SERMON OUTLINE

SERMON TITLE: How to Pass the Tests of Life

SERMON REFERENCE: James 1:1-4

LWF SERMON NUMBER: #0507

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1) INTRODUCTION
   a) James 1:1-4
      i) The word “temptations” in this passage means “tests” or “trials.”
   b) We each face tests in life, and we need to learn how to pass those tests.
   c) It is important to remember that the words “testing” and “temptation” are used interchangeably.
   d) Today’s message will help us learn how to pass the tests of life.

2) THE FACT OF TEMPTATION (JAMES 1:1)
   a) We see in this passage that the people are “scattered.”
      i) The people have endured persecution.
   b) James is speaking figuratively in this passage when he says, “to the twelve tribes.”
      i) He is comparing the New Testament saints to the Old Testament saints.
      ii) He is comparing the church to Israel and Judah.
      iii) James is speaking to Christians everywhere.
         (1) This is a letter to Christians, wherever they may be, who suffer trials, temptations and tribulation.
   c) James 1:2
      i) This Scripture says “when” we fall into temptations, not “if.”
      ii) One thing we can expect in life is difficulty.
         (1) All people fall into diverse trials and temptations.
         (2) Christianity does not make us immune to problems.
   d) Persecution, trials and testing are a part of life.
      i) They are unavoidable and universal.
      ii) They are inevitable.

3) THE FORMS OF TEMPTATION (JAMES 1:2)
   a) The word “divers” (or diverse) means “various kinds.”
      i) We all face trials and testings, but my trials and testings may not be like yours, and your trials and testings may not be like mine.
   b) Trials and testings are many and varied, but they come in two categories:
      i) They may simply be a test.
         (1) 1 Peter 4:12
         (2) These trials are used as fire is used to test the purity of metal.
         (3) This kind of testing is sent by God to cause us to stand.
      ii) Other temptations and trials are sent by the devil.
         (1) These temptations may not only be a trial or a test, but they may also be a solicitation to do evil or to sin.
         (2) These temptations are not sent by God.
            (a) God tempts no one with evil.
               (i) James 1:13
            (b) Trials are sent by God to cause us to stand; temptation to sin is sent by the devil to cause us to stumble.
(i) One is meant for our maturity; the other is meant for our misery.

c) James uses the word “temptations” interchangeably.
   i) It can be used as either a trial to cause us to stand or a temptation from the devil to cause us to sin.
   ii) While God does not cause both kinds of temptations, He does allow both kinds.
      1) God will use both kinds, whether or not it is a testing of our faith or a temptation to sin.

4) THE FORCE OF TEMPTATION (JAMES 1:2)
   a) The phrase “fall into” shows how these temptations come to us.
      i) “Fall into” in the Greek can be translated to mean “fall into suddenly.”
         1) Luke 10:30
            a) The same word is used to describe the man who “fell among thieves.”
   b) Diverse temptations can be serious and can come suddenly and savagely.
      i) We don’t know when they’re coming.
   c) We need to be ready at our average moment to meet what the devil may throw at us at his selected moment.
      i) Again, temptations and trials come to us all, saved and unsaved alike.
         1) Job 14:1

5) THE FACING OF TEMPTATION (JAMES 1:3)
   a) When temptation comes, it is like taking a test.
      i) It is the testing of our faith.
      ii) We should do our homework now so that when the examination comes, we are prepared and know how to face it.
   b) It is not God’s will that we have the vacancy of temptation but that we have victory in temptation.
   c) It is not a sin to be tempted.
      i) Temptation to sin is not a sin.
         1) Hebrews 4:15
            a) Jesus felt what we feel.
               i) Jesus is the God-man.
                  1. Jesus was just as much man as though He were not God and just as much God as though He were not man.
               ii) Jesus faced in His manhood and in His humanity the temptations that we face.
                  1) He knows what we face.
                  2) Jesus was tempted as we are tempted, but Jesus never sinned.
   d) Testings, trials and temptations are not necessarily because of sin.
      i) Sometimes during trials, we examine ourselves and pick ourselves apart trying to determine what we did wrong.
(1) It may be that we did absolutely nothing wrong but that God is simply testing our faith.
(2) If we do not understand this, we may become discouraged.
   (a) Seeds of doubt and discouragement sprout in the soil of ignorance.
   ii) When we face temptations, we need to do so with a wholesome attitude.

e) 1 Corinthians 10:13
   i) The word “but” is used three times in this passage.
   (1) These three rebuttals answer the following arguments we use when we blame the Lord for why we don’t pass the test:
      (a) My temptation was unique; no one else ever went through what I’m going through.
         (i) “But such as is common to man.”
      (b) The temptation was too strong.
         (i) “But God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able.”
         (ii) Nothing comes to us but what first comes through God; God allows it even if the devil sends it.
         (iii) Psalm 103:14
            1. God knows our frame and the load that we can carry, and God is faithful and will not suffer us to be tempted above that we’re able.
   (c) There was no way to pass the test.
      (i) “But will with the temptation also make a way to escape.”
      (ii) It is God who makes a way.
         1. It will not be in our strength.
         2. We will fail if we try to do it by ourselves.

f) God’s plan is for us to face the temptations of life and to not make excuses; for God is faithful, and He is with us.

6) THE FRUITS OF TEMPTATION (JAMES 1:3–4)
   a) If God could stop the trial or temptation, then why doesn’t He?
      i) God is working something in our lives.
   b) Everything that God does and that He allows is for a reason.
      i) It is for our good and for His glory.
   c) In these verses in James, the Lord mentions the four fruits, or reasons, for our temptations:
      i) Enjoyment
         (1) James 1:2
         (2) We can praise the Lord in our trials, knowing that He is getting ready to send us a blessing.
            (a) Trials and temptations, rightly used, are a prelude to a big blessing: God will bless us in a wonderful way.
      ii) Endurance
         (1) James 1:3
(a) The Greek word for “patience” in this passage means “to bear up under,” “to endure,” or “to be steadfast.”
   (i) This word has a much stronger meaning that just being calm in a jittery situation.
(2) The trying of our faith works steadfastness and endurance.
(3) The trials and tests of life are what keep us going, trusting and praying; they keep us relying upon God.

iii) Enlargement
   (1) James 1:3–4
      (a) The Greek word for “perfect” in this passage does not mean sinless, but mature.
      (b) Hebrews 2:10
         (i) Jesus was always sinless; there was never a time when He wasn’t sinless.
      (c) The word for “perfect” speaks of growth, enlargement and maturity.
(2) We grow when we work under pressure.
(3) God does not want us to live weakly and to die feebly, but He wants us to grow and mature until we’re strong.

iv) Enrichment
   (1) James 1:3–4
      (a) God wants to enrich us in everything, wanting nothing.
      (2) God has a plan; He is not working against us.
      (3) God wants to enrich us, which is why we can count it all joy when we fall into diverse temptations.

7) CONCLUSION
   a) God has a wonderful plan for us.
   b) Trials will not rob us; they will enrich us.
      i) God desires us to live a life with no inadequacies.
      ii) God wants to bless us and make us rich.
   c) No matter how big and dark the clouds may look that are following you today, God wants to bless you; and standing in the shadows, you will find Jesus.
   d) Sometimes we tend not to take God at His Word and count it all joy, and we complain.
      i) We need to remember that temptations are universal, and they come suddenly.
      ii) Temptations or trials may be sent by God to cause us to stand or sent by Satan to cause us to stumble, but God is over it all.
      iii) God will always make a way to escape.
   e) You can count it all joy today if you have a personal relationship with the Savior.
   f) Place your trust in Jesus today.
g) Call upon Jesus. Repent (turn) from your sins, and turn to Jesus. Ask Him to forgive you of your sins, and acknowledge Him as Lord of your life.
   i) Romans 3:23
   ii) Romans 10:9-10
   iii) Romans 10:13
   iv) Acts 16:31
   v) John 3:16