

One of the great temptations in my life is the donut. I love donuts. My absolute favorite donut is a Boston cream pie. But any doughnut that has a nice custard for filling is going to work for me. Honestly I'm tempted by pretty much all donuts. I don't discriminate. I am just as tempted by the \$12 gourmet, extravagant doughnut as I am by the gas station donut that has probably been sitting out there for two days. Every time I drive by a donut store I want to pull in. Every time I walk by the donut section I want to grab it. And my children know this about me so whenever I ask if they wanna come with me to Walmart, their first question is are we gonna get a doughnut?

All of us, face temptations. Some of them are minor or food related like my temptation with donuts. But most of the time the temptations that we face in our lives are much more serious and much more grave. We watch a news story and are tempted to despair and doubt God rule over the world. Someone sins against us and we're tempted to respond back in a sinful way. Or you're scrolling through your phone or on your computer and an image pops up that tempt you to lust after someone made the image of God.

I don't know what your temptation is. I don't know what temptation you find the hardest to escape. But The reality is every single one of us have Temptations. Especially as Christians we have Temptations things tempt us to walk away from Jesus.

This morning, Jesus is going to show us how we can escape temptation. Jesus is going to give us a model of how we can avoid falling into temptation.

Jesus will show us how we can come out the other side.  
Turn in your Bible to Luke 22:39-65.

The story of Jesus praying in the garden.

The story of Peter denying Christ three different times.

Jesus being betrayed by Judas and arrested.

The disciples trying to resit.

And the story of Christ being beaten and mocked after his arrest.

Al of these stories are not just randomly chosen.

They are not just meant to let us know what happened when Jesus was arrested and executed for our salvation on the cross.

Luke has arranged and written them this way on purpose.

Luke has pointed out particular details and ignored other ones to make one point.

We only have one point this morning.

**We can escape temptation through prayer.**

Everything that we will see in these stories here is going to show us this.

Let us dive in and see.

Verse 39, **"And he came out and went, as was his custom, to the Mount of Olives, and the disciples followed him. 40 And when he came to the place, he said to them, "Pray that you may not enter into temptation."**

So Jesus heads to the Mount of Olives.

And his custom does not seem to be praying in this particular place.

His custom seems to be that He does repeatedly go out to pray.

His custom is to periodically remove Himself from the crowds.

And to go to a quiet place, often out in nature and pray.

He takes His disciples with Him.

But He takes intentional time to pray alone.

And so, when Jesus does this before He leaves, He tells them to pray

They need to start praying now and tonight, so that when temptation comes in the morning, they won't fail.

If they want to escape the temptation to sin, it is to pray.

And this is what Jesus does himself in verse 41, **"And he withdrew from them about a stone's throw, and knelt down and prayed,"**

Jesus knows He's about to enter temptation.

So goes and He prays.

Jesus is praying so that he can escape temptation.

We can see first that he does this by withdrawing.

He goes away from the disciples to pray on his own.

Because we need to pray for each other,  
We should pray for each other.  
We can often feel and tell when others pray for us.  
But there are some moments when the prayers of others are not enough.  
When you are being tempted to sin, you need to pray.  
You can't just hope I pray for you.

Remember Jesus told Peter last week that He was praying for him.  
But Peter needs to be praying himself.  
If Peter does not pray, he will not escape it.

We get a glimpse of Jesus prayer in 42, **"saying, "Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done."**

The cup is symbolic of judgment and punishment throughout the Old Testament.

So Jesus is praying and asking that God would keep him from having to endure the judgement

And it's not because Jesus doesn't want to go through with it.

It is not because God is holding Jesus at gunpoint and forcing him to do this.

Jesus knows that everything he is about face is going to be some of his greatest temptation since the wilderness.

This is when everything is going to be the hardest.

Jesus end his prayer saying that he's willing to submit to God.

He's willing to trust in God.

That, even if things aren't gonna go the way to be the easiest.

Jesus is following the will of the Trinity.

This is a very short prayer.

It's only two sentences.

That's probably not all that Jesus prayed.

Jesus probably prayed for hours and prayed for a long time.  
It seems like he prayed long enough that the disciples fell asleep.  
I doubt He said only these two things over and over again.  
But maybe He did.  
So this is just kind of a summary of his prayer for us.

Which means, that our prayers to escape temptation need to be long too.  
It is not just enough to pray once and move on.  
We need to keep praying over and over again.  
Prayer is not a checklist it is an attitude.  
We can't just say something once and move on.  
Christ gives us an example here of repeatedly praying.  
We probably need to pray more than we think we need.

Verse 43, **"And there appeared to him an angel from heaven, strengthening him."**

An angel appears and strengthens Jesus.  
This happens because of Jesus's prayer.  
Because Jesus has been praying, because Jesus is from praying that he won't be tempted. God send an angel to strengthen him before the moment comes.

But he doesn't stop praying he keeps going in verse 44, **"And being in agony he prayed more earnestly; and his sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground."**

Even though he is in agony, he prays more earnestly.  
Jesus doesn't stop praying just because God helps a little bit.  
Jesus doesn't stop praying after the angel strengthening him.  
He prayed even more earnestly.  
He continues to pray.  
Even though He is sweating mightily.  
Even though he's sweating so much that either blood is coming out of him or that it almost seems like blood is coming out of him.  
Jesus keeps praying.

Verse 45 we find out what the disciples have been doing.

**"And when he rose from prayer, he came to the disciples and found them sleeping for sorrow,"**

Do you see that they fall asleep.

And actually tell us that they are falling into their sorrow or into their grief. It's contrasting what Jesus has been doing in the garden, and what the disciples have been doing.

The disciples have been feeling some of the same anxiety and worry that Jesus has.

But while Jesus pressed into prayer, they fell asleep.

And while Jesus is standing and encouraged having been strengthened, the disciples have fallen down and let their grief overcome them.

Now they probably prayed a little.

I don't think they completely ignored Christ.

I am sure they started praying.

They may have even prayed to escape temptation once or twice.

But it was not enough.

Verse 46, **"and he said to them, "Why are you sleeping? Rise and pray that you may not enter into temptation."**

Jesus repeats his command.

If Jesus tells you something twice, it's got to be really important.

And Jesus is rebuking them, Temptations you need to pray

But they haven't been.

And now it's gonna be too late.

They did not pray enough.

They should have prayed longer.

But now it is too late.

Temptation is here.

Verse 47, **"While he was still speaking, there came a crowd, and the man called Judas, one of the twelve, was leading them. He drew near to Jesus to kiss him,"**

Right, as Jesus is telling them again that they need to pray to avoid temptation, temptation strolls in.

Judas and the Romans are here to arrest Jesus.

Judas comes right up to Jesus to kiss him on the cheek,  
so they know who the right person to arrest is.

There is some sad irony in this act.

It's almost like Judas is pretending he's not the one who's betraying Jesus if no one will notice.

This moment of feigned innocence is wicked.

Verse 48, **"but Jesus said to him, "Judas, would you betray the Son of Man with a kiss?"**

What are the things that happens here is Jesus responded to the temptation rightly.

Let me ask you, what would you have wanted to say to Judas?

What would you want to say to someone that you love?

Who has been with you for years?

Who is now betraying you and going to have your killed?

Because of their greed?

I think all of us would have some things to say.

We would probably want to say some things we wouldn't say in church.

But that isn't what Jesus does

Because Jesus has been praying, and He has prepared for this moment

And Jesus just asks Judas a question.

Jesus asked you if this is how He wants to do it?

If Judas will continue pretend to be a follower of Jesus, instead of just admitting who he is.

Jesus can respond that way in this moment because he has been preparing and praying for it.

Jesus responds rightly the disciples respond wrongly in verse 49

**"And when those who were around him saw what would follow, they said, 'Lord, shall we strike with the sword?'"**

Suddenly the disciples of lots of energy.

They didn't have energy to pray.

They didn't have the ability to go to God and ask for help.

But now they're ready to do things on their own strength.

They see the soldiers with their sword and they've been counting.

They know they got two swords, and they are ready to fight

They have not been paying attention at all.

Because they've not been praying before this moment, they're gonna fail right away.

Verse 50, **"And one of them struck the servant of the high priest and cut off his right ear."**

One of them starts to fight.

And he chops off the ear of one of the high priest servants.

There's kind of dark comedy in this moment

This is how prepared they are for temptation that they respond with violence.

And they respond with violence before Jesus can tell them no.

Now they can't wait to act and they respond wrongly.

And they're fighting us so ineffective, they chopped off somebody's ear.

Not even a soldier or somebody that they're supposed to fight, but just a lonely servant.

Verse 51, **"But Jesus said, 'No more of this!' And he touched his ear and healed him."**

Jesus rebuke them, and says, knock it off.

Because they don't understand that Jesus is ready and prepared to go to his death.

The kingdom of God will not come through the sword.

Jesus has not called His disciples to violence.

Jesus has rebuked them every time they tried to use it in the past.  
Like when they wanted to call down fire from heaven.  
Redemption will come through violence.  
It is not the violence Jesus does through the sword.  
But violence done to Christ on the cross.

And then Jesus heals the man  
This is part of the beauty of Jesus.  
Even when Jesus is being betrayed by those people he cared about.  
Ignored by the disciples, who claimed to be following him.  
Heading into the most difficult hour of his existence,  
    he takes time to heal the people who are going to kill him.  
That is love and that is grace.  
In the darkest moment, Jesus heals.  
He shows grace even to his enemies.  
And Jesus responds this way in the moment because he was ready.  
He had been praying.

Verse 52, **"Then Jesus said to the chief priests and officers of the temple and elders, who had come out against him, "Have you come out as against a robber, with swords and clubs?"**

Jesus ask more questions.  
And Jesus is questions are rebuke, but they're not out of anger.  
He wants to know what crime is committed did they come at him as he has been leading a revolt in a violent uprising.  
Because Jesus has not been leading a violent uprising, if anything he has been leading a violent healing.

Verse 53, **"When I was with you day after day in the temple, you did not lay hands on me. But this is your hour, and the power of darkness."**

They only came now because its hidden and secret.  
They did not come when Jesus was teaching publicly every day.  
They never laid hands on Jesus where everyone was watching.  
They were too afraid of the crowds before.



Because deep down they know this is wrong.  
They know who Jesus is, but they don't want to admit it.  
And they also can only come now, because now Jesus is allowing it to happen.  
They only do so in darkness and when Christ allows.

Verse 54, **"Then they seized him and led him away, bringing him into the high priest's house, and Peter was following at a distance."**

They take Jesus and they lead him away under arrest.  
And now the moment comes for Peter's temptation.  
We get to see how Peter will handle his moment.  
He hasn't done great so far.  
And Jesus already warned him that he's going to fail three times.  
Peter really should've been praying but he didn't.

Verse 55, **"And when they had kindled a fire in the middle of the courtyard and sat down together, Peter sat down among them."**

There's a group of people gathered outside,  
Peter comes and sits down at the fire next to a group of people.

Verse 56, **"Then a servant girl, seeing him as he sat in the light and looking closely at him, said, 'This man also was with him.'"**

The serving girl catches a glimpse of Peter and thinks that he looks familiar.  
It also seems like Peter is trying to avoid the light.  
He is cold so he is by the fire.  
But he is trying to hide his face.  
But she looks closer and notices he was with Jesus.

Verse 57, **"But he denied it, saying, 'Woman, I do not know him.'"**

Peter lies and denies it  
Peter says he doesn't even know Jesus  
This is the first time Peter will deny even knowing Jesus.

Verse 58, **"And a little later someone else saw him and said, 'You also are one of them.' But Peter said, 'Man, I am not.'"**

Somebody else sees them and asks and says that all you're one of Jesus is disciples.

And again, Peter denies it.

Verse 59, **"And after an interval of about an hour still another insisted, saying, 'Certainly this man also was with him, for he too is a Galilean.'"**

An hour goes by

In another person, insist that now man, you gotta be lying, you have to have been with Jesus.

He says that you're Galilean.

You're from the same region as Jesus.

Verse 60, **"But Peter said, 'Man, I do not know what you are talking about.'"**

This is not just Peter denied that he knows Jesus now.

This is Peter denying his own hometown.

This is Peter lying about where he's from.

He pretends that he isn't even from Galilee

Three times Peter had a chance to be identified with Jesus and three times he fails.

The disciples weren't arrested, only Jesus.

The man who just last night was saying that he's willing to go to jail

Last night he was willing to die,

But now when Jesus has been arrested, says he doesn't even know him.

Look what happens in the rest of verse 60, **"And immediately, while he was still speaking, the rooster crowed."**

While Peter is lying

While Peter is failing in a temptation, the rooster crows

Verse 61, **"And the Lord turned and looked at Peter. And Peter remembered the saying of the Lord, how he had said to him, "Before the rooster crows today, you will deny me three times."**

That very moment, Peter remembers that Jesus told him.

Three times he would deny Jesus.

Three times before the rooster crows.

And it crows right when Peter fails for the third time.

He did not pray, and he failed.

It is at that moment, Jesus looks at Peter.

Luke is the only one who gives us this detail.

Luke is the only gospel writer who tells us that Peter's denial of Jesus happens when Jesus is nearby

It seems like it is even happening within earshot of Jesus

While Jesus is there, Peter denies him three times.

And on the third time when the rooster crows,

Jesus looks at him.

And Peter look back at Jesus.

They lock eyes.

I want you to imagine what look Jesus was giving Peter.

It doesn't tell us we weren't there.

But the scene is so filled with drama that you can picture it.

Do you think Jesus was giving Peter a look of I told you so?

Do you think Jesus was giving Peter a look like he was so disappointed?

Do you think Jesus was giving Peter a look of disgust that he would do such a thing?

We don't know, but I really doubt that Jesus would've given him a look like any of that.

After all, it's not like Jesus is surprised, he knew this would happen.

And Jesus told Peter last week that he was praying for him that this wouldn't happen

And Jesus tried to encourage Peter to pray his own that this wouldn't happen

I think Jesus looked at him with love.

The same way he always has.

The same look of love Jesus has given Peter each time he has failed.

I think that when Jesus and Peter locked eyes, Peter wasn't overcome with emotion and shame because Jesus was making him feel bad.

Jesus showed Peter grace even in that moment.

I love what theologian John Calvin tell us. He thinks Peter had to meet Christ's eyes so that he could come to himself again.

When Christ looked at Peter, the rays of grace could penetrate his heart.

He needed to look at Jesus again to remember who he was.

He needs to remember who Jesus was.

He needed to remember not just that Jesus warned him.

He needed to remember that Jesus had hope for his restoration.

And even though he was pretty bad that Jesus still loved him.

And verse 62, **"And he went out and wept bitterly."**

Peter goes away crying

It ends on a somber note.

And the reality is it did not have to be this way

You see Jesus was weeping earlier in the garden when he prayed.

And because Jesus was weeping, then he isn't weeping now.

But because Peter was unwilling to weep in the garden,

he's now going to weep in the temptation

Jesus wept bitterly and with sorrow in prayer.

Peter weeps bitterly and with sorrow in failure.

Peter fails because he didn't pray.

Jesus's words to Peter were not just a prediction of the future to show him what was going to be .

They were a warning.

Because throughout the Bible, when the prophets proclaim warnings of judgment, they're always in an escape in a relenting  
Peter could've escape judgment if he would've prayed but he doesn't .  
And so Peter fails.

When you check verse 63 Jesus again face temptation.

**"Now the men who were holding Jesus in custody were mocking him as they beat him."**

Before the trial of Jesus is going to begin, they mock him.

They are beating him.

As they beat him they taunt him.

It would have been a sad sight to watch.

**"They also blindfolded him and kept asking him, "Prophecy! Who is it that struck you?"**

They blindfold him and tell him to prophesy if he really is a prophet, and if he really is the Messiah.

If he was, then he would know who hits him.

**"And they said many other things against him, blaspheming him."**

What do you think those things were?

I can't imagine they were good.

I can't imagine they were appropriate.

They were probably vulgar.

They were probably offensive.

They were definitely blasphemous.

Here are men, blaspheming against our God.

Cursing Him, beating Him, mocking Him.

But what does Jesus say?

Jesus doesn't deny anything.

Jesus doesn't prophesy their deaths.

After all, Jesus knows every single cell in their body.

Jesus could tell them how many hairs are on their heads.  
But Jesus doesn't do any of that.  
Jesus silently suffers and endures his temptation .  
Jesus is held up as the model here for us.

When we enter the much smaller temptations that we are going to face,  
we had better pray.  
To pray to follow Jesus.  
We can escape temptation through prayer.  
Here's what I'm not saying with prayer.  
I am not saying that prayer is like a magic escape hatch.  
That if you pray, and if you just say the right words, then you will always be  
able to escape temptation.

That isn't how God works.  
That isn't how sin works.  
That isn't how we work.  
It is not a magic trick.

I don't want you to get the wrong idea.  
What I am trying to say, is this, if you don't pray, when you are tempted,  
you are way more likely to give into temptation.

And I've noticed this in my own life.  
When I feel the temptations bubbling up.  
When I'm stuck between the thing that I know that I should do but I don't  
want to do and the thing that I want to do but I know that I shouldn't do.  
When I am wrestling in the moment, I often know that I should pray for  
God to help me escape.

BUT

The times that I do not pray.  
The times I try to struggle with the temptation on my own.  
Those are always the times I fail.  
I have already made my decision.

And in that moment my refusal to pray shows I've already given into temptation.

My body and my mind just has to catch up with what my heart is already decided.

So this is what I mean when I say the prayers how we escape it.

Prayer is throwing up your hands and begging for Jesus to pull you out of the temptation.

Prayer is acknowledging that you don't have the strength to do it.

We have to remember the gospel.

The message of Jesus is that you cannot save yourself.

We need Him.

Not just to be saved and gain eternal life.

We need Him again and again to escape temptation.

The reality is we are going to fail in temptation.

We may pray to escape at right moments.

We may have good days where we do not fall into sin.

But we will all have moments when we do sin.

Because we cannot avoid it.

But the gospel reminds us that Jesus always did.

Jesus never failed.

Jesus always prayed before.

Jesus was the perfect and sinless lamb.

Yet, despite his perfection he was numbered among the transgressors.

That does not just mean that he was considered a sinner by those in power.

It means that He chose to become one of us.

Jesus took our sins upon His shoulders.

He took our sins and He nailed them to the cross.

He became what we are so that we could become like He is.

Our hope for deliverance from sin is Jesus.

None of us have the ability to save ourselves.

We cannot make ourselves righteous enough to be accepted by God.

We cannot fix what is wrong with ourselves with our hearts.

We cannot put ourselves together.

We can't through our own will avoid temptation like we should.

And we have to be able to admit that.

And prayer is the first step of admitting that we need God's help.

Prayer is acknowledging your dependence on Jesus.

Praying in the midst of temptation, acknowledges that you don't want to do it, but you don't know how to not do it.

Prayer is a desperate for help.

When you find yourself tempted, pray.

When you find yourself struggling, pray, and call out to God.

And you know that you're about to go into some situation where you are going to be tempted you need to pray before you get there.

Pray before you go into that meeting.

Pray before you see that person.

Pray before you are in that situation.

Don't fall asleep, pray. Because temptation is coming.

But remember the gospel.

You are going to fail.

Like Peter we will deny Christ with our words and how we live.

But Jesus is looking at you with love.

Jesus hung and died on the cross for you despite your failures.

He loves you.

There is salvation, forgiveness, and grace for all who ask.

Look into the eyes of Jesus.

There you will find all you have ever needed.