

Hold On Help is on the Way - Part 3

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[0 : 00] Happy New Year, New City. Thank you, Precious. This will be a Kevin Smith sermonette.

So there will be a part four. Let's pray. Father, thank you for your mercy. You are worthy of all praise, honor, and glory.

And as we begin this new year, the first Sunday of the new year, Lord, we are excited about your possibilities. May your kingdom come.

May your will be done through us for the glory of your Son. Holy is your name. Bless your word now.

May it go forth to encourage, strengthen, prepare, equip, correct, your people. And may even the one who preaches fall under this word.

[1 : 02] Use me now for your glory. May your anointing be upon me and upon us as we hear.

Thank you for your presence in this service.

Thank you for the testimonies of your grace and goodness. In Jesus' name. Amen. The word of the Lord, once again in Hebrews chapter 2.

I'm going to read verses 14 through 18, but verse 18 is our text. Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery.

For surely it is not angels that he helps, but he helps the offspring of Abraham. Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God to make propitiation for the sins of the people.

Here's our text. For because he himself has suffered when tempted, he is able to help those who are also being tempted. That is the word of the Lord.

[2 : 24] Please be seated. Thank you again, praise team. Beautiful, beautiful music. Thank you. A businessman, who will not be named, was on a diet, and he experienced a craving for donuts.

I was laughing because a dear young lady behind me read my notes and sent me a picture of donuts, made a picture of donuts for me. Now I won't mention the donut shop on North Shore that he was interested in.

He drove to the donut shop and just kept circling the block. Then he prayed, Lord, I know you don't want me to eat donuts.

I know that's not your will, but I need you to confirm it. There are no parking spaces at this donut shop.

So I'm going to drive around the block, and if no parking space comes open, that will be confirmation. After going around eight more times, a spot became available.

[3 : 56] God's will. Here's what happened. His desire gave birth to a behavior, and the behavior to the sin.

Too often, this is how we deal with temptation. We stay close and give ourselves opportunity to fail. And then we wonder, how did I fall? How did I mess up again? Do you feel it?

If you're honest, you ain't got to say nothing out loud, just in your own soul, do you feel it? Some of you right now are facing some temptation.

We all are being tempted. It's time and time again. Are you staying close and giving yourself opportunity to fail?

[5 : 01] You still need help. You still need help. So I got good news. Hold on. Help is on the way.

Help has come. Help has come. We've been looking at why Jesus had to be made like us. Why Christmas had to be so.

Why did he have to be made like the son of God had to be made like us? We've been looking at it from this wonderful book, mostly of Hebrews. Last time we saw that he had to be made like us to be a high priest.

That's language we don't use. We don't talk about high priests, but it means he had to be made like us to represent us before God and making offering for our sins. But Jesus did what no other high priest could do.

He offers himself in our place to not merely cover our sins, but to take them away forever. And now we come to the last part of this passage where the writer of Hebrews shows us the last way that Jesus came to help us.

[6 : 12] The son of God was made like us to help us in temptation. In the Bible, to be tempted or tested, the same word in the original language.

Same word. What is the difference then between a temptation and a test? The difference between a test and a temptation is found in the initiator's motivations and expectations.

Show you how. The devil tempts that the believer might fail to obey God and so sin and eat the donut. God tests that he might show and sharpen our character with no focus on making the believer fall or fail.

He is seeking to make us more like the son who never failed. Now keep in mind, as the eternal son of God, the second person of the most holy trinity, it was impossible for him to even have temptation come near him.

Holy, holy, holy. As God, he could not be tempted. And as God, you don't put him to the test. He's perfect.

[7 : 31] You don't test him. So not, there was no possible way that the eternal son of God in all eternity could face temptation.

But he voluntarily took up our humanity, becoming one of us. The son of God and the person of Jesus entered the realm of temptation.

You see, Adam, the head of humanity, gave into temptation. But in Romans 5, Jesus is likened, Paul likens Jesus to a second Adam.

He's the head of a new humanity. He faces temptation for us, but does not fail.

Romans 5, 519. For as by the one man's disobedience, Adam, the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience, Jesus, the many will be made righteous.

[8 : 32] In Adam, yes, we are all made sinners, but Jesus comes to help sinners. He comes to help us so that in him we might be made righteous.

Righteous meaning right in God's sight, seen as one who keeps his law. But only, only as one of us could the son of God come to our aid in temptation.

Now, the word help in verse 18 of our passage, the word help is different. It's synonymous, basically, but it's still a little different than the one we looked at in verse 16 as our high priest.

Remember in verse 16, we taught that word help has the idea of grabbing you and bringing you to safety. He laid hands on us. That's our salvation.

He doesn't ask us to do anything in salvation. He comes and grabs and brings us free. Right? But this word help is not the same word.

[9 : 44] It simply means he comes to our aid. He comes to help. Now, is there a real difference?

I thought, I think I see a little difference here. I think I do. He comes beside us to help us in temptation.

I call this empowering coaching. He gives us the ability to resist temptation. That's when he dragged you out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of light.

By doing that, you were born again. His spirit lives in you. And you have now, you, child of God, you who have trusted in Jesus, you have the power of God in you to resist temptation.

Yes, you do. But you need something else. You need him to come beside you, as it were. He's in us. You need him to kind of speak up as it is.

[10 : 45] We need him to kind of coach us up a little bit. He gives us the ability, but he doesn't do it for us. What he does is he models and guides us with the empowering presence already in us, but you have to make a decision here.

Remember James 4, 7? Submit yourselves, therefore, to God. You resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

Give yourself, first of all, to God and his ways, as seen in Jesus, by acknowledging how desperately you need his help.

Submit yourself to God. That's first. Submit. Give yourself to him and his ways in Jesus. Only then can you stand against the enemy.

As long as you're circling the donut shop, you're not in a good place to resist. Resistance begins with submission to God, to Christ, to his way.

[12:08] Now, for the model. Our Lord Jesus can help us because he knows what it means to face temptation and win. Never fail.

Win. Hebrew says he suffered when tempted. You know, when we think of Christ's sufferings, we tend to think only about the cross, and we should, because the cross is the height of his sufferings. But there are other ways in which our Lord Jesus suffered for us. He suffered the attacks of human beings that he created. He suffered the limitations of a human body. Think about it this way, kids. Phenomenal cosmic power in a little human being made of flesh and blood. I just kidding. That makes my...

Okay? Who is Jesus? Right? But what we think of most of the time when we think of his temptations, we think of the devil.

[13:10] We think of that time in particular. The devil went after Jesus more than once. But there was one time that we all think about where Jesus was tempted by the enemy, and he models for us there and teaches us in so many things.

We're going to get started this Sunday. Matthew 4 or Luke 4, both fours, record the temptation of Jesus. I'm going to use Matthew 4.

It's not on the screen. I hope you have a Bible. The one's in the pew. You can turn there if you like. Matthew chapter 4. You remember this passage. Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.

After fasting 40 days and 40 nights, he was hungry. And the tempter came to him and said, If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread.

But he answered, It is written, Man should not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God. Then the devil took him to the holy city, Jerusalem, set him on the pinnacle of the temple, the highest part, and said to him, If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down, for it is written.

[14:22] I read the Bible too, boy. He will command his angels concerning you, and on their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone. Jesus said to him again, It is written, You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.

Confirm it's your will. Don't up, Christian. And again, the devil took him to a very high mountain. Showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory.

And he said to him, All these I will give you if you will fall down and worship me. Then Jesus said to him, Be gone, Satan, for it is written, You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve.

Then the devil left him. And behold, angels came and were ministering to him. Wow. First of all, our Lord is led by the Spirit into the wilderness to square off with the devil at the very beginning of his ministry.

Who led him into the wilderness? Who's the Spirit? Thank you. Like Israel, Jesus goes into the wilderness.

[15:42] But where Israel failed, this new Israel, the true Son of God, will succeed. Basically, the devil seeks to tempt our Lord to prove that he's the Son of God.

Twice he says it, right? If you are the Son of God. It's about, are you really? Now, Jesus had just come from his baptism. What did he, what happened at his baptism? What did he hear?

God spoke and God said what? You are my beloved Son and you are well pleased. So Jesus already had the Word of God to say who he was.

Now, the devil comes along and says, really? The same trick in the garden. Did God really say? The new Adam is facing the same temptation.

Did God really say? Are you really? Will you take God? Come on, Christians. Will you take God at his word or must he confirm it?

[16:41] Donut Christian. I'm a donut Christian, y'all. Please, don't think I'm picking on you. I am picking on Derek, but nobody else.

The devil is tempting our Lord to doubt his identity. And he wants him to use his power and position for his own provision and protection to benefit and comfort himself, watch this, without the cross. This is a strong temptation, y'all. Because Jesus was weak from fasting from food for 40 days. He was as near death as he will ever be until the cross.

40 days of fasting, that's no food. It seems he may have had water because if he didn't have water, this would be a supernatural fast because you can't go 40 days without water.

It seems to be that this was a, he faced this in his humanity. So after 40 days of not eating, you can still be alive, but you can barely move.

[18:03] It's hard to understand that because I've never been hungry. Not like that. I fasted maybe three days at the most, and I know how I felt.

40? 40? What he needed at that time was comfort in the form of food and water because he was human.

And what did the devil say? Well, since you're hungry, make some bread. You have power to just make these stones turn into it. Come on, man. Open the bakery. Second, show the world that you're God's son.

Jump off the temple. He's going to catch you. The Bible says so. He's going to catch you. Third, the kingdoms. Aren't you the king?

Aren't you the Davidic king? Aren't you the one that was to come to rule the nations? I'll give them to you, baby, because I got them. The whole world lies in the hands of the evil one. He's ruling the nations of unbelief.

[19:05] Listen, I got them. I will give them. You can have all the glory. All you got to do, just one little thing. Just bow down and worship me just one time.

I'm not asking for a lifelong commitment. I just want a thing. So just one time.

If the Lord had just just did this, that would have been enough.

And we would not have a savior. No big deal. But that head, Bob, that that one just giving in just one donut.

I'm sorry. I'm stuck on these donuts now. One little thing. Big benefits.

[20:10] One little knot. Huge. Baby, I'm going to pay. It's going to pay out. Dan Doriani, one of the great commentators here and pastor and former and theologian says, temptation invites a man or woman to take something that is good when for some when for some reason the person tempted does not have the right to that good thing or cannot at that moment use it properly.

Thus temptation begins with something that is good and perverts it. You're not married and you and your boyfriend are being tempted, you know.

sex is a good thing but at that moment you don't have the right to it because of your situation.

You're not married. A good thing and a good desire but at that moment you are not in a position to use it properly.

The devil even twisted scripture to make it sound like the Bible would justify the Lord's disobedience and pursuit of the easy way. Twisted the Bible, the very word of God.

[21:34] That never happens today. if the Lord had given in to this path of least resistance then the devil would have become his master humanly speaking.

Humanity would have been doomed for he would have sinned against God to save himself. No longer could he represent us as the perfect man. You see the devil is the ultimate con artist.

We could say of Genesis 3 in the beginning was the con. The devil by trickery leads you to believe you're getting what you want by listening to him but in reality he is getting what he wants.

And Adam and Eve fell for it in the beginning was the con. And it worked. And it still does. More times than we want to admit he's still conning us.

So what do we do? Our Lord Jesus resisted temptation because his desires were holy. Hebrews 4 15 remember we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses but one who is in every respect has been tempted as we are yet without sin.

[22:49] In every respect tempted as we are without sin. Why? Why without sin? His heart was totally devoted to the Lord his God which is why his father which is why he is without sin.

Listen how does temptation work? The issue is our desires. The issue is our heart. James 1 13 to 15 let no one say when he is tempted I'm being tempted by God for God cannot be tempted with evil.

Holy holy holy and he himself tempts no one. Watch this but each person is tempted when he is Lord and enticed by his own desire. Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin and sin when it's fully grown brings forth death.

Temptation is a matter of your own desires being pulled toward that which dishonors God. God the word there in James referring to desire refers to strong desires.

It is sometimes translated lust but we think lust only refers to sex stuff. No lust strong desires can refer to a lot of things.

[24 : 03] It means an intense longing in this context for an improper object or a proper object and wrong way. anything that gets in your way of the pursuit of God in Christ is a desire pulling you in the wrong direction.

And see how strong desires can cause us to be lured away from safety by trickery enticed baited like a fish. I don't know how many of you like the fish I'm told that they use things called lures. These little things that you throw it in the water and it moves with the water or you can make it move by reeling and pulling and you reel and fish see this little wiggling thing in the water. Maybe it's colorful. Maybe it looks like something fish would like. I don't know. You fishermen can tell me. But it's in the water and it's wiggling. Well fish see the wiggling and they go that must be something good to eat.

It looks edible to me. And the fish go and once they bite down on the lure there's something under the lure called the hook.

[25 : 27] And when they bite down on the lure what they end up biting down onto also is the hook and now they're hooked.

Can't let go. I'm trying to let go but I can't. It's caught and then I saw the movie.

Reels you in. the Bible talks about sin that way. Our desires we see something shiny or someone shiny or something or some idea whatever it is we see something that says I think I would like that. Oh no I really want that. And once we grab hold I can't let go we're hooked.

It could be something a strong desire for a good thing for love for money for friends for respect for security all good things but if it's not in the right way for the wrong reason or in an improper way it becomes a temptation.

[26 : 56] Bonhoeffer wrote a book believe it or not on temptation this little known book very tiny little booklet he says this with irresistible power desire seizes mastery over the flesh it makes no difference whether it is sexual desire or ambition or vanity or desire for revenge or love of fame and power or grief or grief for money joy in God watch this is extinguished in us and we seek all our joy in the treasure at this moment God is quite unreal to us he loses all reality and only desire for the creature is real Satan does not here fill us with hatred of God but with forgetfulness of God the lust thus aroused envelops the mind and the will of man or woman in deepest darkness the powers of clear discrimination and of decision are taken from us we can't we can't think straight the question presents itself is what the flesh desires really sin in this case it is here that everything within me rises up against the word of

God you see the word of God is clear the word of God speaks it doesn't equivocate it doesn't say I think this is a good idea I think this is the word of God speaks clearly and says follow me this is right this is wrong there are many things that are black and white there's some gray areas but those areas call for wisdom most things really especially morally speaking are black and white God says don't he says do no yes it's clear but when those moments when our desires when our desires what we long for love respect fame fortune whatever when our desires are pulled and pulled he Bonhoeffer was right we lose our minds clear discrimination goes out the door and the word of God gets let go let's go back to donut

I'm going to end with this let's go back to donut Christian let me ask you some questions this is for hands now do you think he felt peace about his decision to eat the donuts if you think he felt peace hand up okay if you think he did not feel peace hand up you're wrong it's my illustration I can no this is my opinion I'm putting it out there as my opinion I think he did feel peace because the desire was fulfilled you see the strong desire was fulfilled now I didn't say it was a lasting peace I just said peace so that's okay he did feel he felt like oh I think he isn't that what happens he felt led how many times have I heard

Christians tell me over the years 30 years of ministry of pastoral ministry I've heard from Philadelphia to D.C.

to Miami to Chattanooga Tennessee I've heard this time and time again I feel led pastor most of the time such who feel led to do something is always to what they desired have you noticed that I've heard very few believers tell me they feel led to deny themselves take up the cross and follow Jesus that's what he said but we don't feel led that way why do we always feel led to go the path of least resistance the least self denial least waiting least humility least long suffering and sometimes least work we always be careful and not always

[31 : 32] I'm using that word loosely okay but so many times believers feel led we say we feel led it is always the easiest way the way we always wanted the way we want it's like God is he's he's clued into whatever you want whatever you want not what I want whatever you want it's all good it's one of the devil's greatest cons you can have what you want without change you can have what you want without sacrifice you can lose weight and eat as many donuts as you like just like always Jesus never sinned but he was tempted because why did he never sin he desired the glory of the father more than anything what do you desire we must see

Jesus suffering temptation for us in our place do you see him he longs for the glory of the father he wants to do nothing but to please the father he says I always do what pleases him he longs to glorify the father and in that case to glorify the father in your salvation see Jesus in your place so that you will go to him with your desires and lay them at his feet submit yourself therefore to God then resist the devil submit your desires he knows about your desires remember he he's made like us he resisted the temptations cause he's made like us he knows your desires he understands your desires and yet he says to you love the Lord your God with all your heart with all your soul with all your might and love your neighbor as yourself delight yourself in the Lord and he will give you the desires of your heart but how do you get the desires of your heart you delight yourself in the Lord and your desires are conforming to his will you're submitting you're loving him more than life itself family do you see it we are led astray because we love something more we love something more we want something more than Jesus and we have not just want we have to have it and at that moment at that moment you bite that's when you bite down and the enemy reels you in resist the devil we'll talk more we're not done yet resist the devil in Jesus name for

Jesus sake according to Jesus word and the enemy will flee from you father bless your word to your people's hearts may it go down deep protect us oh god the enemy this nation this world is so full of temptations in in Jesus name amen