

## The Great Leading Temptations

This morning what I'd like for us to think about is stopping sin before it becomes sin, or when it's in the temptation stage; and remember, there is no sin in being tempted, but in yielding to it. That's an important point we want to keep in mind, otherwise we'll feel defeated at every turn and not even try to be an overcomer. In **Hebrews 4:15** we're told that Jesus was tempted in all points such as we are, yet without sin, and so there is hope for every tempted soul to gain the victory over temptation, but here's the caveat, as long as we don't purposely place ourselves in the way of temptation. This Jesus did not do, and neither should we. In other words, if I've had a problem with alcohol in the past, it would not be wise for me to go into a bar to see if I could resist. God does not promise to deliver us if we deliberately go where temptation will be found. If you have a weak point in your character and you do everything you can to avoid temptation, then the Holy Spirit can give you a backbone to resist and you will be victorious in the greatest battle that has ever been fought, the battle with self, but when we go where we shouldn't, and each one of us knows in our hearts where that is, then Satan will win every time, and with each defeat we will get weaker and weaker until the devil will be able to lead us around by the nose whenever he wants.

In the Spirit of Prophecy we're told that there are three great leading temptations, and this is backed up by the Bible, as we'll see. The first great temptation is on, you guessed it, the point of appetite, the second presumption, and the third is love of the world, and I'd like to begin by reading a short section out of ***Testimonies for the Church, volume 4, pages 44, 45***. This is really important, so please listen carefully. Here's what it says, "In the wilderness of temptation Christ met the great leading temptations that would assail man. There He encountered, singlehanded, the wily, subtle foe, and overcame him. **(Now listen friends, Jesus did it singlehandedly, but we cannot, so don't try, if you do you'll only meet with failure. We need help from on high, and it's available to all who obey what they already know and ask for help. Acts 5:32 says the Holy Spirit will be given to those who obey)** The first great temptation was upon appetite; the second, presumption; the third, love of the world. Satan has overcome his millions by tempting them to the indulgence of appetite. Through the gratification of the taste, the nervous system becomes excited and the brain power enfeebled, making it impossible to think calmly or rationally. **(You wonder why most people find it so difficult and even impossible to overcome sin? To a large extent it's because of what they're putting in their mouth. And think of this, how can our law makers make just and fair laws if they can't think calmly or rationally? And could this have something to do with a coming Sunday law? I have no doubt)** The mind is unbalanced. Its higher, nobler faculties are perverted to serve animal lust, and the sacred, eternal interests are not regarded. When this object is

gained **(or when he has succeeded in the area of appetite)**, Satan can come with his two other leading temptations and find ready access. **(So, do you see how important appetite is and how it's the entering wedge for the commission of nearly every sin? In *Counsels on Diet and Foods*, page 59 we're told that if we could overcome appetite we would be able to overcome every other temptation)** His **(Satan's)** manifold temptations **(or we could say every other temptation known to exist)** grow out of these three great leading points. Presumption is a common temptation, . . . Those who profess to be followers of Christ, and claim by their faith to be enlisted in the warfare against all evil in their nature, frequently plunge without thought into temptations from which it would require a miracle to bring them forth unsullied. . . The promises of God are not for us rashly to claim while we rush on recklessly into danger, violating the laws of nature and disregarding prudence and the judgment with which God has endowed us. This is the most flagrant presumption. And regarding the "love of the world": the thrones and kingdoms of the world and the glory of them were offered to Christ if He would only bow down to Satan. Never will man be tried with temptations as powerful as those which assailed Christ. Satan came with worldly honor, wealth, and the pleasures of life, and presented them in the most attractive light to allure and deceive. 'All these things,' said he to Christ, 'will I give Thee, if Thou wilt fall down and worship me.' Christ repelled the wily foe and came off victor. Satan has better success in approaching man. All this money, this gain, this land, this power, these honors and riches, will I give thee for what? His conditions generally are, that integrity shall be yielded, conscientiousness blunted, and selfishness indulged."

What I'd like to do this morning is spend the next few minutes looking at these three great leading temptations for the purpose of becoming better acquainted with Satan's devices and thus be able to more successfully resist our great adversary.

Appetite, the first great leading temptation takes on many different facets. Usually when people think of appetite they think of food, don't they? And certainly that's the major part of it, but there are many different kinds of appetites, both good and bad. As I was searching through the 3,539 inspired statements that mention appetite, so you see we're not going to be able to cover everything, but we'll hit just the high points. As I searched through, under the heading of bad appetites I found words like: unlawful, lustful, perverted, unnatural, depraved, intemperate, debased, poisoned, benumbed, injurious, diseased, animal, gross, gluttonous, excited, gratification, indulgence, spoiled, untrained, pampered, unrestricted, unrestrained, uncontrolled, slaves to, and epicurean, which means given to luxuries of the table.

Then under the heading of good appetites I found words like, spiritual, denial, educate, control, overcome, restrict, temperate, natural, and victory.

So as you can see, I was able to easily find many more under the **indulgence** list than the **denial** list. And it's the same way with the works of the flesh versus the fruit of the Spirit listed in **Galatians 5**, have you noticed? God has few truths compared to the devil's many lies and different ways to tempt and annoy. Jesus said, "straight is the gate, and narrow is the way that leads to life eternal and few there be that find it, but wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leads to destruction and many there be that go in there at." And so, we want to be one of the few, but we've got to learn to control our sinful nature and not yield to it when we are assailed by the devil through these three great leading temptations.

Then this short quote from **Temperance, page 12**, "Our natural inclinations and appetites . . . were divinely appointed, and when given to man, were pure and holy. It was God's design that reason should rule the appetites (**plural, so you see there are various kinds**), and that they should minister to our happiness. And when they are regulated and controlled by a sanctified reason, they are holiness unto the Lord."

And so very clearly here, when God created man, all of his appetites were pure and holy and under control. And it's no coincidence that Adam fell on the point of appetite and that Christ's first temptation in the wilderness was upon the same point. Satan figured if it worked so well with Adam it would also work with Jesus. But here he was sadly mistaken. Where Adam failed, Christ was victorious and thus prepared the way, through the power of the Holy spirit, for us to follow His example. If Christ had not been victorious, we could not be victorious, and thus we could not be forgiven for our sins, and neither could we be strengthened to overcome our depraved appetites. In fact, if Christ had failed, there would be no hope for the human race at all! And so, we owe everything to Christ for living a perfect life, and then sacrificing that perfect life so we could perfect a Christlike character that He can take back to heaven with Him when He comes.

The devil tempts us in this life with all sorts of temporal advantages, but none of it is lasting and there's none we can take to heaven. The only thing we're taking is a moral character that has been sanctified through obedience to the truths of the Bible. So it would seem obvious that we should take the time to find out what those truths are through a diligent study of God's holy word. We all need to be on a spiritual maintenance program in order to live a victorious Christian life. When a person is born again it's like receiving a brand-new car, but what happens to that car if it's not maintained? Soon it will break down, won't it? And it's the same way with our spiritual life, if we don't take

the time to maintain it, it will soon be ready for the junkyard; we won't develop the kind of character that Jesus can take to heaven when He comes, and that day is one day sooner than it was yesterday, and I think we can all agree that we have no time to frit away the precious hours that remain.

***Testimonies for the Church, volume 3, page 491***, "As our first parents lost Eden through the indulgence of appetite, our only hope of regaining Eden is through the firm denial of appetite and passion." That's the only way we will ever see and be a part of Eden restored. This is a very simple truth, but not so easy to apply, because it requires the daily crucifixion of selfish desire. We must say no to our fallen sinful nature when tempted to indulge, and that requires a struggle, a struggle that most professed Christians are not willing to endure, and frankly, one they don't even think is required, because they've been fooled by preachers that have first been fooled by the devil themselves on this point.

And by the way, don't let anyone tell you that Jesus did not have a fallen sinful human nature. If you believe that, then you are defeated right from the start. If Jesus had to have an unfallen human nature to be victorious over temptation, then how can we do it with a sinful one? The Bible is very clear that Jesus was tempted just like we are tempted, and to think otherwise is to be fooled by one of the biggest lies of the devil. Jesus had no advantage over those who have been born again of the Spirit. When we partake of the divine nature, as it says in **2 Peter 1:4**, then we will have the power to deny the sinful indulgence of appetite and be victorious just as Jesus was.

There are several stories in the Bible as examples of perverted appetite, and since we don't have the time to look at all of them, I'd like you to consider the one that stands out in nearly everyone's mind. It's found in **Genesis 25:24-34**. We won't take time to read it, because you're already familiar with the story, so I'll just refresh your memory a little bit.

There were twin boys born to Isaac and Rebekah, one was daddy's favorite and one was mommy's favorite. Esau came out first and Jacob second. One day Esau came home from the hunt and he was famished, and when he smelled Jacob's lentil soup and fresh bread right out of the oven, he was willing to do anything to satisfy his ravenous hunger. He said, "Jacob, give me a bowl of soup and some bread, I'm about ready to die from hunger", and Jacob said, "are you willing to sell me your birthright?" And Esau said, "what good is the birthright to me if I'm dead?" And Esau sold his birth-right to Jacob because he was overcome by appetite. **Genesis 25:34** says, when Esau finished his meal he got up and left and "despised his birthright", that means he didn't value his inheritance as the first-born son.

Now what does all this mean to us? Well, it's much more than just satisfying our hunger with forbidden food, because there was nothing wrong with Jacob's lentil soup and homemade bread, was there? No, it was perfectly fine. Neither was there anything wrong with the fruit that was hanging on the tree in the midst of the Garden. And so, it has something to do with controlling our appetite even when it comes to good things. Esau's problem was that he didn't value spiritual things. He was willing to give up his eternal inheritance because he didn't value it enough to deny his appetite, even with good food, and the time may come when we are tempted with something that's not wrong in itself, but if we are willing to disobey God to get it, that's where the problem lies. For example, the time is coming when we will not be able to buy or sell we're told, and if we are offered something that's perfectly fine in itself in order to relieve our want during that time, but there's some kind of string attached, then it would be wrong to accept it. If it would mean valuing that thing more than waiting upon God to supply our need, as He has promised to do, then we are in danger of making the same mistake as Esau and our first parents.

The birthright that fell to the first-born son was a spiritual birthright as well as receiving twice as much physical inheritance as children that came along later. And so the first born was to be a spiritual leader, but Esau wanted nothing to do with it. To him the spiritual birthright was a yoke of bondage. To him, power and riches, feasting and reveling is what made him happy. He gloried in the unrestrained freedom of his wild, roving life and wanted nothing to do with being restricted in any way. Jacob, on the other hand, was the devotional one of the two boys, but he didn't wait for the blessing from his father in God's appointed way and went about to accomplish it on his own, and with his mother's help. And so, there's even a lesson here that we don't want to run ahead of God. And think of this, Esau sold his birthright for a small indulgence to meet his present wants, and this determined the after course of the rest of his life, and the life to come. To Esau, a morsel of food was more valued than the service of his Master. And so we need to consider that by one wrong action on our part, we could very well determine the whole direction of the rest of our lives as well, and this is especially true for young people to consider. Be careful, young person, of your associations and your choice of who you may spend the rest of your life with, because one wrong choice here can make the rest of your life very miserable and unhappy. After his desire was gratified, Esau regretted what he had done in selling his birthright, but for him it was too late. He lost the chance to be the spiritual leader that God designed he should be and it cost him his eternal inheritance.

In ***Counsels on Health, page 110*** it says, "Since the first surrender to appetite, mankind have been growing more and more self-indulgent, until health has been sacrificed on the

altar of appetite. The inhabitants of the antediluvian world were intemperate in eating and drinking. They would have flesh-meats, although God had at that time given man no permission to eat animal food. They ate and drank till the indulgence of their depraved appetite knew no bounds, and they became so corrupt that God could bear with them no longer. Their cup of iniquity was full, and he cleansed the earth of its moral pollution by a flood. **(Did you get that? Why did God destroy the earth with a flood? It was because of intemperate eating and drinking. That's how serious the indulgence of appetite is, and where it leads. If God had to cleanse the earth with a world-wide flood because of self-indulgence, we need to understand that it's important for us to restrain our appetites if we want to inhabit the earth made new)**

“As men multiplied upon the earth after the flood, they again forgot God, and corrupted their ways before him. Intemperance in every form increased, until almost the whole world was given up to its sway. **(This could be written about the world today, couldn't it?)** Entire cities have been swept from the face of the earth because of the debasing crimes and revolting iniquity that made them a blot upon the fair field of God's created works. The gratification of unnatural appetite led to the sins that caused the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. God ascribes the fall of Babylon to her gluttony and drunkenness. Indulgence of appetite and passion was the foundation of all their sins.”

Do you understand what we just read? The downfall of all the great kingdoms of the world owe their destruction to depraved appetite and the lustful passions that are created by it. Pretty serious if you ask me, and shouldn't we learn from their past mistakes? These things are written for our admonition in these last days as we are living during a time when God is about to cleanse the earth one last time by fire, and you know what? it will be for the same reasons He took past kingdoms out of the way. That's why we're told that if we don't learn from history, we're doomed to repeat it.

Well, the necessity of overcoming uncontrolled appetite seems clear enough, but how can it be done? Easy to talk the talk, but not so easy to walk the walk.

***Ministry of Healing, pages 175, 176,*** “Those who put their trust in Christ are not to be enslaved by any hereditary or cultivated habit or tendency. Instead of being held in bondage to the lower nature, they are to rule every appetite and passion. God has not left us to battle with evil in our own finite strength. Whatever may be our inherited or cultivated tendencies to wrong, we can overcome through the power that He is ready to impart. . . . Through the right exercise of the will **(or our power of choice)**, an entire change may be made in the life. By yielding up the will to Christ **(or by letting Christ choose for us)**, we ally ourselves with divine power. We receive strength from above to

hold us steadfast. A pure and noble life, a life of victory over appetite and lust, is possible to everyone who will unite his weak, wavering human will to the omnipotent, unwavering will of God.”

Now, if it’s possible to overcome all inherited and cultivated tendencies to wrong, do you think God is going to let anyone slide when divine help is offered free of charge? No! If people don’t avail themselves of the power to stop sin while in the temptation stage, they will be making the same mistake as did Esau.

We just read that through the right exercise of the will, an entire change may be made in the life, and that by yielding up the will to Christ, we ally ourselves with divine power. And what is God’s will? It’s everything between the two covers of this holy book. If we would have Christ choose for us, it’s the same thing as obeying what He has said in His word, it’s just that simple. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, when we do what the Bible says, that’s the right exercise of the will that will give us strength from above to live a life of victory over our depraved appetites.

Well, there’s much more that could be said about appetite, but we need to move on to the second great leading temptation, which is presumption. According to the dictionary presumption is “Unreasonable confidence in divine favor.” “O Lord, you understand! You’re such a loving God that I know you’ll forgive me if I indulge in sin just this once.” Do you know dear friend, that just this once nearly always leads to just once more until a habit is formed, which habits form character, and character determines our eternal destiny?

Here’s another definition of presumption: “to venture without positive permission.” I know of many Seventh-day Adventists that are attending a church that they know is in apostasy, thinking that they won’t be affected by the error they sit and listen to every sabbath and the weak associations they’re building with those who think they’re saved in sin. That’s presumption, and it’s one of the three great leading temptations. Not only are many Seventh-day Adventists indulging their appetites by eating potluck goodies on God’s holy day, that we’ve been told by inspiration to avoid, but they are partaking of error passed off as good spiritual food that will leave them in perfect darkness.

If you think I’m exaggerating, let me read something to you that you may not have read for a long time. **Early Writings, page 125**, “God is displeased with us when we go to listen to error, without being obliged to go; for unless He sends us to those meetings where error is forced home to the people by the power of the will, He will not keep us. The angels cease their watchful care over us, and we are left to the buffetings of the enemy,

to be darkened and weakened by him and the power of his evil angels; and the light around us becomes contaminated with the darkness.”

Why would a person be obliged to go to a meeting where error is being taught? Why would God require, that's what obliged means, why would God require and send someone to a place like that? Have you ever thought about it? I can think of very few reasons. One might be to expose the error, or to satisfy your own mind that error is indeed being taught. Sometimes it's not the best thing to just take someone's word that error is being taught at a certain church. One may have to hear it with their own ears and see it with their own eyes, but if that's the case, number one, you better have a good understanding of the truth before you go, and number two, you better know God's voice well enough to know that it's He who is telling you to go and not just to satisfy curiosity or to have a little social contact. You may also be obliged to go if there is a funeral or memorial service of a friend or loved one, or perhaps a baby dedication of a grandchild or a wedding, but just to go for regular Sabbath services when you know things are not right is akin to selling your birthright.

A little while ago we read that we need to be regulated and controlled by a sanctified reason, but how? We're told how it comes in **John 17:17**, and these are the words of our Lord. He said, “sanctify them through thy truth, thy word is truth.” Very simple, but we have to prioritize our lives, and that priority is to take a dedicated time each day to get better acquainted with the truth. That's it! We don't have to understand how God will bring the change we need, we just have to have faith to believe that it will happen when we do what He says, and it will!

Again, there are many stories in the Bible that furnish us with good examples of sins of presumption. There are Eli's sons who despised the offerings of the Lord and made the people give them raw meat to eat. Talk about being given to depraved appetite, they were! There are also Hophni & Phinehas who offered strange fire; there was Uzzah who touched the ark; there was Saul who offered sacrifice of the spoils God said to destroy; there were Korah, Dathan, Abiram; there were the men of Beth-Shemesh who looked into the ark. Many do not consider it such, but faith without works is presumptuous; and there are even prayers of presumption. **Psalm 66:18** says, “if I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me”, but many Christians think that He will. That's presumption. You may remember reading about a preacher named Moses Hull who was a great debater that always won the argument and was warned by Ellen White not to debate with spiritualists, but he presumptuously disregarded the warning and ended up losing his soul.



Let me read you several statements about presumption, because it's important that we understand this second great leading temptation. The first is in the book ***Redemption, Volume 2, pages 87, 88***, "There are many who fail to distinguish between the rashness of presumption and the intelligent confidence of faith. . . God has given man precious promises upon condition of faith and obedience; but they are not to sustain him in any rash act. If men needlessly place themselves in peril, and go where God does not require them to go, and self-confidently expose themselves to danger, disregarding the dictates of reason, God will not work a miracle to relieve them. He will not send his angels to preserve any from being burned if they choose to place themselves in the fire." That's why I said earlier that if I've had a problem with alcohol in the past, it would not be wise to go into a bar to see if I could resist.

***Gospel Workers, page 260***, and this quote is probably the clearest of all. "Only he who has true faith is secure against presumption, for presumption is Satan's counterfeit of faith. Faith claims God's promises and brings forth fruit in obedience. Presumption also claims the promises, but uses them as Satan did, to excuse transgression. Faith would have led our first parents to trust the love of God and to obey His commands. Presumption led them to transgress His law, believing that His great love would save them from the consequences of their sin." O how many professed Christians there are today who think the same way.

***Signs of the Times, May 18, 1882***, "Those who, knowing their danger, will yet venture into places of worldly, demoralizing amusement, or who will poison the mind with the literary productions of the skeptic, or the sensualist, are guilty of presumption. God does not give His angels charge to keep those who choose to walk in forbidden paths. When in the way of duty we are brought into trial, as was Daniel in the king's court, we may be assured that God will preserve us. But if, through stubbornness, hardihood (**daring**), or bravado (**boldness**), we place ourselves under the power of temptation, we shall fall, sooner or later."

***Testimonies for the Church, volume 4, page 44***, "Presumption is a common temptation, and as Satan assails men with this, he obtains the victory nine times out of ten." Pretty high success rate, isn't it? That's why it's the second great leading temptation.

Let's take a look at a couple Bible texts regarding presumption and then we'll move on to the third great leading temptation.

**Psalm 19:13**, "Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great

transgression.” So we see here that even the Bible refers to presumption as a great transgression, which would also make it one of the great temptations.

**2 Peter 2:9**, “The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished: but chiefly **(or particularly, or most of all)** them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government. Presumptuous are they; selfwilled, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities.” Wow! There are several things in this verse we could talk about, but our focus is presumption. What does it mean to be selfwilled? It means doing your own thing, doesn't it? even when you know better. Being self-willed is just the opposite of letting Christ choose for us by doing what He tells us in His word. It's presumption, and it's a great sin. Those who commit sins presumptuously are unjust, Peter says, and will be reserved unto the day of judgment to be punished.

**1 Corinthians 10:12**, “Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.”

This is good advice that will keep us from the sin of presumption. Why does Paul say this? Because one can think they are standing firm upon the truth and are confident they are doing the right thing, when in reality they might simply have “unreasonable confidence in divine favor” or they might be “venturing into forbidden paths without positive permission” from the word of God. That's why it's important to study to show ourselves approved unto God. Otherwise, without knowing it, we may be guilty of falling for the second great leading temptation.

The love of the world was the third temptation Satan used to try to buy Christ's homage, but He would not be bought! Praise God!

**Matthew 4:8-11**, “Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; and saith unto him, all these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me. Then saith Jesus unto him, get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him.”

If we want the devil to leave us and have holy angels minister to us, then we must first resist temptation like Jesus did. We must serve God and Him only, but if we yield to the suggestions of the enemy, there is no promise of deliverance.

The temptation to love the world is the temptation to serve self, isn't it? When I think of

the love of the world I think of what it says in: **Mark 8:34-37**, let's go there. "And when he had called the people unto him with his disciples also, he said unto them, whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it. For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" Good question, and one we should consider as we prepare for the second advent.

***The Desire of Ages, page 129***, "Placing Jesus upon a high mountain, Satan caused the kingdoms of the world, in all their glory, to pass in panoramic view before Him. The sunlight lay on templed cities, marble palaces, fertile fields, and fruit-laden vineyards. The traces of evil were hidden. **(Oh, isn't that the way it is? Satan comes with his temptations and it isn't until after we yield that the ugly truth begins to dawn upon us, but remember this, the grass is always greener over the septic tank)** The eyes of Jesus, so lately greeted by gloom and desolation, now gazed upon a scene of unsurpassed loveliness and prosperity. Then the tempter's voice was heard: 'All this power will I give Thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it. If Thou therefore wilt worship me, all shall be Thine. . . .' When Satan declared to Christ, 'The kingdom and glory of the world are delivered unto me, and to whomsoever I will I give it, he stated what was true only in part, and he declared it to serve his own purpose of deception. Satan's dominion was that wrested from Adam, but Adam was the vicegerent of the Creator. His was not an independent rule. The earth is God's, and He has committed all things to His Son. Adam was to reign subject to Christ. When Adam betrayed his sovereignty into Satan's hands, Christ still remained the rightful King. Thus the Lord had said to King Nebuchadnezzar, 'The Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will.' Satan can exercise his usurped authority only as God permits." And aren't you thankful for that?

As we consider these three great leading temptations, we realize that not only was Jesus tempted in these three areas, but Satan comes to us in the same way. He tempts us through appetite; he tempts us to presume upon God's mercy, and he tempts us to love this world more than we love God, and just as all other truths can be traced back to the pillars of our faith, so can every temptation be traced back to these three great leading temptations, and as we are on probation to see if we will yield to temptation or submit to God, so it was with Christ. Did you know that even Jesus was on probation while here on earth?

***Youth's Instructor, July 20, 1899***, "Unless there is a possibility of yielding, temptation is no temptation. Temptation is resisted when man is powerfully influenced to do a wrong

action; and, knowing that he can do it, resists, by faith, with a firm hold upon divine power. This was the ordeal through which Christ passed. He could not have been tempted in all points as man is tempted, had there been no possibility of his failing. He was a free agent, placed on probation, as was Adam, and as is every man. **(This just boggles my mind to think of what might have been had Jesus failed in His mission. If Jesus had failed by giving in to temptation, He would have sinned, and if He had sinned, how could He be allowed back in heaven? There would have been consequences that even Jesus would have had to face, and I don't know about you, but I don't have the intelligence or the desire to go any farther with such horrible thoughts. I'm just thankful He was victorious, because failure is simply unthinkable.)** In His closing hours, while hanging on the cross, He experienced to the fullest extent what man must experience when striving against sin. He realized how bad a man may become by yielding to sin. He realized the terrible consequence of the transgression of God's law; for the iniquity of the whole world was upon Him."

I don't think we realize just how closely Jesus identified Himself with fallen humanity and what He sacrificed to save us from the second death, do you? In fact, I know we can't, because we're not going to know until we enter the Holy City.

***The Desire of Ages, page 131***, "Never can the cost of our redemption be realized until the redeemed shall stand with the Redeemer before the throne of God. Then as the glories of the eternal home burst upon our enraptured senses we shall remember that Jesus left all this for us, that He not only became an exile from the heavenly courts, but for us took the risk of failure and eternal loss. Then we shall cast our crowns at His feet, and raise the song, 'Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing.'"

Friends, it means everything for us to be there. There is absolutely nothing in this life that is worth missing heaven for, and why would we want Jesus to have risked everything for us to then just throw it all away like it's worth nothing. I want to see Jesus don't you? And I want to thank Him for risking everything for me. I don't want to miss it and I don't think you do either, that's why we have to keep our eyes on the prize, otherwise the attractions of this world will eclipse the attractions of the world to come.

Appetite, presumption, and love of the world are the three great leading temptations, and if you have been touched by the Holy Spirit this morning and you want to have victory over every inherited and cultivated sin and to be able to cast your crown at Jesus' feet and sing worthy, worthy is the Lamb that was slain, I invite you to bow your heads with me as we pray for divine power to be overcomers.