

SICK OF EVIL • Week 4: Hall Pass to Harm

Daily Briefing • Day 2 of 5 • I Had No Choice

WEEKLY MEMORY VERSE

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.

1 Corinthians 10:13

Yesterday we drew the line between being tempted and embracing it. Today we deal with the excuse that shows up the second you draw that line: “I could not help it, the temptation was too strong, I do not have the power.” You can watch or listen to Sunday's message at 1mso.church or on the One Missoula app.

OPENING PRAYER

Heavenly Father, I pray that You would help me to resist temptation. You say that I've been liberated from sin and filled with the Holy Spirit, so I pray that You would train me to put to death what is earthly in me and walk in holiness. God, when I stumble, I pray that You forgive me and then help me to see where the failure happened so that I can live free from the temptation. I pray these things in the name of Jesus. Amen.

TODAY'S TEACHING

There are two sentences Christians say that sound humble and are actually the opposite. The first is “I am just a slave to this, I have always been addicted to it.” The second is “I do not have the power to beat this.” Both feel like honest admissions. Both are worth thinking hard about before you say them again.

Here is why. Scripture says that if you belong to Christ, the old you was crucified and you are no longer enslaved to sin (Romans 6:6-7). It says you have been set free from sin (Romans 6:17-18). Scripture also says the same Spirit who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you right now (Romans 8:11), which means you have the power to resist the temptation. Sunday we read that God's seed abides in the believer (1 John 3:9). So when a Christian says they are still a slave to something, they are saying something about their spiritual condition that is worth examining honestly rather than repeating as a go-to excuse.

Then there is the promise of God's protection. “*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*” (1 Corinthians 10:13). Read that slowly. Not one temptation you have ever faced was unique to you. Not one of them exceeded what you could handle. And in every single one, there was a door out.

Which means the honest version of what happened is not that you had no choice. It is that the door was there and you did not take it. This isn't meant to be shaming; it's meant to paint the possibilities for future victory over temptation.

The writer of Hebrews puts this even more bluntly. He is writing to Christians who were facing real hostility for their faith. In the centuries that followed, Christians were imprisoned, tortured, and executed rather than renounce Jesus. That is still happening in parts of the world today. Against that backdrop he writes to people who were tempted to fold and says, “In your struggle against sin you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood” (Hebrews 12:4). He is not being cruel. He is telling them the truth about where their resistance actually stopped.

A good metaphor for these concepts is running for distance. You have adopted a limiting belief that you can only run one mile, so when mile one ends you stop and say your body gave out. However, God says you can actually run two miles, and He has promised He will never ask you for five (because five is actually beyond your ability). We quit at one mile and call it our limit, when the truth is we gave up early in a fight we were equipped to keep fighting. When it comes to sin, we give in to the temptation too easily and God promises He won't ever let the temptation go beyond our ability.

So this lands somewhere uncomfortable. If you are in Christ, you are not a slave. You have a new heart, the Holy Spirit inside you, and God's own promise of a way out every time. Which leaves two honest explanations when you sin: either you wanted your sin more than you wanted Him in that moment, or you quit struggling before you had to. Neither one is comfortable. But both are far more hopeful than being a slave, because both leave the hope of actual change and future victory.

READ & MEDITATE

1 Corinthians 10:13

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.

Hebrews 12:3-4

Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted. ⁴In your struggle against sin you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood.

Read 1 Corinthians 10:13 and count the promises in it. There are more than one. Then read Hebrews 12:3-4 and notice what the writer tells them to consider first, before he tells them where their resistance stopped.

REFLECT

Reminder: honest introspection and Scripture-informed self-assessment is far more beneficial than self-delusion and wishful thinking.

Two statements that sound humble: "I am a slave to this," and "I do not have the power to beat it."

Have you said either one in an attempt to justify your sin? Which one, and about what?

Scripture says a person in Christ is no longer enslaved to sin and has the Spirit who raised Jesus living in them. Sit with the gap between that and what you have been saying about yourself. What do you actually make of it? If you truly are enslaved to your sin, what does that mean about your belief that you are a born-again new creation with the Holy Spirit living inside of you? (Reminder from yesterday: Experiencing temptation is not the same thing as embracing temptation.)

Fill in the blanks from 1 Corinthians 10:13:

God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your _____, but with the temptation he will also provide the _____ of escape, that you may be able to endure it. (1 Corinthians 10:13)

*These fill-in-the-blank questions use the ESV text. Your Bible may use different words for the same idea.

Think about the last time you gave in to something. Replay the game film in your mind and look back honestly. Where was the door out that you didn't take?

The book of Hebrews was written to people under real pressure, and Christians have been imprisoned and killed rather than deny Jesus ever since. Their temptation was to renounce Christ in order to save their own lives, prevent imprisonment, not get hurt, or rescue their loved ones.

Measured against their example, how hard are you actually fighting your non-life-threatening temptations? What would it look like to push past the point where you normally quit?

You decided you can run one mile. God says you can run two and promises He will never ask for five.

What is the self-imposed limit you have accepted about yourself? Name the specific thing you have wrongly decided you cannot beat.

Where did that belief actually come from? A past failure, something someone told you, or just how long you have surrendered to it?

That leaves two honest explanations for sin: you wanted it more in that moment, or you quit early. Both can change. Slavery cannot.

Which of the two is usually true for you? Be specific rather than picking the easier answer.

What is one concrete thing you could do this week to either want God more in that moment or to hold out longer than you normally do? Do some honest introspective self-assessment before moving on.

PRAYER

Write your prayer or pray out loud. As we've read, God's ear is not dull. Talk to Him like He is listening and wants to hear from you.

MEMORY VERSE

Write or recite 1 Corinthians 10:13 from memory:
