

**Grace Bible Church**  
**Pastor Robert R. McLaughlin**  
**Tree Of Life**  
**Week Ending 4-25-2021**

\*\*\* As our regulars will surely be aware, Pastor is recuperating at this time (please continue to pray for his full recovery and comfort), so Pastor Kenny Hines has been standing in the gap and filling in, with assistance from Deacons John Medeiros, Jason Kauranen, as well as Samantha Medeiros. This edition will be based partly on my own personal notes on what they presented during the week's classes, so it be a bit shorter than previous ones (perhaps a relief to some!) but I shall ask the Holy Spirit to aid me in making sure the teaching which was presented is honored. Thanks for your faithfulness to the teaching of the Word of God and the execution of the PPOG!

Continuing the study of the doctrine of The Rapture as begun by Pastor McLaughlin, let us open in **1 Th 4:15-18**

**“For we say this to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of *the* archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who remain, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. Therefore, comfort one another with these words.”**

Paul was addressing some concerns among the congregation about whether those who had died before the Rapture would be left out which would understandably be cause for heartache. In fact, as verse 16 states, the dead in Christ – those who were born again but who have died during the Church Age, would be called first, and the living would follow after, as Pastor has taught in the previous lessons.

Phase one: Christ was resurrected

Phase two: the dead in Christ are called up “in the twinkling of an eye” and transformed

“For the Lord Himself will descend *with a shout*”

This “shout” refers to the commander rallying the soldiers before a battle. The Tribulation period is a time of preparation for war. This war will be the final showdown with “the rulers”, “powers”, “world forces of this darkness”, and the “spiritual forces of wickedness in heavenly places”, in which Satan will be removed from office as the ruler of the world and the Lord Jesus will claim His rightful place as King of Kings and Lord of Lords for the millennium. The archangel gives command to stand at attention, and the war trumpet sounds!

In **1 Cor 15:35-49**, Paul explains the resurrection of the dead in Christ, and the transformation, specifically, that a new body is created which is based on the old one but which is not the old one but something new. The earthly body is perishable and corruptible, but the perishable can not inherit the imperishable, and the corrupt and dying can not reside in heaven with the imperishable and

incorruptible God for eternity! It is a hard thing to grasp when you try to understand it in the context of normal everyday empirical experience. It must be understood in the context of the supernatural spiritual reality. “For we walk by faith (doctrine) not by sight (empirical experience).” (2 Cor 5:7) Now, in 1 Cor 15:51-52, Paul states as a dogmatic statement of fact (imperative mood) that we will be transformed in less than a second, at the last trumpet:

**“Behold, I am telling you a mystery; we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed.”**

The word for “behold” is a word that denotes amazement, as in “check *this* out, I’m going to show you something amazing!” Paul is revealing a great mystery. This is part of the mystery doctrine which was hidden in God (Eph 3:9) and not revealed to mankind, not even the prophets (Eph 3:5). So this is definitely something amazing and exciting!

**1 Th 4:17 Then we who are alive, who remain, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord.**

The word for “caught up” should be translated “seized”. This is not voluntary, it is not an act of human will. Wherever we are, whatever we are doing, even if we are asleep, we will be taken up by force.

## **II. God’s Timing**

**2 Pet 3:8-9 But do not let this one *fact* escape your notice, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years like one day. The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not willing for any to perish, but for all to come to repentance.**

We understand that the Rapture of the Church is *imminent*. That means it can happen *at any time*; there is no prophecy that must be fulfilled before it can happen. We are told some signs, but those signs are present throughout the entire Church Age! People in every age since the Church Age began have read the headlines and thought, “surely Christ is returning any day now!” That doesn’t mean He isn’t going to, He could return with a shout as you read this sentence! But He also could come back a long time from now. We believe He will come soon, because things are ramping up, things are really getting unstable, and not just in isolated places as before, but the whole world is now connected and moving as one like never before. But this is doesn’t mean we *know* that it is happening tomorrow or next year. No one knows when. But for this reason we are instructed explicitly to be ready at any time. The Lord will come when we least expect it (Matt 24:44). We hope and prepare, redeeming the time (consistent PMA of BD), for the days are evil (throughout the Church Age!) (Eph 5:16), and remain watchful and alert.

**1 Th 5:5-6 “for you are all sons of light and sons of day. We are not of night nor of darkness; 6 so then, let’s not sleep as others do, but let’s be alert and sober.”**

**Luk 12:35-36 “Be prepared, and *keep* your lamps lit. You are also *to be* like people who are waiting for their master when he returns from the wedding feast, so that they may immediately open *the door* for him when he comes and knocks.”**

**Luk 12:39-40 “But be sure of this, that if the head of the house had known at what hour the thief**

**was coming, he would not have allowed his house to be broken into. You too, be ready; because the Son of Man is coming at an hour that you do not think *He will.*”**

These passages tell us to be on alert and watchful and prepared. We are collectively the bride of Christ, and we must be preparing for the wedding. Does a bride to be ignore the preparations and live as one who is single in the months before the wedding? Does she leave everything up to others, assuming they will handle it, and concern herself with other things? I have never seen that! The bride-to-be is focused on all the preparations for her big day, with all excitement and hope and joy of one waiting for a secure hope! This ought to be our mindset as Church Age believers, and this is the purpose of this study – to orient us to this mindset. The Rapture is *imminent!* Do you believe it?

Be *watchful*, be *alert*, be **BOLD**. That is our message!

How can we do that? Are we not mere mortal men? The flesh is weak says scripture! Lucky for us, there’s an app for that – it’s called Bible doctrine and it’s powered by God the Holy Spirit! In the Church Age we believers alone have the privilege of the indwelling of HS (John 14:16-18) thanks to Christ’s work. No believers in any other dispensation had or will have this unique grace provision, and no other believers in any other dispensation have the unique mission *or* such potential for blessing in time and eternity as us! Maybe this is one reason why it was “hidden from ages and generations” (Col 1:26). But unfortunately, the majority of Christians today know nothing about this, having either never been taught it, or having rejected it and chosen to live as moral, upright, nice unbelievers with cross necklaces and a Bible that is nothing but a whole lot of inspiring stories. YOU are blessed to receive this teaching, do not waste it!

Christ left so that the HS could come and we had the opportunity to learn to live dependent on divine power and truth just as He Himself did during His earthly ministry. The power is the filling of the Spirit, being in fellowship with soul under influence of Him.

**Gal 5:16 “But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh.”**

**Gal 5:22-23 “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.”**

**Joh 15:8 “My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples.”**

**Rom 12:2 “And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed[supernaturally] by the renewing of your mind [via consistent PMA of Bible doctrine], that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.”**

Pastor has taught at length about John 15, the vine and branch doctrine. Those of you well-familiar with his ministry will know that we as the branch can do nothing apart from the sustaining vine which is the Lord Jesus Christ. Everything is dependent on our union with Christ via salvation by faith alone in Christ alone. There is NO spiritual life apart from regeneration, being born again (**Joh 3:3**), and after salvation, there is no legitimate production of fruit, i.e. divine good, apart from Christ (**Joh 15:4**) and the filling of the Spirit (**Joh 14:17**).

**Joh 12:26 If anyone serves Me, he must follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also; if anyone serves Me, the Father will honor him.**

We must be ready at a moment's notice; we must decrease, He must increase.

**Rom 1:1 “Paul, a bondservant of Christ Jesus, called as an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God”**

“Bondservant” is *‘latreuo’* meaning a hired servant who serves to minister, offer and worship.

We all have gifts to use to serve God. We bear much fruit when we are using our gifts to spread the gospel and edify the saints, serving in the local assembly, executing the PPG.

**Joh 16:13 “But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come.”**

**Joh 20:22 “And when He had said this, He breathed on them and \*said to them, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit.’”**

Remember that Jesus left so that faith could be called into focus. If Jesus is here in His resurrection body people would believe by seeing not by faith (remember Thomas). After resurrection He spends time only with those who had already believed. He also left to prepare rooms for us (**Joh 14:3**).

Be *watchful*, be *alert*, be **BOLD!** *And* – utilize the enabling power of the Holy Spirit and recover it whenever you sin by utilizing **1 Joh 1:9** to recover the filling of the Spirit.

It has been stated that no one can know the time the Rapture will occur (**Mar 13:32, Mat 24:36**), but we are told that there will be various signs. God the Holy Spirit has revealed this to us through scripture. Let us take a look at some.

### **III. Are We Living In the Last Days?**

**2 Tim 3:1 “But realize this, in the last days perilous times will come.”**

The word “last” is *‘eschatos’* which denotes an emphatic last; very very very last. It was used by sailors for last port, furthest away, as in no port after that. This is where we derive the term “eschatology.”

**2 Tim 3:2-4 “For people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, slanderers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good, treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God,**

This is the post-modern world to the tee. This describes the secular humanist but it also describes the religious humanist. Believers are in focus here as well as unbelievers. This is made clear near the end of the passage. This describes the world that has cast aside faith, reverence, and worship of the divine and replaced it with faith, reverence, and worship of self, of humanity. We worship ourselves and we worship pleasure above all. When God says our means of pleasing ourselves is evil and abominable we

get mad at God. We defy God. We deny God. We attack God. We hate God. We hate restraint! That is the definition of arrogance and unholiness and it starts with ungratefulness and disobedience, it begins in the home. The children are all abused according to the biblical definition – they are not evangelized or taught the Word, their souls are neglected and malnourished, their parents are unholy. So they all become self-righteous and proud, and self-willed.

**2 Tim 3:5 “holding to a form of godliness although they have denied its power; avoid *such people as these.*”**

“Godliness” is *‘eusebeia’*, which refers to the unique spiritual life of the Church Age. As we noted, this is a supernatural way of life which requires a supernatural power – which is God the Holy Spirit. God has provided us with a direct line to this divine power source (**2 Pet 1:3** – ‘godliness’ here is also *eusebeia*) in addition to the rebound technique so that we can execute the PPOG in spite of our failures. The filling of the Spirit, which refers to fellowship, i.e. we have fellowship with Him which we lose whenever we sin – God can not have fellowship with sin! Since these people, if they are believers, are living in sin, they have no fellowship. Unbelievers do not have the Holy Spirit indwelling them, and deny the power, following myriad false spiritual systems which are nothing but emotionalism and self-hypnosis, and believers who do not understand the filling of the Spirit and/or who reject rebound (**1 Joh 1:9**) *deny its power*. They may appear outwardly moral, and may be very self-righteous and legalistic, but they are filled with “dead men’s bones”, i.e. mental attitude sins and garbage in the soul. We see that today the most brazenly and outwardly *immoral* people think they are actually moral and claim to be spiritual!

**Rom 1** shows what people do who are like this, and the attacks on this verse and the abandonment of it by woke, people-pleasing apostate churches exemplifies the fact that we are in this state today even inside the church. Those who are in emotional and soul revolt against God hate a chapter like Rom 1 and want to erase it from existence. “They suppress the truth in unrighteousness.” Arrogance hates authority, because it sees itself as the only legitimate authority. It demands total autonomy while denying the rights of others. This is the **2 Tim 3** mentality. **Ps 2:1** gives a great description as well.

**Ps 2:1-3 Why are the nations restless  
And the peoples plotting in vain?  
The kings of the earth take their stand  
And the rulers conspire together  
Against the LORD and against His Anointed, saying,  
“Let’s tear their shackles apart  
And throw their ropes away from us!”**

Let’s tear *their* shackles apart and throw *their* ropes away from us!”

They hate God’s laws that say “you can’t do whatever you please!” Arrogance hates to be restrained! These people who “love pleasure more than God” are believers who profess to love God but ignore His Word and go against it without repentance or acknowledgment of sin, twisting or ignoring the scripture to justify it or declare it to be ok.

#### **IV. Are You Confident In What You Believe?**

The doctrine of the Rapture is important because it gives us HOPE, as well as a sense of purpose in understanding how we represent Him on earth while He is gone, because we are as the bride, keeping her lamp lit, waiting for the bridegroom to arrive. Does the bride in waiting let her lamp go out, and step away for a nightcap? Or is she too excited and too afraid to miss his arrival? We should be waiting with a sure hope, knowing that He WILL come during the night, so we must be alert and sober, and not sleep (**1 Th 5:6**). How can we remove any doubt and become firmly rooted in confidence? Learning all about what God has planned for our wedding and the feast and the room that is being prepared for us in the Father's house. This doctrine will give you confidence in the Lord's imminent return and our place as His bride. Would the Lord Jesus Christ leave His bride to suffer God's wrath on those who rejected Him? Never.

The 4<sup>th</sup> distinction from our Rapture Vs. Second Advent distinction chart is:

### **Rapture**

4. The Church goes to heaven, **Joh 14:3**.

### **Second Advent**

4. Church returns with Christ, **1Th 3:13**.

The gospel of John is pretty unique and we know this because Matthew Mark and Luke for the most part tell the same stories (parables) and events, but with different accounts, from different perspectives, but the gospel of John just throws you a monkey wrench, and because of the element of surprise, this gospel makes you want to pay attention a little more. The gospel of John was written later, and the Holy Spirit inspired John to reveal something different from the previous three. Pastor has done a wonderful, deep study of the gospel of John which is available on this website and is highly recommended!

**Joh 13:33 "Little children, I am with you a little while longer. You shall seek Me; and as I said to the Jews, [Jesus is talking to the non-Jewish believers, gentiles] I now say to you also, 'Where I am going, you cannot come.'**

**Joh 13:34 "A new commandment I give you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another."**

Notice that it's "*a new commandment*" and I believe that stems from the fact that Jesus says "even as I have loved you" – You see, I believe what makes this new commandment is the fact that we now have the great power demonstration, Jesus is the Great Power Demonstration, and His life, His ministry is the Great Power Experiment. The Great Power Experiment refers to the PPOG, and the unique spiritual life of the Church Age believer. Never before or again in human history will the individual believer have such potential for maximum glorification of God or such power given to us to enable it. You should understand and appreciate your potential and how blessed we all are to live in this most critical time!

**Joh 13:35-38 By this all *people* will know that you are My disciples: if you have love for one another.**

**Simon Peter \*said to Him, “Lord, where are You going?” Jesus answered, “Where I am going, you cannot follow Me now; but you will follow later.” Peter \*said to Him, “Lord, why can I not follow You right now? I will lay down my life for You.” Jesus \*replied, “Will you lay down your life for Me? Truly, truly I say to you, a rooster will not crow until you deny Me three times.**

**Joh 14:1-2 “Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father’s house are many rooms; if *that* were not so, I would have told you, because I am going *there* to prepare a place for you.”**

“In my Father’s house there are many rooms” is another reference to the Jewish wedding tradition. The Rapture is a wedding between the bride (the Church) and the bridegroom (TLJC). All of the symbolism is drawn from the wedding process which was elaborate. “Chuppah” is a word for the bridal chamber, or a canopy outside of it. When a man took a bride, part of the process involved building on to the family’s house a chamber for the bride to live in, and when the procession came from the bride’s father’s house to the house of the bridegroom, they would lift the veil outside before the crowd and then enter the chamber for the consummation.

**Ps 19:5 “Which *is* like a bridegroom coming out of his chamber (chuppah), And rejoices like a strong man to run its race.”**

So, the Lord has gone to prepare a room for us in his family home, and then at an unknown time He will return for us

**Joh 14:3 “And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.**

Let’s take a peak at some background for John 14. It begins a long address from Jesus and continues until the end of chapter 17.

Jesus begins with comfort and reassurance which applies to their immediate emotions, but also serves to strengthen their faith in the hours to come. They were going to have TURBULENCE! These words are spoken to the disciples, but include principles which apply to all believers, including us and that’s how we are going to look at them today, as if Jesus was speaking directly to us, bc He is.

During the last supper is when Jesus reveals to His disciple the future of what is going to take place, a part of His revelation. He notes that one of the inner circle would become a traitor, meaning Judas (**Joh 13:21**), and the first words of this chapter continue uninterrupted from the prediction that Peter will deny Christ (**Joh 13:36–38**). This is an incredible prediction because He doesn’t just say Peter will betray Him, He says Peter will betray Him 3 times! Jesus predicts this because He knows all things. He is omniscience! And He is giving us some omniscient advice here!

Earlier scripture indicates Jesus sometimes had a troubled spirit (**Joh 11:33; 12:27**), which points to His humanity, but here He tells His followers not to have troubled hearts. To everything there is a season, there is a time when even the Lord has a troubled heart. But let’s look a little more closely at it.

In John 11:33 is the story of the death of Lazarus.

We have Two Greek phrases that are used in describing Jesus' reaction to this scene. One is *enebrimēsato tō pneumati*, translated as "deeply moved in His spirit." This phrase will be used again in verse 38.

According to the gospel of Mark the implication is not entirely sorrowful (**Mar 14:5**). In this context, Jesus isn't angry at the people for being sad—He's angered that they have something to be sad about. His "spirit" is disturbed by what's happening. According to **Heb 4:15–16**, as a fully-human man, Jesus understands what it means to suffer loss.

The other Greek expression used here is *kai etaraxen heauton*, translated as "greatly troubled." It would be fair to describe Jesus' mood here as "agitated."

This features the same term John chose to depict the turbulence of a pool of water (**Joh 5:7**).

*Have you ever been on an airplane and the pilot announces 'TURBULENCE'? – many of us are already troubled just preparing for the turbulence – never mind the actual event! Jesus Christ is demonstrating for us how to handle turbulence in life by staying in God's plan and utilizing the spiritual skills. Remember: Jesus is the Great Power Demonstration.*

Now back in **Joh 12:27**, in reference to Jesus sometimes having a troubled spirit (**Joh 11:33; 12:27**), Jesus is continuing to speak to a group of gentile, non-Jewish, seekers brought to Him by the disciples (**Joh 12:20–22**).

**Joh 12:27 "Now My soul has become troubled; and what shall I say, 'Father, save Me from this hour'? But for this purpose I came to this hour."**

This is where we get deep in our study because I want to point out something to you that I believe will actually make a great impact on your life, it did for ours!

**Principle:** What might seem like death and destruction is really the process which turns something mundane and immature into something mature and productive.

People always want to avoid adversity but sometimes adversity is the best thing for us to move forward. Sometimes it is the *only* way to move forward! After all, if everything is fine, why would we change? The late Col R.B. Thieme, Jr said, "adversity is inevitable, suffering is optional." Suffering is not the adversity, it is what we do to ourselves when we react instead of responding and reject instead of embracing adversity, failing to recognize the opportunity for application and growth that it represents.

This is a concept also explored by the apostle Paul in his letters (**1 Cor 15:36–42**). Paul is saying that our bodies are the same as Jesus earthly body and we face challenges and temptations as He did.

**1Cor 15:36-37 "You fool! That which you sow does not come to life unless it dies; and that which you sow, you do not sow the body which is to be, but a bare grain, perhaps of wheat or of something else."**

Paul is showing Paul goes on to explain to the church at Corinth that the resurrection body is not a resuscitated body, not the old body being restored, but a new body based on the original, and that the original must pass away for the new body to replace it. When a plant begins to sprout from the planted



seed, the seed itself dies so that the plant can grow.

Paul was also responding to those in Corinth who rejected the idea of a physical resurrection. The idea was challenging to the Greeks in particular because of a cultural block. The idea of the dead body being reanimated was culturally repugnant and offensive to them, it was a great obstacle and a hang-up. So, Paul knew that many of those who questioned this were not asking sincerely but rather were attacking it. This is why he seems harsh. But they didn't understand the difference between resuscitation (restoration of a dead body) and resurrection (creation of a new perfect body).

**1Cor 15:42 “So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown a perishable body, it is raised an imperishable body;”**



But the new body is based on the old body, after it's image. The resurrection of a Christian's body after death is like the sowing of a seed that grows into a plant. The seed must die for the plant to live. The seed, our pre-death frame, is not the ultimate end God had in mind for us. The resurrected body that comes after physical death is the one God means for us to occupy forever.

Paul concludes the metaphor by stating that God gives life to the plant based on the seed that is planted. Wheat kernels grow wheat plants; corn kernels grow corn plants. In the same way, God somehow determines the "kind" of our resurrected body by the "kind" of seed, pre-death body, that comes from it. In other words, Paul will show, the resurrected body will fit or match the body that died in some way. A reflection of how we live our lives, ones attitude toward the Word of God. Positive or negative volition toward doctrine (PVTD/NVTD) is the determining factor. And this has nothing to do with your failures and sins, - God gave us plenty of illustrations such as David, Paul, Peter... they all failed but they still had PVTD and they still had a heart after God! They kept on rebounding and moving forward. It's not the failures, it's what we do after we fail.

**Pro 24:16 For a righteous person falls seven times and rises again, But the wicked stumble in time of disaster.**

We are nourishing the seed of our resurrection bodies now in this life, and just as Jesus Christ had to die and leave this earth for the Holy Spirit to come and do his work, our seed must die in order for our resurrection bodies come to fruition. Our spiritual walk is actually forming our resurrection bodies, our eternal bodies, we are not forming this temporary earthly bodies or an upgraded version. Concentrate on your spiritual body...

Now back to **Joh 12:27** shows us how our Lord operated in His humanity, in his seed. This verse provides a fascinating glimpse into the humanity of Jesus Christ.

**Joh 12:27 "Now My soul has become troubled; and what shall I say, 'Father, save Me from this hour'? But for this purpose I came to this hour."**

Again, here He describes Himself the same way He did when approaching Lazarus' grave in **Joh 11:33** - TROUBLED OR AGITATED.

These passages use The Greek root word tarassō, often translated as "troubled," implying an agitation or disturbance.

In His humanity, Jesus experienced the same emotions as anyone else (**Heb 4:15**), and in this case that means the anxiety one would expect, given all He knows of what's to come (**Joh 19:1; 19:16**).

**Heb 4:15 "For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things just as we are, yet without sin."**

**Heb 4:14–16** is among the most often-quoted passages in the Bible. It is also one of the clearest expressions of Christianity's unique nature. Jesus, the Son of God, has experienced all of our struggles, temptations, and sufferings. And yet, He did so without succumbing to sin.

For this reason, We can look to Him as our perfect example. We can rely on Him as our perfect substitute. We can come to Him as our only High Priest. And, we can trust in Him as our source of help and healing. Knowing that Christ fully, personally understands what it means to be human gives us confidence when we bring Him our failures and needs. The central figure of the Christian faith is not a remote, distant deity. Nor is it some flawed, mortal figure. Instead, The "founder" of our salvation is one who has experienced all of our temptations and did so without falling into sin. Earlier portions of Hebrews explained why Messiah had to be fully human.

In order to become the perfect example for humanity (**Heb 2:10**), and our true High Priest (**Heb 2:17**), Jesus had to experience all of the struggles and suffering of mankind (**Heb 2:14–18**). Here, this idea is given even more direct expression. Christ has a unique understanding of our plight (**Heb 2:18**).

**Heb 4:15 For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things just as we are, yet without sin.**

The Greek word used here is *sympathēsai*, which has come into English almost unchanged as "sympathize."

Jesus can "feel for" us in our temptations since He has experienced those lures as well. The same temptations that bring us to anxiety...

In fact, it can be said that Jesus actually understands the weight of our temptation better than we do. A man strong enough to lift a heavy object appreciates its weight more than one who lacks the strength to hold it up. At some point, the weak man's power runs out, and he never fully bears the load: he drops it. Christ, in enduring our temptations without failure, experienced their weight far beyond the point where we would have failed and given in. While we are tempted, and often sin, Christ was tempted in every way we are, but remained sinless (**2 Cor 5:21; 1 Joh 3:5; 1 Pet 1:19**).

This verse also clarifies an extremely important point about the nature of sin: namely, that The experience of temptation is not a sin, itself. I hope that's freeing for you!

The fact that Christ experienced the temptation to sin, but was sinless, is monumentally important for our understanding of the gospel.

Why?

Too often, we categorize certain sins—usually ones we personally are not prone to—as those by which only "really bad" people are even tempted (kind of funny!). Like the drug addict who steals cheats lies are way worse than the suzy homemaker who judges all her friends...

Rather than helping others recognize the difference between temptation and action, and guiding them to react in a godly way, we act as if being tempted is the sin, itself. This, according to the Word of God, is simply not true. Christ was tempted—Christ was without sin.

No matter what lures a person feels, God always gives them a way to respond without violating His will (**1 Cor 10:13**). Instead of a cold, emotionless judge, or a flawed, fickle spirit, Christians worship Jesus Christ.

THIS MEANS THAT AT THE JUDGEMENT SEAT, WE CAN BE CONFIDENT IN HIS JUSTICE.

He is the only One who has both experienced and overcome the power of sin and temptation.

**Heb 4:16** goes on to show us that this not only takes away our excuses for failure, it gives us reassurance that, when we fail, He will offer us mercy and compassion.

We will conclude this 4<sup>th</sup> distinction with some more background for **Joh 12:27** where we will see how Jesus also makes an interesting statement about asking God to spare Him from what is coming.

**Joh 12:27 "Now My soul has become troubled; and what shall I say, 'Father, save Me from this hour'? But for this purpose I came to this hour."**

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