

Temptation      Genesis 38      Lent midweek 2, February 28, 2018

How then can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?" And as she spoke to Joseph day after day, he would not listen to her, to lie beside her or to be with her. Gen 38:19ff Today we look at temptation

Dear friends in Christ, today we continue our Lenten journey with Joseph. We see him enslaved, far from home. In the land of Egypt, among foreign peoples and foreign Gods. He would seem to be alone.

Yet God was with him, and he rose in the house of Potiphar, Where he was in charge of his masters house and all he had. God was with Joseph and blessed Potiphar as well.

Yet here in this foreign land, the adversary worked against Joseph. And he used the good place Joseph was in to tempt him. He used Potiphar's wife to tempt Joseph. Yet Joseph refused her. And when she grabbed his cloak, he left it behind and fled. Joseph was accused, and Joseph was convicted and Joseph was thrown into prison.

But what can we learn from Josephs temptation?

1. Joseph recognized that God was with him. He did not focus on the wrongs done him. He saw God with him even though he had been kidnapped. He saw God with him even though he was a slave. Thus, He did not think what he could do or what he could get. He saw how Good God was to him in the foreign land.
2. Joseph knew his sin was against God. He did not try to excuse it and see why it was OK just this once. Instead, he refused, saying how can I sin against God? He knew his God.
3. Joseph fled sin. He didn't find a reason to stay. He didn't say he could handle it and trust in himself. He fled. He fled even when it meant giving up his cloak, his status. He left it behind because his God was with him, even when his status was not.

Now it didn't look like it turned out well for Joseph. He was thrown into prison. Yet God was with him, and his wealth and success in Potiphar's house did not become a trap for him. How much higher praise that God was with him in prison than that he ruled Potiphar's house.

Now how can we deal with temptation.

1. See how God is with us. Do not focus on what mean do to you but what God does for you and his presence. Read his word. Use his gifts of baptism and the supper. Meet with his people and encourage and be encouraged. God promises to be where two or three are gathered, there in the midst of them. Gather round his gifts of word and sacrament. Focus on what God has done instead of the harms others did.
2. Know the law of God, that nothing is excused because its just how we are. Nothing is OK just because its just once. Nothing is OK because they did me wrong or I need it just one time. Even that one time was against God, and even for that one time, Christ died to satisfy the wrath of God.
3. Flee from sin. Don't say I can handle it. You'd tell your kids to leave a party with underage alcohol and sex, wouldn't you? Because it is a bad place for them to be. You also. Avoid shows that use bad language, that teach sex outside of marriage is OK. Avoid company that does the same.

And what when this fails, and we still sin. What then?

God says that he provides a way out, a way of escape. It isn't that we don't sin, it isn't that we flee, it isn't that we see him. It is that we have a Champion. We stand against temptation and even sin because Christ has defeated sin for us. Go to God, go to his son for forgiveness. That you can stand under temptation.

Things may not go smoothly for you. You may be rejected by friends, considered a nerd, a bit of a stick in the mud. But God will be with you in word and sacrament. Trust him.