

**Title:** “House of Prayer – Lead Us Not into Temptation” – Matt. 6:9-13

**Aim:** The cry of our hearts should be “Lead me, Lord!”

**Intro:** How was your week? What victories did you enjoy? What failures did you endure? What trials came your way? What temptations to sin did you encounter? How’d you do in the face of temptation? The word “temptation” has a two-fold meaning. The basic meaning is “a test, a proving, a trial of a person’s fidelity/integrity” (Strong’s). It carries “the idea of testing metal to determine if it is genuine.” It can mean simply a trial that we go thru, a difficulty we face, a test of how we will handle trouble; or it can mean a temptation/prodding toward sin. Of course, anytime we face difficulty, there is a temptation to respond wrongly, which is sin. Certainly true, maybe an understatement, that temptation, be it trial or push toward sin, is a major part of the believer’s life. It’s an ongoing battle, a fact born out in Scripture, whether we study the life of Christ or Paul, Abraham or David. In Romans 7 Paul describes his own life as a struggle w/in. *“For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing”* (Rom.7:19). Peter wrote (I Pet.4:12), *“Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you.”* So, temptation/trial very much a part of our everyday lives. Theme: House of Prayer – God has called His Church/people to be a house of prayer, a people of prayer, a people who encounter God together when we gather & individually day by day, so that others may encounter the living God thru us. So, the emphasis today is this: if temptation is a major part of our lives, then shouldn’t prayer regarding temptation be a major part of the prayer lives of people of prayer? Once again, our text is Matthew 6:9-13 [READ]. Jesus taught us that we should pray, “Lead us not into temptation...” An immediate difficulty arises here. Doesn’t Scripture teach us in James 1:13 that God doesn’t tempt us to sin? *“Let no one say when he is tempted, ‘I am being tempted by God,’ for God cannot be tempted with*

*evil, & He Himself tempts no one.*” It’s clear here that what is meant by being tempted is “being lured into sin/evil.” God doesn’t/won’t do that to His children. Then why should we pray that God would not lead us into temptation when His word says He won’t? At the same time, we know from Scripture that God does test the faith/fidelity of His children. In that same passage, James 1, we are urged in vs2-3 to ***“Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness...”*** Same root word in vs2 (trials) as in vs13 (tempted), tho the wd “testing” in vs3 is different, meaning “a proving.” But, the point is that God won’t prod us toward evil, but He will test us/our faith, just as He did w/Abraham when He told him to take Isaac, the son of the promise & offer him upon an altar. But if God does test us, allowing, even bringing various trials into our lives, according to His purposes, then why should we pray, “Lead us not into temptation” (testing)? Here are my thoughts, w/which you may agree or disagree. The previous 2 petitions in the Lord’s Prayer can be reduced to the 1<sup>st</sup> 2 wds in each: “Give us” (this day our daily bread), & “Forgive us” (our debts as we forgive our debtors). This petition can also be reduced to 2 wds: “Lead us...” Let me say that the literal translation of this whole phrase is indeed “do not lead us into temptation.” The wd, “eisphero” is the combination of 2 wds, “eis” – “into” & “phero” – “lead” – “conduct, carry, bear w/one’s self (w/the suggestion of force or speed, like being borne in a ship over the sea), bear up, uphold, bring to/ forward” (Strong’s). So, while not aiming to change what this phrase is saying, my point is this: if God is leading us, He will never lead us into temptation (prod us to sin or cause us to sin). And if God is leading us, He will carry us thru trial, the testing of our faith, & perfect us in the process. A verse that has impacted my life is Matthew 17:1, which seems rather generic: ***“And after 6 days Jesus took w/Him Peter & James, & John his brother, & led them up a high mountain by themselves.”*** I know I’ve shared this, but at a particular difficult time in my life I read this vs & the phrase, “Jesus took

w/Him...” shot thru me like a laser. Would Jesus choose to take me w/Him, knowing my sin/failure/weaknesses? I began to pray, “Lord, take me w/You. Wherever You want me to go, take me w/You.” We read the wonderful promise & admonishment in Galatians 5:16, 25 – **“But I say, walk by the Spirit, & you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.” “If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by [keep in step w/] the Spirit.”** God wants to lead us! He has put His Spirit w/in us to lead us in victory over temptation. Thru the prophet Isaiah God made this wonderful promise to His people: **“Fear not, for I am w/you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you w/My righteous right hand”** (Is.41:10). He has promised that He will not allow us **“to be tempted beyond our ability, but w/the temptation He will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it”** (I Cor.10:13). I think that refers both to temptation to sin & trials we encounter. The point is not as so often misunderstood that “God must think I’m pretty strong or He wouldn’t allow this trial/test.” No, He’s the One who’s strong & mighty. The point of this phase in the Lord’s Prayer is dependence. “Lord, lead me, carry me, bear me up; I need You!” Jesus is our **“great high priest who has passed thru the heavens,”** who is able **“to sympathize w/our weaknesses”** because He is the **“one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet w/out sin”** (Heb.4:14-15). He is able to help us in our weaknesses, & to carry our burdens w/us. What a great invitation we are given in Matthew 11:28-30 – **“Come to Me, all who labor & are heavy laden, & I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, & learn from Me, for I am gentle & lowly in heart, & you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy, & My burden is light.”** So the cry of our hearts should be, “Lead me Lord! I’m so very weak, but if You lead me, I will not fall into/succumb to temptation. If You lead me, I will weather the storm under the shelter of Your wings. If You will lead me, I can go anywhere, do anything You desire. I am not alone & I am not afraid!” Then, of course, the point is to follow Him. Don’t call yourself

a Christian if you don't intend to follow Jesus! And we shouldn't pray "Lead us not into temptation" while making provision for the flesh. As commentator David Brown wrote, "He who honestly seeks & has the assurance of forgiveness for past sin, will strive to avoid committing it for the future. But conscious that 'when we would do good, evil is present w/us,' we are taught to offer this...petition," "Lead us not into temptation." Follow Jesus & you will not be led into temptation. Follow close to your Savior/Lord. In the midst of your trial, nestle close to Him – He'll get you thru, bear you up. Depend upon your living God, your Father in heaven. And in keeping w/the thought that we are to be a house of prayer – where those who don't yet know God can encounter Him thru us – our following our Lord Jesus is a witness/light to those around us. As we battle w/temptation & following His lead overcome; as we encounter various trials & endure & grow thru them, we point others to the living God, to the only Savior. So let us pray, "Father...give us our daily bread...forgive us our debts...& lead us not into temptation." "Lead us, Lord, we will follow." "Lord, take us w/You." God has said, "My house shall be called a house of prayer." Let us be a people of prayer.