

Title: TEMPTATION, FAITH, DUTY, LUKE 17:1-10.  
(Chatham, NJ; 10/03/10, AM) [Pd – Devotional]

Theme: Jesus discusses temptations, faith, and duty.

Purpose: To reflect on these issues in word and song.

Introduction:

1. Jesus approaches the end of his ministry; he nears Jerusalem.
2. Several miscellaneous items are addressed without parables.
3. Today we want to reflect on them, believe them, and live by them.

I. Temptations: Have Realistic Expectations (1-4).

- The first statement, “Temptations are sure to come,” reminds us of Ben Franklin’s axiom, “In this world, nothing can be said to be certain except death and taxes.”
- Temptations are a part of this sinful environment.
- Although the Lord’s Prayer asks God to lead us away from those things, we will always have conflict and sin to deal with in this life.
- If your expectations are a life free from worry and conflict or if you keep hoping for such a time, you’re expectations are not realistic.
- Here Jesus emphasizes the perpetrators: “woe to the one through whom they come.”
- Punishment for tempting someone is severe.
- “Beware!” “Be on your guard!” “Watch yourselves!” “Pay attention to yourselves!” These all translate 17:3. (also Luke 21:34)
- Immediately he tells us how to deal with those who sin against us: rebuke and forgive.
- Forgiveness must always be the response; it is the response that God always gives to us.
- Temptation, sin, and conflict find their only proper resolution in the mercy of God.

**Song: My Faith Looks Up to Thee, 586**

II. Faith: Raise Your Expectations (5-6).

- What prompted the disciples’ statement, “Increase our faith”?
- Is it because of the teaching he has just given them?
- However, this is a universal challenge for all Christians.
- Jesus doesn’t grant them their request; he tells them what to aim for.
- Is he suggesting that their faith is small and thus chastising them for the smallness of their faith?
- Is he telling them to raise their expectations?
- Perhaps the task of being faithful seems daunting at times.
- Yet we only need a small amount: the size of a seed.
- That might just be the message; using the little faith you have might be more useful and powerful than you think.
- You don’t need to increase it just put it to work.

**Song: O for a Faith That Will Not Shrink, 540**

III. Duty: Lower Your Expectations (7-10).

- The servant’s work is never done.
- He comes in from the field and then must serve dinner to his master before he eats.
- Does the servant receive thanks for what he is paid to do?
- Likewise we must learn the value of saying, “We are unworthy servants.”

- Romans 12:3 is consistent with the humility bred by the notion of being an unworthy servant.
- Furthermore doing our duty is no cause for pride.
- We are saved by grace, not by works; no one can boast before God, Eph. 2:8-9.
- It is actually comforting to know that I don't have to climb a spiritual ladder of success.
- Let's strive to do our duty and let God decide the rest.
- Humility is never out of place in the Christian community.