

PLEASANT SPRINGS CHURCH • SERMON • THE CONQUERING KING,
PART NINE

The Choice

Christ, the Answer — an exploration of 1 Corinthians 10:13

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The Conquering King, Part Nine — 1 Corinthians 10:13

Preached Sunday, September 20, 2026 by Pastor Jeremy Arnold

1 Corinthians 10:13 • Galatians 5:17 • James 1:13–15 • Joshua 7 • Genesis 3:1 • Hebrews 12:1–2
• Philippians 4:13 • Hebrews 4:15 • John 15:4–7

Last week the battlefield moved inside us. This week it narrows to a single moment — the moment between the temptation and the transgression. That moment has a name. It is called a choice, and it is still ours to make.

THE SERMON TEXT

1 Corinthians 10:13 (ESV)

“No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.”

RECAP

Last week we talked about the war taking place inside our minds and hearts. That war is over sacred space and allegiance — to put it another way, believing loyalty. Galatians 5:17 says the flesh and the Spirit are opposing forces. The question for us is which one will win us over.

TEMPTATION

James 1:14 (ESV)

“But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire.”

Our text for today teaches us that God is faithful, and that through Christ He gives us what we need to endure temptation — including the schemes and attacks of the enemy.

REMEMBER ACHAN?

If we recall Achan from Joshua 7, we know the order it came in. First he saw. Then he coveted. Then he took. Then he hid. Listen to how the two voices talk:

- The flesh says, “Take it.” — The Spirit says, “Trust God.”
- The flesh says, “Nobody will know.” — The Word says, “God sees.”
- The flesh says, “You deserve this.” — Jesus says, “Follow Me.”

Point

There is a moment between temptation and transgression. That moment is the choice.

That moment matters because in it the evil forces present and exploit our areas of weakness, luring us away from Christ and His Word. Temptation says, “You can have this.” But the Word of God says, “You can choose Christ.”

James 1:13–14 (ESV)

“Let no one say when he is tempted, ‘I am being tempted by God,’ for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one. But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire.”

Point

Temptation itself is not a sin. It is the presentation of a choice.

There are at least two dimensions to it — external enticement and internal desire. Temptation is the moment when the two meet and we are confronted with whether we will trust God or follow the desire. According to James, God is not the One who does the tempting or presents the choice. He is the One who offers the way out.

THE ESCAPE

God does not promise that temptation will not come. He promises that when it comes, He will provide a way for us to endure it. The enemy can put something in front of you, but he cannot make the choice for you.

He can tempt you, deceive you, pressure you, and exploit your desires — but temptation does not remove your responsibility to respond to God. The decision stays ours. It is an act of our own will. The enemy does not become morally responsible for the choice we make. We do.

He can whisper, he can entice, he can remind you, he can even exploit your weaknesses — but he cannot make the decision for you.

Genesis 3:1 (ESV)

“Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, ‘Did God actually say, “You shall not eat of any tree in the garden”?’”

Right there is where the battle begins. Before the serpent ever convinces Eve to eat, he sows a seed of question in her mind and gets her to reconsider what God had told her. He still uses the same strategy today:

- Is that really what God meant?
- Is this really wrong?
- Does it really matter?
- Surely God understands — He knows we aren’t perfect.

The enemy wants us to move from “God said” to “But...”

There was a point when Achan saw everything and could have walked on by. He could have said, “God said don’t take of the spoils. I will obey.” Now watch the progression:

James 1:14–15 (ESV)

“But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death.”

Sin always wants to convince us that no one will ever know, and that it won’t hurt anyone else — so why does it matter? In Achan’s case it affected the whole camp.

Point

That is why obedience matters.

Hebrews 12:1–2 (ESV)

“Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.”

Looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith. He is faithful. In 1 Corinthians 10:13 we see that we are not facing something impossible to overcome — because God is faithful.

We can never be strong enough, disciplined enough, or brave enough to overcome in our own strength. But whatever circumstance I find myself in, Christ is sufficient to sustain me. That is the message Paul is teaching us:

Philippians 4:13 (ESV)

“I can do all things through him who strengthens me.”

- God knows our limitations.
- God knows our weaknesses.
- God knows the pressure we are under.

Hebrews 4:15 (ESV)

“For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.”

Here is the promise: there is a way through — Jesus. The question is whether we will take it.

APPLICATION

John 15:4–5, 7 (ESV)

“Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. ... If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.”

Sometimes we have to leave, and cleave:

- Leave the conversation. Cling to Christ and His Word.
- Leave the room.
- Put down the phone.
- Turn off the TV.
- Call a Christian friend for wise counsel — and wise counsel will always be Christ-centred and point you back to the Word of God.
- Pray.

Never negotiate with temptation or have a conversation with the devil. All he needs you to do is compromise with sin.

IN CLOSING

Jesus never negotiated with temptation. He answered the tempter with the Word of God. The way of escape is not a technique we master — it is a Person we run to, and He has already walked through every door we are afraid to open.

— Pastor Jeremy Arnold

QUESTIONS TO PONDER THIS WEEK

1. The moment.

Think of the last time you gave in. Where exactly was the moment of choice — and what were you telling yourself right then?

2. “Did God actually say?”

Which of God’s clear words have I quietly begun to re-negotiate, and what does the “But...” sound like in my own voice?

3. The way out.

God promises an escape with every temptation. In the situation I struggle with most, what does the door actually look like — and why have I not walked through it?

4. Leave and cleave.

What is the one thing I need to leave this week, and who is the Christ-centred friend I could call before I need them?

GROW FURTHER

THE CONQUERING KING, PART EIGHT

Conquering the Flesh

Last week's message — the enemy we carry in our own chest, and why Paul will not let us manage it.

DEEP RESEARCH

Matthew 4:1–11

The temptation in the wilderness, measured against the Greek — how the Word answered every offer.

DISCIPLESHIP

Spiritual Formation — the Steps

What abiding actually looks like on a Tuesday, when nobody is watching.

“God is faithful... with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape.”

1 Corinthians 10:13 (ESV)