

Escape Room

Doubt

Matthew 4:5-7; Deuteronomy 6:16

Exodus 17:2-7; Mark 4:35-38

(May 5-11, 2019)

In Shakespeare's play *Measure for Measure*, the characters Angelo and Escalus debate the nature of the law. Angelo maintains that the law is clear and should be enforced. Escalus, on the other hand, urges Angelo to take a more flexible view of the law. Escalus accuses Angelo of committing errors from time to time and, given those errors, argues that Angelo should not enforce the law so strictly. Angelo admits to being tempted, but responds, "'Tis one thing to be tempted, Escalus, another thing to fall."

We are all tempted from time to time, so what is the answer to temptation? When tempted, how can we avoid falling?

Answer and discuss the following question with your group

1. When you were a child, did you ever play the game "Truth or Dare" with your friends? The game required players to choose either Truth (and tell the truth about something) or Dare (and do whatever your friend dared you to do). While Dare seemed exciting at first, it was usually followed by negative consequences. Which option did you usually choose? Explain a memorable time you played.

Read the following excerpt out loud or watch message segment #1.

An excerpt from the StoneBridge message, "Doubt".

If the dark side were that unappealing, it would be easy to say "No." But that is not what darkness looks like. Instead it is shiny and juicy and tempting. The dark side looks anything but dark.

We face temptations all the time. Some are fairly small, "Should I watch *The Voice* or mow the lawn? Should I hit the bar or hit the gym?" Others are little bit more damaging. The dark side is getting more and more enticing. Temptation has always been that way. If it wasn't enticing, why would we do it?

Read Matthew 4:5-7, Deuteronomy 6:16, and Exodus 17:2-7 and answer/discuss the following questions.

Matthew 4:1-11 recounts three temptations Jesus faced after being baptized. Last week's lesson focused on Jesus' first temptation, to turn stones into bread after fasting. Satan again misuses scripture in verses 5-7 to tempt Jesus a second time, in this instance to prove God's love.

2. Explain the second temptation of Jesus and the circumstances Satan used to bring God's love for Jesus into question. Why would jumping off the Temple have been a test of God's love? In contrast, explain how standing steadfast in the face of temptation revealed faith.
3. Based on verse 7, did Jesus rely solely on his own strength to escape temptation? Explain.
4. After reading Deuteronomy 6:16 and Exodus 17:2-7, how did the Israelites' complaints at Massah show they doubted God's love and direction? Explain the point of Deuteronomy 6:16 and why Jesus referred to this verse in deciding to trust rather than doubt God's love.

Read the following excerpt out loud or watch message segment #2

An excerpt from the StoneBridge message, "Doubt"

Jesus rebukes the wind and says to the sea, "Peace, be still." And there was a great calm. "Why are you afraid? Where is your faith?" Jesus was teaching those men, and us, today.

You can trust me. I will give you peace in the midst of storms. When sorrow comes – and it will – you can trust me. When a problem finds its way to you – and it will – you can trust me. When the storm of anxiety shows up – and it will – you can trust me.

In the storms of life, when God seems to not care, when he seems distant and asleep, he is there. Faith brings us through. Faith in a God who provides, at just the right time. Faith in a God who rescues, at just the right time. Faith in a God who calms things down, at just the right time.

But how do I know that you are real? How do I know that you care? Trust instead of test.

Read Mark 4:35-38 and answer/discuss the following questions

5. Explain how Jesus used a storm to teach his disciples to have faith instead of doubt.
6. Jesus' temptation after his fast, Israel's doubts while in the desert without water, and the disciples' fear during the storm, each occurred during challenging circumstances or while defenses were down. How can trusting God during life's storms build faith rather than sow doubt?

Reflection and Wrap-up

7. When tempted, we have all heard a friend say, or we have said ourselves, "Go ahead, God loves you and wants you to be happy," or "I'm sure it will be ok, God will forgive me." Why do you think we rely on such sayings? What alternative paths are there?

8. When it comes to temptation, we can choose Truth even when it is difficult ("I am ... the truth") (John 14:6) or Dare because it seems exciting even if it has negative consequences ("the wages of sin is death") (Romans 6:23). When you are tempted, will you choose Truth or Dare?

Pray Together as a Group

Additional Study

If you have time during your Small Group or you want to study more about the message topic, read and consider the following passages:

- Psalm 91:11-12
- Deuteronomy 6:6
- Deuteronomy 9:22
- Deuteronomy 33:8

Just Thinking

- If temptation wasn't enticing, why would we do it?
- Temptations may look attractive and enticing at first, but giving in always has negative consequences spiritually.
- Satan tempts us to doubt who God says we are.
- Trust God's Word and overcome temptation.
- Knowing and relying on scripture helps us resist temptation.
- We should not abuse God's grace and patience by giving in to temptation.
- Truth or Dare was a really dumb game.