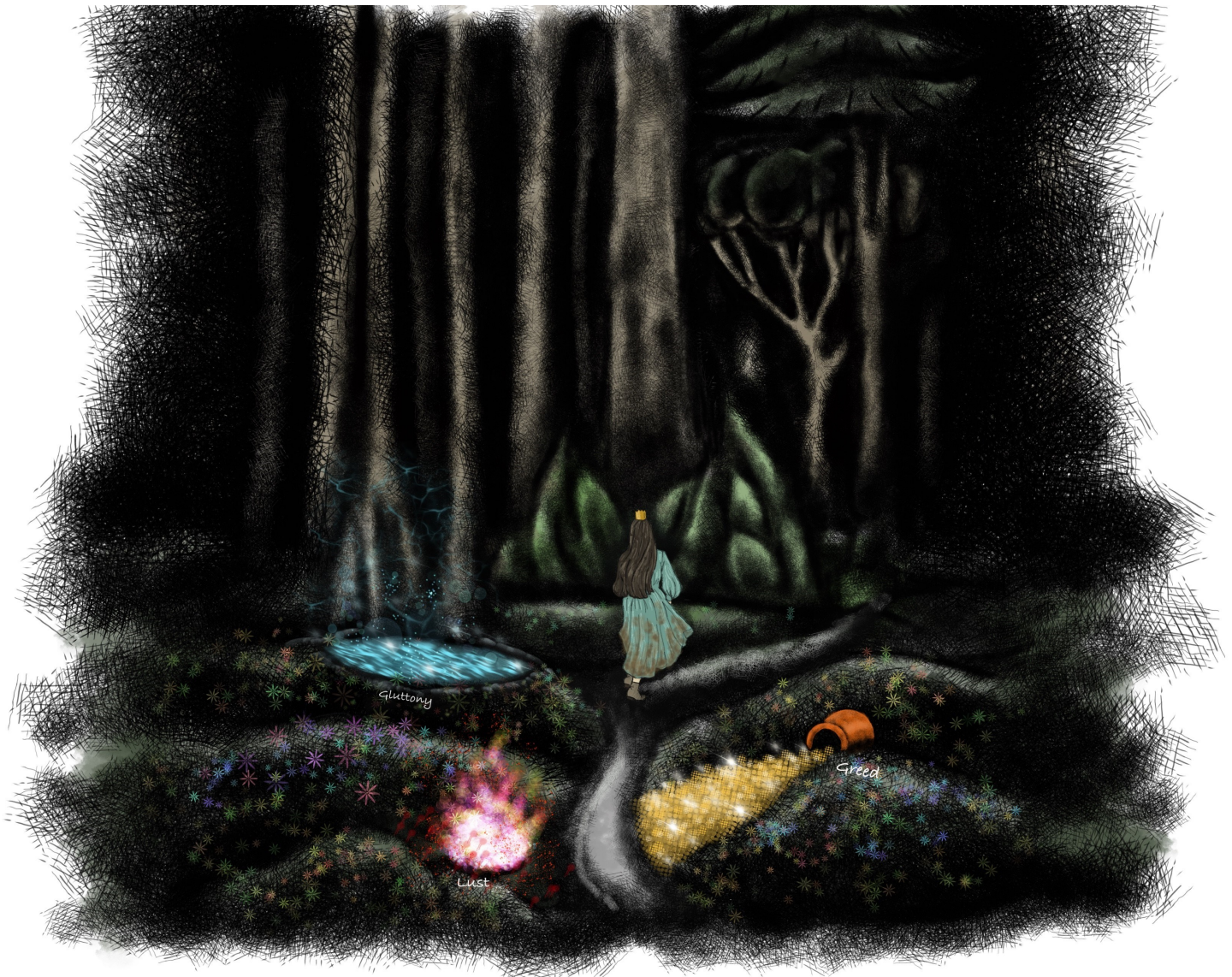


Making the Most of Wednesday, August 19

Affliction from Temptation

“...abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul.” —1 Pet 2:11



Between 6:00—9:00 AM: Today we meet Every Pilgrim inside the dark forest. She'll face three tests before she passes through the gate that opens to glory. As we talked about last week, affliction is the norm for believers. The word appears 55 times, and 47 of these refer to the pressures on believers.

One source of affliction is temptation. Notice that she's walking past three sparkling enticements. Now, our physical bodies have legitimate needs and appetites, but sin puts our healthy desires on steroids, expanding them and driving us to seek what we shouldn't have or don't need. Inordinate or improper hungers that we fight against leave us feeling squeezed as we walk along. (We'll hear an anonymous testimony today at Joel Moment about this experience.) But we can learn from Jesus, *"who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet was without sin"* (Heb 4:15). He's a veteran. Thank him that because he won his own battles, he could offer an unblemished sacrifice that atoned for our sin and opened the salvation way for us. Google "The Living Way" by James Nicholson for the perfect hymn.

BETWEEN 9:00-12:00 PM: The devil attacked Jesus with *pleasure* during his ministry. His aim was to sabotage Jesus' mission ("Knock Jesus off the path...keep him off the cross") and destroy the human race. Here he dangles some goodies in front of Jesus. Our fate hung in the balance, but Jesus won. Read Matt. 4:1-4 and picture the scene.

1 Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.

2 And after fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry.

3 And the tempter came and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread."

4 But he answered, "It is written, "'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"

Likewise, our foe uses temptation to draw us off the road that leads to life (Matt. 7:21). The last thing he wants is for us to carry out God's will. This first temptation relates to satisfaction of our appetites. "Buy it, eat it, watch it because you deserve it." Our bodies and inner beings need resources, but our flesh begs for more than we need to fill gaps that only God can fill. Talk to the Lord about your temptations. Tell him that you need satisfaction from his Word and Spirit ("The afflicted shall eat and be satisfied" — Ps. 22:26).

BETWEEN 12:00-3:00 PM: The devil enticed Jesus with *popularity* ("I'll appeal to his human desire to shine and make a spectacle of himself"). Notice when you read Matt. 4:5-7 how he offers Jesus public fame and admiration.

5 Then the devil took him to the holy city and set him on the pinnacle of the temple

6 and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down, for it is written, "'He will command his angels concerning you,' and "'On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone.'"

7 Jesus said to him, "Again it is written, 'You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.'"

Attention grabbing is our new national pastime. We want to shine and be seen. So many voices tell us to assert ourselves, be proud and post fictitious visions of ourselves. All that self-looking crowds out love. Where are you tempted to grab the limelight rather than humbly drawing attention away from yourself to other people?

BETWEEN 3:00—4:00 PM: Join the **Joel Moment Prayer Gathering**. Go to [Zoom.com](https://zoom.com) and enter Meeting ID and Password.

BETWEEN 5:00—10:00 PM: The devil tempted with *possessions* ("I'll corrupt him with treasures so he won't take up that cross"). Read Matt. 4:8-11 and observe how the devil urges Jesus to sell his soul to gain the globe.

8 Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory.

9 And he said to him, "All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me."

10 Then Jesus said to him, "Be gone, Satan! For it is written, "'You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve.'"

11 Then the devil left him, and behold, angels came and were ministering to him.

Material goods are to be used and enjoyed. Goals are to be pursued. But possessions and pursuits are not to become obsessions. Think of Gollum with his "Precious" in the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy. We know that items and dreams have taken first place in our hearts if we violate God's principles to protect them. Only God is worthy of our absolute dependence, submission and affection, and he'll patiently separate us from competitors. As part of our ongoing repentance ("Return to me" — Joel 2:12), take an inventory of what's most important to you. Do you have too firm a grip on some earthly prize or person? Make A. W. Tozer's prayer on the next page your own.

"Father, I want to know Thee, but my cowardly heart fears to give up its toys. I cannot part with them without inward bleeding, and I do not try to hide from Thee the terror of the parting. I come trembling, but do come. Please root from my heart all those things which I have cherished so long and which have become a very part of my living self, so that Thou mayest enter and dwell there without a rival. Then shalt Thou make the place of Thy feet glorious. Then shall my heart have no need of the sun to shine in it, for Thyself wilt be the light of it, and there shall be no night there. In Jesus' Name, Amen." A. W. Tozer, *The Pursuit of God*, p.31.



ANONYMOUS [You'll hear the story of a person who is struggling to honor God while in the throes of persistent temptation.]

ANNA SEITZ [She recorded "Way Maker" for us to sing as we think about Jesus who paved the path and helps us to walk it.]

You are here, moving in our midst
 I worship You
 I worship You
 You are here, working in this place
 I worship You
 I worship You
 You are here, moving in our midst
 I worship You
 I worship You
 I worship You
 You are here, working in this place
 I worship You
 I worship You

You are
 Way maker, miracle worker, promise keeper
 Light in the darkness, my God
 That is who You are
 You are
 Way maker, miracle worker, promise keeper
 Light in the darkness, my God
 That is who You are

You are here, touching every heart
 I worship You
 I worship You
 You are here, healing every heart
 I worship You
 I worship You
 You are here, turning lives around
 I worship You
 I worship You
 You are here, mending every heart
 I worship You
 I worship You

Even when I don't see it, You're working
 Even when I don't feel it, You're working
 You never stop, You never stop working
 You never stop, You never stop working

LAUREN SABOFF [Thoughts from the Word of God on today's big theme.]

^{ESV} **2 Corinthians 3:18** *And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.*



GROUP PRAYER PROMPT #1 (15 min.): Jesus taught us to pray about this kind of affliction.

^{ESV} **Matthew 26:41** *Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."*

Let's pray that in hours of testing, we'll all stand strong by looking to Jesus.

GROUP PRAYER PROMPT #2(15 min.): Are you grateful, needy, nervous, confused, content? Are you feeling some other emotion? Let's appreciate the Lord's goodness with expressions of thanks and also ask him for everything the hurting people of this world need.

Record what God shows you in Joel Moment, Part 2 — that is, the time after 4:00 PM — when we share Scripture, intercede and support each other as the Holy Spirit leads us.
