sanctification, that Perfection of us in our faith by our Lord so we may one day be presented to God as Christ's Bride, takes work on our part. (**James 2:26**) This work is pushed onward by Christ, and it still is our responsibility to respond with the soft and obedient heart placed in us. (**2 Cor 3:3**) On that Last Day the fruitful will be approved.

'**He will receive the Crown of Life which the Lord has promised**' – The same prize Paul speaks of in (**1 Cor 9:25**). This is a token of victory, one worn in sweet tears, through which the Saint will look back on the trials of this life for only but a moment, instead now glad for receiving from the Lord what He has promised. Our Salvation, as of now, is still yet a promise of the Deliverance to come on the Judgment Day, though we still be sinners now in this flesh. (**Rom 5:8-9**) But it is the most trustworthy Promise from our Creator, one we can no doubt count on. The whole of a Christian's life and hopes are anchored on this one thing. It is of utmost value, and the Crown of Life represents that Promise fulfilled. Does anyone know by the sight of his eyes that even Jesus exists? Let alone that He will keep His promises? Have any of us seen the LORD descend on Sinai? Yet what believer in our Lord can deny the reality of Jesus on his own heart and in his own life? This comes from a relationship, through faith, given by God alone, in which we are called to endure. Though we have not yet stood before the Lord to receive our Prize, in faith, in one heart, in our mind's eye, we can look forward to this day.

'**Which the Lord has promised to those who love Him**' – There is one defining factor given by our Lord as to who will receive the Crown. There is no mention of works, of knowledge of the Word, of Holiness or Piety, but instead the overall governing factor under which all of the above are borne. (**Matt 22:36-38**) Love for Him is exemplified in our desires to live obediently under His rule of Love, and in doing so, these fruits should be expected. (**Eph 4:29-30**) All the Saints, both now and then Glorified, are certainly a stew of very different souls, but the one true binding factor which will be seen and is seen in the Saint, is a working Love of our Jesus, even on to death. Be bold, be sure, be ever counting on His Promise and live in abandon of all things of lesser value than His saving Love. (**Matt 13:45-46**)

Looking back to '**when he has been approved**', notice this is in the future, not now. Our Lord and God, in our Salvation, has entered into a promise, a covenant with each of the Elect. He promises to take us in and begin our Sanctification in the preparation of our presentation to the Father, after we have been approved and shown Holy in the Righteousness imparted to us in Christ. Why does Paul often write the theme of 'working out your Salvation'? Because he knew it was always best to be in full submission to the Lord's Spirit, in His Will, under the care of our Perfect Counselor. Anything less would risk impeding the Saving work of the Spirit. Instead, recognize what God has promised to do for us as His Children in Jesus' name, and do everything you can to keep on the yoke, to keep your neck from being stiff, to keep from frustrating the Holy Spirit. (**Eph 4:29-30**) This is our responsibility in the training of this life.

'**Let no one say when he is tempted**' illustrates a number of things, but first that we will be tempted, not we may be tempted. Every day as we are tempted, we must recognize the consequences of our reaction. Remembering that the Lord always gives us an alternative to choosing sin, our response will either bring about Glory to God or punishment for our sin upon the shoulders of Our Lord Jesus at the Cross.

'**Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He tempt anyone.**' Our Father, His Son, and His Spirit are Holy. In this utmost sense it is not possible for any stain to be upon Him. As a Holy God, He is above all things even and including the despicable perversion of evil. And as so, nor does He taint Himself in it. It has been said that the Devil is God's Devil, and this must be true. Satan, as an instrument of God, is the only one worthy of the dire title of the Murderer, in as it was he who enticed Eve to put asunder mankind's relationship with the Creator. Recognize the difference between trials and temptations, in their source, function, and intent. God is the Author of our trials in order to exercise us in our Sanctification; Satan is the author of temptation to try to impede our growth, 'hurt' God, spoil and taint the fruit, and for the unsaved increase and ensure their torment in damnation. In function, the trials usually come from the circumstances around us, in this theatre God has created as our proving grounds. Trials will have benefit if we embrace them properly, employing our faith in God as we face them. Temptation is an

excitation of the seed of evil in us from before we were reconciled. The flesh is capable of evil now, but will later be shed in exchange for our Glorified body, free of this sin, to match our perfect Spirit given us by the Lord as His own. **(2 Cor 5:5-6)** Temptation is Satan's mechanism to incite rebellion against God – the same filth he wallows in. And the intent should be clear in light of from who or Who these come – God, being Just, Love, Righteous, and Holy can only bear these same fruits. Likewise, Satan, being rebellious, hateful, fallen, vengeful, defeated, and scorned can also only bear likewise. **(Matt 12:33)**

Everyone who sins ultimately has to look no further than himself to blame. **(Matt 15:19)** The very seed from which sin begins comes from within our evil hearts. **(Rom 5:12)** Satan has never physically forced anyone, including Eve, to commit the act of rebellion. His means are to 'entice' and convince us to act on our depraved desires, and by any means possible. He is the deceiver, the destroyer, the liar. **(Jn 8:44, Rev 12:9)** Under a fully Sovereign God, he too has been brought into place in God's plan with a purpose, not as an afterthought or mistake. He is our Lord's fool in the end, and for the sake of God's Glory and to the end of separating the Goats from the Sheep, he will be allowed to remain until God's fullness of His time is realized.

Our choice to follow Satan's prompting is the germination of our evil desires. These desires realized follow through to the sin itself. The culmination of our life of sin ultimately brings about the consequence of spiritual death. **(Rom 6:23)** Those sinners not chosen will suffer the torment of Hell in the separation from God. Even now as they live, though they may not realize it, they too enjoy the world's benefit of God's presence. **(Matt 5:45)** The Elect, also committing sin, must see their spiritual death and separation from God realized on the Cross. It is the unfathomable Sacrifice and Gift of our Savior which makes this possible and ushers us into the presence of God, fully reconciled and without debt. Thus so we may fail to recognize our rightful gratefulness to our Lord for His immeasurable show of Love towards us, even as we were His enemy at the time. This gratitude must show forth in the believer's life. For if it doesn't, it can only be for a lack of understanding of what has taken place.

Key Summary

Stay the course, endure the temptations and trials which will face you for the rest of your life as a Christian.

Understand the Author of your trials and the author of your temptations, all while remembering the consequences for your choices in them.

Guard against sin, looking forward in your Walk, your growth ultimately leading up to receiving your Crown of Life from our Savior's hand.

Study Questions

Why is this man who endures blessed?

What awaits him in being 'approved'?

What does the Lord's promise include and mean?

What is the chain of progression in sin?

Philippians 2:12

¹² Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling;

James 2:26

²⁶ For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.

2 Corinthians 3:3

³ Clearly you are an epistle of Christ, ministered by us, written not with ink but by the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of flesh, that is, of the heart.

1 Corinthians 9:25

²⁵ And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown.

Romans 5:8-9

⁸ But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. ⁹ Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him.

Matthew 22:36-38

³⁶ "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?"

³⁷ Jesus said to him, ""You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind." ³⁸ This is the first and great commandment.

Ephesians 5:8-10

⁸ For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light ⁹ (for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth), ¹⁰ finding out what is acceptable to the Lord.

Matthew 13:45-46

⁴⁵ "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking beautiful pearls, ⁴⁶ who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had and bought it.

Ephesians 4:29-30

²⁹ Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers. ³⁰ And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

2 Corinthians 5:5-6

⁵ Now He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who also has given us the Spirit as a guarantee.

⁶ So we are always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord.

Matthew 12:33

³³ "Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or else make the tree bad and its fruit bad; for a tree is known by its fruit.

Matthew 15:19

¹⁹ For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies.

Romans 5:12

¹² Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned

John 8:44

⁴⁴ You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it.

Revelation 12:9

⁹ So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

Romans 6:23

²³ For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Matthew 5:45

⁴⁵ that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.