

November 29, 2009 by Steve Brandon



## He Is Able To Help

### Hebrews 2:18

When facing difficulties in life, we often turn to those who have traveled the path before to help us. When visiting the Grand Canyon, we are helped greatly by a guide, who will take us to the bottom of the canyon on a donkey. We don't want to discover how to do it ourselves. When your car breaks down and you are in need of a good car mechanic, you will often ask others around you for a recommendation of a mechanic that you can trust: one who is honest and reasonable with their rates. You don't want to go with just any car mechanic whose name you find in the yellow pages. You want to find a trusted one. When you have money to invest, you turn to a financial planner, who can help you invest your money wisely.

This is true in the spiritual realm as well. When you experience the trials of life, you can find help from those who have gone through similar circumstances. Paul put it this way, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction so that we will be able to comfort those who are in any affliction with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God" (2 Corinthians 1:3-4).

We have been through a trial, and have found God's grace sufficient for us. We have been comforted by His grace. And now, on the back end of the affliction, we are ready and equipped to help others who are going through the same thing. We are able to help them diagnose what's going on in their souls. We are able to work them through the range of emotions and feelings that they are experiencing. We are able to direct them to the same fountain from which we found our strength and comfort in our trial.

But, I press further. When we are looking for a guide in the Grand Canyon, we want the best guide, the one with the greatest knowledge, the best personality, and the greatest story-telling abilities. When looking for a good mechanic, we want the best mechanic, who has proven himself to be fast, efficient, and cost-effective. When looking for a financial advisor, we want the best. We want one who understands how the market works, getting the best return with the least risk. Spiritually, the same truth holds. When we are tempted, don't we want access to the best help available? The good news is this: when it comes to temptation, we have access to the best!

Let us look at our text this morning:

Hebrews 2:18

For since He Himself was tempted in that which He has suffered, He is able to come to the aid of those who are tempted.

Jesus is our best help in temptation, because he experienced it all and never yielded to it. Not even once. He knows how to conquer temptation. He knows how to go through it sinlessly. He is ready and able to help. It says in Hebrews 4:15, For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin."

Jesus can sympathize with our weaknesses. But, further than that, Jesus can help us through our own temptations, because He walked through them sinlessly. Too often, regarding this area of sin, we seek the help of other sinners, who have fallen. For instance, alcoholics anonymous (or any of a bunch of support groups) gathers together a bunch of recovering alcoholics. All of those who sit around that circle know what it's like to battle the temptations to have another drink. So far, so good. But, all of them have fallen. All of them are still struggling with their sinful addiction. Some of them may well fall the next week into their sin and find themselves in a drunken stupor. They may come to the group next week and confess their failures while others come around side them to comfort them, knowing that they too have fallen. But, who in the group can help the most? Isn't it the one who has been sober the longest? Isn't it the one who knows how to battle the temptation and win? Likewise, Jesus is our best help in times of temptation.

Jesus has been tempted in all things as we are, yet, He never sinned! (Heb. 4:15). Jesus knows best how to battle the temptation. So, let's go to Him to find help in our temptation! That's my point of application this morning! "He Is Able To Help" so go to Him! "For since He Himself was tempted in that which He has suffered, He is able to come to the aid of those who are tempted" (Heb. 2:18).

Let none of you say, "I'm being tempted, and there's no way out of the temptation. Nobody else can sympathize with me. These are my unique struggles. It's impossible not to give in." That's wrong! There is someone who can help. His name is Jesus Christ. He is able to come and help you. And so, I want for us to really think about the life of Christ. As He walked upon the earth, He suffered many things. He was tempted in many ways. And yet, in all of it, He never gave in to sin. Because of that, "He is able to come to the aid of those who are tempted."

So, This morning, I want to take Hebrews 2:18 and apply it to the life of Christ over and over and over again, that you might be convinced that Jesus is able to come and help you in your temptation. We have enough examples in His life to give us hours of material. To apply this verse to Christ's life, I thought that we find it helpful to simply walk through the book of Luke. As we walk through the book, I want for you to see some of the ways that Jesus was tempted. And then, I want for you to realize that He indeed can sympathize with us in our weakness.

We'll begin in Luke 2. (We can skip chapter 1, because Jesus was born in chapter 2.) My first application goes out to all of you children, especially the teenagers among us, who are experiencing difficulty in your relationship with your parents. You may be thinking, "They just

don't understand me. They just don't understand what I'm going through? They don't understand the pressures that I'm facing. They don't understand the feelings that I have."

If this is you, I say, "Go to Jesus. He had parents who didn't understand Him either." Look at verse 41, ...

Luke 2:41-50

Now His parents went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover. And when He became twelve, they went up there according to the custom of the Feast; and as they were returning, after spending the full number of days, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem. But His parents were unaware of it, but supposed Him to be in the caravan, and went a day's journey; and they began looking for Him among their relatives and acquaintances. When they did not find Him, they returned to Jerusalem looking for Him. Then, after three days they found Him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, both listening to them and asking them questions. And all who heard Him were amazed at His understanding and His answers. When they saw Him, they were astonished; and His mother said to Him, "Son, why have You treated us this way? Behold, Your father and I have been anxiously looking for You." And He said to them, "Why is it that you were looking for Me? Did you not know that I had to be in My Father's house?" But they did not understand the statement which He had made to them.

Joseph and Mary didn't understand Jesus. He was their child. He had been with them for 12 years, but, they didn't understand Him. They didn't understand that He was different than their other children. They didn't understand that He had a divine call upon His life. They didn't understand His passion for God's word.

And so, young people, if you have parents who aren't understanding you, look to Jesus to help you in temptation. Do you realize what your temptation is? Your temptation is to step outside of the role of your parents. But, God has called you to live in subjection to your parents, and this is a good thing. God has called you to be obedient to your parents in all things (Col. 3:20). God has called you to honor your parents. And when they don't understand you, you will be tempted to rebel against them. But, do you know how Jesus acted? Look at verse 51, ...

Luke 2:51

And He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and He continued in subjection to them; and His mother treasured all these things in her heart.

Jesus was an obedient, submissive child. He was obedient, even to sinful parents. Do you think that there were some trying times? I am certain there were. Joseph was working with Jesus in the shop and I'm sure Jesus didn't always do things quite like Joseph had wanted. Joseph probably lashed out and yelled at Jesus. Jesus knows what it's like to submit to sinful parents.

Mary, in her sin, likely continued to pile the housework upon Jesus, as Jesus always obeyed her. Perhaps He was pressed to help with the dishes. And then, He had to help with the washing. And then, He had to take out the trash. And then, He had to clean the front walkway. And then, He had to run to the neighbors for an errand. So much so, that Jesus didn't have time to get his schoolwork done. And yet, through it all, Jesus responded rightly, never sinning.

Listen, children, Jesus suffered at the hands of his unreasonable parents, and He knows how to conquer such temptations. So, next time you are being tempted by your parents in some way or another, go to Jesus and seek His help.

Let's continue on by looking at Luke 4. This is the classic temptation passage.

Luke 4:1-13

Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led around by the Spirit in the wilderness for forty days, being tempted by the devil. And He ate nothing during those days, and when they had ended, He became hungry.

And the devil said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread." And Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'Man shall not live on bread alone.'" And he led Him up and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time.

And the devil said to Him, "I will give You all this domain and its glory; for it has been handed over to me, and I give it to whomever I wish. 'Therefore if You worship before me, it shall all be Yours.'" Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'You shall worship the LORD your God and serve Him only.'"

And he led Him to Jerusalem and had Him stand on the pinnacle of the temple, and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down from here; for it is written, 'He will command His angels concerning you to guard you,' and, 'On their hand they will bear you up, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.'" And Jesus answered and said to him, "It is said, 'You shall not put the LORD your God to the test.'" When the devil had finished every temptation, he left Him until an opportune time.

This section of scripture is packed with ways in which Jesus was tempted. Really, there are three waves of temptation.

First of all, we see Jesus tempted in the flesh. Jesus was hungry, having eaten nothing for 40 days. His flesh was starved. Satan came and said, "Satisfy your flesh. Tell this stone to become bread." Now, there was nothing intrinsically wrong for Jesus to make stone into bread, any more than it was wrong for Jesus to turn water into wine. But, at that moment, it was wrong. It was wrong because at that moment, Jesus had

just been taunted by the devil, "If You are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread" (verse 3).

There are many passions that we have, which in and of themselves aren't wrong. But, at the wrong time, they are sinful. The passions we have for food are wrong when we have already eaten enough. Jesus understands the temptation to gluttony. The passions we have for sex are wrong when they are fulfilled outside of our marriage. Jesus understands the temptations to immorality. Jesus has experienced these passions. So, run to Jesus whenever you experience the pull of the flesh, and need help to escape.

When you need help to escape the cigarette, run to Jesus. When you need help to escape the lure of the internet, run to Jesus. When you need help to escape the drugs, run to Jesus. When you need help to escape your laziness, run to Jesus. He is ready and able to help!

Furthermore, Jesus was tempted by the tauntings of Satan, "If You are the Son of God, ..." He understands the pressure that gang members might place upon other gang members to demonstrate their toughness. He understands the pressures that fraternity members might place upon one another. He understands peer pressure. He understands the pressures you feel to "perform" at your religious duties. So, run to Jesus when others are pressing you into proving yourself. He understands and He can come to your help to do what is right.

In verses 5-8, we see Satan tempting Jesus with all of the kingdoms of the world, if Jesus would but bow down to Satan. The temptation here is to succeed by cutting corners. It sure would be easier to gain the kingdoms of the world by bowing to Satan than it would be to go to the cross. The temptation here is to think that the ends justify the means. But, of course, Jesus knew that the ends never justified the means. And, to bow down to Satan would violate one of the Ten Commandments, "You shall worship the Lord Your God and serve Him only" (verse 8). Jesus understands the pressures to succeed. Jesus understands the temptation to the easy way out, rather than the more difficult way, which is God's way--the right way. So, when these temptations come upon you, go to Jesus. He is able to help.

Satan's third temptation comes in verse 9-11. It was a dare. Satan said, "Jesus, I dare You to show how much God cares for you. Throw yourself off the temple peak. Surely, God will take care of you. Many will see how much you trust God. God will be glorified in His great rescue." But, Jesus would have nothing of it. He quoted from Deuteronomy 6:16, "You shall not put the Lord your God to the test." In other words, "I'm not going to presume upon God, regardless of how great His answer to prayer will be."

We can presume upon God in many ways. We can take out a loan and expand our business, presuming upon God to bless our work, beyond what is reasonable. We can date a non-Christian, presuming upon God to do a work in her soul. We can take some promises of Scripture far beyond their intended application and presume upon God. Jesus knows all about these temptations, having experienced them, Himself. He knows how to overcome them. He can come to your aid and help you.

There are far more lessons to learn from the book of Luke. There are many more lessons in the book of Luke for us. In no way can my message this morning cover them all. There is also Matthew, Mark and John. I just want to give you a flavor of how you can read the gospels, not so much to imitate Jesus and how He dealt with temptation as much as to show you that Jesus faced many temptations during His life, but never sinned. Therefore, He is able to come to your aid in your time of temptation as well. But, even if we exhaust the gospels, there are still more ways in which Jesus was tempted that we will never know about, as all of the details of His life weren't recorded in the Bible (John 20:30). He can help you in all of your temptations!

Let's press on to the second half of chapter 4, where we see Jesus preaching to His hometown. He opened up to the book of Isaiah and read the text, (as recorded in verses 18 and 19), ...

Luke 4:18-19  
The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me,  
Because He anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor.  
He has sent Me to proclaim release to the captives,  
And recovery of sight to the blind,  
To set free those who are oppresses,  
To proclaim the favorable year of the Lord.

Jesus sat down and said, "Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing" (verse 21). At first, the people were delighted by His words, saying "Is this not Joseph's son?" (verse 22). But, as Jesus continued, the people were not so thrilled. He told them that "no prophet is welcome in his hometown" (verse 24), and provided a few Old Testament examples. Then verse 28 records the response of the people when Jesus stopped speaking.

Luke 4:28-30  
And all the people in the synagogue were filled with rage as they heard these things; and they got up and drove Him out of the city, and led Him to the brow of the hill on which their city had been built, in order to throw Him down the cliff. But passing through their midst, He went His way.

Have you ever spoken the truth to someone about the gospel, only to have them get angry with you? Or, you point out some sin in their life, and rather than repenting, they turn on you? Jesus knew how this felt. Jesus can come and help you in your temptations to anger and frustration and depression and fear. So seek Jesus when you deal with those who are hostile to the truth!

But, Jesus experienced far more than you have, I believe. He was threatened with His life. These people sought to kill Jesus! During the days of Jesus, you threw someone down the cliff in order to lame them, so that you could throw stones upon them to kill them! By God's grace, Jesus escaped this attempt at His life. Jesus knows what it is to be so hated by people that they attempted to kill Him! He can help you in your temptation to soften the truth, so that people won't feel so badly about you. He can help you when you are fearful of speaking with

others because of the result. So, call on Him!

Consider the following passage.

Luke 8:1-3

Soon afterwards, He began going around from one city and village to another, proclaiming and preaching the kingdom of God. The twelve were with Him, and also some women who had been healed of evil spirits and sicknesses: Mary who was called Magdalene, from whom seven demons had gone out, and Joanna the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others who were contributing to their support out of their private means.

Now, the sufferings and temptations of Jesus might not be so obvious here. But, please realize that Jesus operated a faith ministry. He and His disciples were funded by those who gave them support. In this case, some of His supporters was named, Mary and Joanna and Susanna. Jesus experienced the same temptations that anyone faces in such a ministry. You minister. You serve others. You trust that God will stir the hearts of those you serve to give what is needed.

My guess is that Jesus knew what it was like to face a little shortfall at the end of the month. He knew what it was to trust God for these things. He knew the temptation not to trust in God, but to instead get His support some other way. The temptations that Jesus faced in being involved in a faith ministry can also extend to those who are feeling economic hardships. When you are out of a job, needing a place of provision, Jesus can help you. When you are under-employed, and looking for more work, Jesus can help you. He has been there. He knows what it's like to trust the Lord for His provision in your life.

Let's turn now to chapter 10, ...

Luke 10:38-42

Now as they were traveling along, He entered a village; and a woman named Martha welcomed Him into her home. She had a sister called Mary, who was seated at the Lord's feet, listening to His word. But Martha was distracted with all her preparations; and she came up to Him and said, "Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to do all the serving alone? Then tell her to help me." But the Lord answered and said to her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and bothered about so many things; but only one thing is necessary, for Mary has chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her."

Now, we often think about this story from the perspective of Mary and Martha. Martha was busy about doing all of her domestic duties, while Mary had chosen to neglect them to listen to Jesus. But, I want for you to think about it from the perspective of Jesus. Here He was, teaching in Mary and Martha's home. There was a group of people gathered around Him, listening to what He was saying. But, as He's teaching, Jesus is noticing Martha being busy about all of these other things, which in His mind were not necessary (according to verse 42). Oh, they may have been nice and helpful. But, they weren't necessary. Jesus was certainly tempted with a holy jealousy, wanting Martha to come and listen to the things that would profit her soul. Instead, she was making a wrong choice.

Have you ever been stirred in your spirit, desiring the best for others, only to see them busy with the things of the world and making poor choices regarding their soul? Perhaps you have observed those who were in the habit of neglecting church attendance, or fellowship opportunities, or some other opportunity that would strengthen their soul. Jesus saw it, and He battled a judgmental spirit.

And then, Martha came in a complaining spirit. She said, "Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to do all this serving alone? Then tell her to help me" (verse 40). Martha made a bad choice and then came complaining to Jesus about the good choice of someone else. Surely Jesus was tempted in these things.

Parents, have you ever faced a complaining spirit in your children? Have you ever experienced the temptation in you to lash out upon them for their attitude? Or, have you ever experienced those at work who constantly have a nagging, complaining spirit? Jesus encountered complainers and can help you in your time of weakness.

Let's pick another way in which Jesus was tempted. This comes in the following text.

Luke 11:14-16

And He was casting out a demon, and it was mute; when the demon had gone out, the mute man spoke; and the crowds were amazed. But some of them said, "He casts out demons by Beelzebul, the ruler of the demons." Others, to test Him, were demanding of Him a sign from heaven.

There are several ways that Jesus suffered and was tempted here. First of all, He was called a name. He wasn't called any name. He was called a demon. He was called Beelzebul, which is equivalent to being called, "Satan." You cannot get worse than that. If someone calls you an "airhead," at least there's some justification for it, as you have surely forgotten something in the past. If someone says to you, "I hate you." There is surely some justification for their words, as you have hurt them in some way or another. But, for the perfect Son of God to be identified with "Beelzebul" is as bad as it gets. It is light being called total darkness. Jesus knew what it was to be called a name, slandered, and even blasphemed! Any insult that you might face is not a big as the insult that Jesus faced.

Jesus has experienced the trauma of being called a name. He experienced the temptation to rage or retaliate. He can come to you help when you are called a name.

On top of that, Jesus was taunted. He had just done a miraculous sign for them, casting a demon out of a mute man, so that now he spoke. And then, they demanded yet another sign from Him! This was with the intent of "testing" Him (as verse 16 makes clear). Those who had called Jesus names were the very people who were demanding more from Jesus before they would believe. Have you ever been tempted by demanding people? Those who never have enough? Whatever you give them is never enough? They are always demanding more and more? Jesus knew this sort of temptation. He can come to your aid in time of need.

Let's look at another example of Jesus being tempted in chapter 12.

Luke 12:13

Someone in the crowd said to Him, "Teacher, tell my brother to divide the family inheritance with me."

Jesus knew what it was to be in the middle of a family squabble. One person wanted one thing. Another person wanted another. Jesus was in the middle, being forced to be the mediator. I know many people that have dysfunctional families. They don't talk to each other, but they will talk through a family member. Is this you?

Jesus knows what it's like to be stuck in the middle. Temptations come from both sides. He can come and help you in your temptations.

Let's continue on in Luke by looking at chapter 17. This is a story especially appropriate for us to look during this Thanksgiving weekend, ...

Luke 17:11-19

While He was on the way to Jerusalem, He was passing between Samaria and Galilee. As He entered a village, ten leprosy men who stood at a distance met Him; and they raised their voices, saying, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!" When He saw them, He said to them, "Go and show yourselves to the priests." And as they were going, they were cleansed. Now one of them, when he saw that he had been healed, turned back, glorifying God with a loud voice, and he fell on his face at His feet, giving thanks to Him. And he was a Samaritan. Then Jesus answered and said, "Were there not ten cleansed? But the nine--where are they? "Was no one found who returned to give glory to God, except this foreigner?" And He said to him, "Stand up and go; your faith has made you well."

Have you ever dealt with unthankful people? Have you ever felt the temptation to lash out at those who didn't express their thanks? Perhaps you gave a gift to a friend, and they never returned your gift with a thanks of any sort. Perhaps you have given gifts to your children, and they never expressed any gratitude for your generosity. Perhaps you invited some guests for dinner, and they never returned your favor with a thank you note or any verbal thanks. Perhaps you have lent a book to a friend, but they never returned it. Isn't there something in you that can burn against such people? They are taking advantage of you. They are ungrateful.

Jesus certainly experienced all of those sorts of feelings. And for Him, it's not just a book that He let another borrow. It's not a dinner invitation; it's not a gift. It was life itself. These lepers were the outcasts of society. In their leprosy, they were banished from all life as we know it. They had to live in their colonies outside the city. They needed to announce that they were leprosy to any who approached. And with their healing, they were permitted to come back into society. They were given the gift of life!

It was the greatest gift that could ever be given anybody! It's far greater than any gift we might give people. And yet, nine of these former lepers were unthankful. Jesus knows what it is to deal with unthankful people. Jesus knows how it tries our patience. Jesus knows how it's easy to speak ill of the unthankful. Jesus can help you in your temptation as well.

Let's look at another way Jesus was tempted. The following portion of Luke is taken from a section just prior to Jesus entering Jerusalem.

Luke 19:31-34

Then He took the twelve aside and said to them, "Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and all things which are written through the prophets about the Son of Man will be accomplished. For He will be handed over to the Gentiles, and will be mocked and mistreated and spit upon, and after they have scourged Him, they will kill Him; and the third day He will rise again." But the disciples understood none of these things, and the meaning of this statement was hidden from them, and they did not comprehend the things that were said.

Here was Jesus, laying out the plans of his life. He was going to Jerusalem to fulfill the prophecies concerning Him. He would be handed over to the Gentiles and brutally murdered. Then, He would rise again. It's not that Jesus spoke unclearly. It's not that Jesus was particularly cryptic. But, the disciples simply didn't understand.

Have you ever shared the gospel with someone, and they simply didn't understand? They didn't believe the words that you were saying? They can be really trying at times: when you pour out your life and your heart to them, and then they refuse to believe. How easy is it for us to lose patience with such people. How easy is it for us to merely give up on such people and cast them off. We can even get angry with them for not believing.

And yet, Jesus knows what it's like to speak clearly to people and have them not understand. He can help you when your best efforts to present Christ to others is set aside. He can encourage you in these things. So, run to Him.

Now, turn over to chapter 22. The passion narrative is filled with many instances of Jesus being tempted. Look at verse 14, ...

Luke 22:14-23

When the hour had come, He reclined at the table, and the apostles with Him. And He said to them, "I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; for I say to you, I shall never again eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God." And when He had taken a cup and given thanks, He said, "Take this and share it among yourselves; for I say to you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine from now on until the kingdom of God comes." And when He had taken some bread and given thanks, He broke it and gave it to them, saying, "This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me." And in the same way He took the cup after they had eaten, saying, "This cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in My blood. "But behold, the hand of the one betraying Me is with Mine on the table. "For indeed, the Son of Man is going as it has been determined; but woe to that man by whom He is betrayed!" And they began to discuss among themselves which one of them it might be who was going to do this thing.

Now, I'm sure that these words are very familiar to you. We talk about the Lord's Supper on a regular basis here at Rock Valley Bible Church. We usually look at it from our perspective, what Christ is telling us to do. But, have you ever looked at it from His perspective?

First of all, Jesus says (in verse 15), "I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer." These are words of excitement and enthusiasm. They are words of happiness and joy. It was an opportunity for Jesus to communicate the glories of what was about to take place, and change the course of history forever.

We know how Jesus shared the bread with His disciples. "This is My body, do this in remembrance of Me" (verse 19). We know how Jesus shared the cup with His disciples. "This cup ... is the new covenant in my blood" (verse 20). But, do you know what took place after these words? He told of His betrayer.

Luke 22:21-22

But behold, the hand of the one betraying Me is with Mine on the table. For indeed, the Son of Man is going as it has been determined; but woe to that man by whom He is betrayed!

Think about it. Jesus was having a meal with His enemy. Jesus was dealing with Judas in such a way that no one could tell who the betrayer was, for that was the discussion in verse 23.

Jesus knew the temptations of dealing with His enemies. He was right here close beside them, even eating with them. He knew how to show love even to His greatest enemy. If you have enemies that are out to destroy you, please realize that Jesus faced this situation as well. He can come to your aid in helping you to deal with them. After all, He sat at the same table of His enemy, showing Judas great love.

Another temptation that Jesus dealt with comes in verse 39.

Luke 22:39-46

And He came out and proceeded as was His custom to the Mount of Olives; and the disciples also followed Him. When He arrived at the place, He said to them, "Pray that you may not enter into temptation." And He withdrew from them about a stone's throw, and He knelt down and began to pray, saying, "Father, if You are willing, remove this cup from Me; yet not My will, but Yours be done." Now an angel from heaven appeared to Him, strengthening Him. And being in agony He was praying very fervently; and His sweat became like drops of blood, falling down upon the ground. When He rose from prayer, He came to the disciples and found them sleeping from sorrow, and said to them, "Why are you sleeping? Get up and pray that you may not enter into temptation."

Think about the number of ways that Jesus suffered here. Jesus was dealing with His own life. He knew what the next few hours held in store for Him. He knew that He was going to the cross to die (18:33). And yet, the battle raged in His heart and mind. "Can I go through with it?" So intense was the struggle that he was "praying very fervently," sweating drops of blood (verse 44). To make matters worse, His disciples were clueless to His struggles. He found them sleeping (verse 45).

Have you ever faced such a difficulty in life that you were praying fervently? All day! Every day! As desperate as you may think your situation was, I'm sure that your trial wasn't as large as the trial that Jesus faced. The bloody drops of sweat demonstrate the intensity of His trial. Has this ever happened to you? So, please know that in the moment of your agony--when you are pleading with the Lord--Jesus has been there. He has experienced it. So, go to Him, He can help.

Perhaps there has been some future event that you are really dreading. You don't know if you have the strength to carry you through. He knows what it's like. He can sympathize with you. Jesus can say, "Been there; done that." He can help.

Have you ever been in a situation where you are struggling with the will of God for your life? You know what the right thing to do is, but, you don't feel like doing it. Are there some other circumstances brewing in your life making it difficult to follow the Lord? Perhaps a temptation to cheat or lie? Perhaps a temptation to avoid something that you know that you should do? Perhaps a temptation to walk the easy path rather than the right path? Jesus felt the struggle. He prayed, "If you are willing, remove this cup from Me; yet not My will, but Yours be done" (verse 42). Go to Jesus. He can help!

Have you ever felt alone? Jesus knows the feeling. He can sympathize with you. He can help you. So, go to Him. Here Jesus was at the greatest trial of His life, and His friends weren't there to support Him. They weren't encouraging Him. They weren't praying for Him. They weren't too concerned about Him. And rather than being a help, His friends were a hindrance.

Let's continue on in verse 47, ...

Luke 22:47-48

While He was still speaking, behold, a crowd came, and the one called Judas, one of the twelve, was preceding them; and he approached Jesus to kiss Him. But Jesus said to him, "Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?"

Jesus knew what it was to be betrayed. He was betrayed in the worst sort of way: by a friend with a kiss unto death.

It's one thing to be betrayed by an acquaintance, someone that you barely know. But, it's another thing to be betrayed by a close friend. Judas walked with Jesus for three years, being in the inside circle of the disciples. Jesus poured out His heart to Judas. He was a close friend.

He was also betrayed by a kiss. It's one thing to be betrayed by a letter or email or phone call, where the betrayal happens in a dark room someplace away from where you are. But, it's another thing entirely to be betrayed by a kiss, face to face. A kiss is an act of love. It's the worst sort of betrayal.

Jesus was betrayed unto death. It's one thing to be betrayed out of some money. You entrust some money to someone and they default on what you give them. It's one thing to be betrayed of confidential information. People say things about you that you first communicated in confidence. But, it's another thing entirely to be betrayed unto death.

So, I don't care what sort of ways that you have been betrayed. Jesus was betrayed far worse than you were. He can help you, especially in your temptation to retaliate. But when betrayed, He didn't lash out in retaliation. Look at how the story progresses.

Luke 22:49-53

When those who were around Him saw what was going to happen, they said, "Lord, shall we strike with the sword?" And one of them struck the slave of the high priest and cut off his right ear. But Jesus answered and said, "Stop! No more of this." And He touched his ear and healed him. Then Jesus said to the chief priests and officers of the temple and elders who had come against Him, "Have you come out with swords and clubs as you would against a robber? While I was with you daily in the temple, you did not lay hands on Me; but this hour and the power of darkness are yours."

At that moment, Jesus willingly submitted Himself to the unruly crowd. So, in the day of your betrayal, look to Jesus. He can sympathize with you. He can help you respond appropriately, because He responded appropriately. So, go to Him.

Let's skip forward to chapter 23 and look at the crucifixion of Jesus. We read ...

Luke 23:33-34

When they came to the place called The Skull, there they crucified Him and the criminals, one on the right and the other on the left. But Jesus was saying, "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing " And they cast lots, dividing up His garments among themselves.

Think about it. You are hanging on the cross. What's your temptation? It's to lash out at those who have inflicted such pain upon you. Your temptation is to cry injustice! And yet, what did Jesus do? He prayed for their forgiveness, "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing" (verse 34).

Are you having difficulty forgiving someone for something that they have done to you? Then, look to Jesus. He was able to seek the forgiveness of those who nailed Him to a cross. I don't believe that the transgressions that others have inflicted upon you are as great as this. Go to Jesus. He can help you in your temptation.

As we continue on in the book of Luke, we find others mocking Jesus.

Luke 23:35-38

And the people stood by, looking on. And even the rulers were sneering at Him, saying, "He saved others; let Him save Himself if this is the Christ of God, His Chosen One." The soldiers also mocked Him, coming up to Him, offering Him sour wine, and saying, "If You are the King of the Jews, save Yourself!" Now there was also an inscription above Him, "This is the King of the Jews."

Jesus was reviled, He didn't revile in return; While suffering, He uttered no threats. Instead, Jesus kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously (1 Pet. 2:23). Do you have difficulty keeping your mouth shut when you are reviled? Are you easily provoked by a slanderous word? Jesus knows how to keep His mouth shut. Go to Jesus. He can help you.

Let's look at one last temptation of Jesus. It came in His death.

Luke 23:44-47

It was now about the sixth hour, and darkness fell over the whole land until the ninth hour, because the sun was obscured; and the veil of the temple was torn in two. And Jesus, crying out with a loud voice, said, "Father, into Your hands I commit my spirit." Having said this, He breathed His last. Now when the centurion saw what had happened, he began praising God, saying, "Certainly this man was innocent."

Jesus knows how to die. There may well be a day when you are tempted by the pains of death to cry out in anguish against God, questioning Him. But, Jesus died well. He is able to come and help you in time of need. So, run to Him. Go to Him. He is able to help.

This sermon was delivered to Rock Valley Bible Church on November 29, 2009 by Steve Brandon.  
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