

The Way Out
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No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it. - 1 Corinthians 10:13

In the Name + of Jesus. Amen. "God won't give you more than you can handle." That saying is thrown around a lot but it's not in the Bible. Probably it's a paraphrasing of these words from St. Paul. But St. Paul isn't saying, "God won't give you more than you can handle." He's not even saying "God will give you the strength to overcome temptation by your willpower or effort." Rather, Paul points to the "way out" that God gives.

The context of this statement is the wickedness of the Israelites as they wandered in the desert. He recalls the incident in which they were bitten by snakes sent by the Lord to punish them. But with that temptation, the Lord also provided a way out: A bronze snake lifted on a pole.

When Paul refers to the "way of escape" from temptation, that "way out" is Jesus. The "way out" is Jesus who was Himself tempted and yet never failed, whose perfect life counts for you. The "way out" is Jesus, whose death on Calvary is the forgiveness of all your sins. The "way out" is Jesus whose resurrection means new life even in this life.

The "way out" is the water of your baptism, which has marked you as one whose sins are forgiven and who belongs to God.

The "way out" is the absolution your pastor speaks, declaring the devil has no hold on you.

The "way out" is the Supper of Christ, by which Jesus the perfect Savior lives in you and you in Him and He saves you from sin and death.

When you are tempted, when sin is coming at you, the devil is enticing you, and your own flesh is ready to give in, make the sign of the cross and remember your baptism into Jesus! Flee to church to have your pastor absolve you. Run to the Lord's Supper and feast upon the saving flesh and blood of the Lamb of God!

Just as the Israelites looked up to the bronze serpent and were saved, so you look to Jesus who hung on the cross and who is there in water, Word, and Supper. Look to Him and the poisonous bites of the evil one can do you no harm!

Lord Jesus, tempted in our place, may your victory over sin and the devil be our victory and may we be comforted and rescued from every temptation that comes our way, held safe in your loving care. Amen