

Remnant Life Church
September 14, 2025
In It But Not Of It
Matthew 26:41

Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.

This has been a very difficult few weeks for our nation

- First, on August 22 a woman riding the light-rail in Charlotte was fatally stabbed in the neck by the man sitting behind her
 - Security video shows that she was sitting alone looking at her phone when the man stood up behind her, unprovoked, and stabbed her multiple times
 - She died right there sitting in her seat
- Thursday was the 24th anniversary of the attacks on the WTC as well as the other locations.
 - Over 3000 people died on that day
- And then on Wednesday, the 10th, political activist Charlie Kirk was assassinated in Utah while he was dialoging with students at an event on campus
 - Yes, his message was one of political conservatism, but he was also an unapologetic Christian who was vocal about his faith and dependence on Jesus Christ as His Lord and Savior
 - He was not disrespectful, never screamed or called people vial names and never made obscene gestures to those he was talking to, although he regularly got that from them and much worse.
 - He was 31 – he was married and the father of 2 children
 - His daughter just turned 3 and his son is 1½
 - I don't care what your political views are, this is sickening
 - And yet there are people celebrating his death, without a single thought of the horror and devastation this rains down on his family and close friends
- How have we as a nation descended to this point where people are being killed for what they think and believe?
 - That freedom being at the cornerstone of this country
 - And he is obviously not the first
 - There are a great number of people who have lost their lives for their beliefs
 - When you are killed for proclaiming your faith you are called a martyr
 - Stephen, as told in **Acts 7**, was the first recorded martyr in the NT
 - I don't know if this is why Kirk was killed but a voice for the Kingdom of God was silenced
- Now before you start getting worked up, this is not a political statement on my part
 - We should be horrified by this type of act regardless of whether we support or agree with someone's political views

- I would feel this same way if the person shot held completely opposite views of Kirk
 - But the great tragedy of this is that he, just like you or I could now be, was killed for what he believed in!
- But what do we expect?!
 - We have as a nation and a culture, for over 70 years, been doing all that we can to remove God, the source of morality and goodness, from our lives
 - You can trace the beginning of this movement to a Supreme Court ruling in 1962
 - Engel v Vital, the ruling stated that a school could no longer sponsor prayer activities
 - They said that students could pray privately or participate in activities after school
 - But even those were not and have not been embraced
 - In 1971 a Supreme Court ruling stated that teachers could only teach course materials that were approved through the provided textbooks and that religion could not be taught as an alternative to any curriculum
 - In 1980 the Supreme Court ruled that the 10 Commandments could not be posted in the schools as it served no educationally secular purpose.
 - Circuit courts throughout the country have been removing the 10 Commandments from courthouses, and virtually every governmental building on the grounds all the while declaring that it violates the separation of church and state.
 - But that statute is being used in a way that it was never intended by its author, Thomas Jefferson
 - In 1802, just a little over one year into his presidency, Jefferson received a message from the Danbury Baptist Association
 - Their concern, they said, was that this new nation would declare a national religion and force people to adhere to its spiritual doctrines
 - That was one of the primary reasons this nation was founded because the Church of England, taken over by Henry 8th so that his marriage to Catherine of Aragon could be ended and he could marry Anne Bolyn
 - From that point on, the Catholic church had no real authority in England or her lands as the Church of England became subject to royal supremacy as opposed to the Papacy
 - And as a result, there was no freedom of religion
 - Which became a part of the very first constitutional amendment when the United States was founded
 - Separation of Church and State was never intended to keep God out of our government; only that the government could not tell the people who or how to worship.
 - But today it has been perverted to be the rallying cry of pushing God out of every aspect of our culture save for the church itself – and I don't know how long we will be able to even do that
 - And we are shocked when a senseless murder occurs!

- Yet all of the filth being spewed out of the cesspool called Hollywood is always about death and evil
- Even the video games for our children carry names like Call of Duty, Assassin, WWII Sniper, Sniper Elite 1-5 and countless others
- When will it end? When will we come to our senses? When will the moral compass be restored?

It must start with us – the children of God

- We must take a stand for godliness and righteousness
 - “I can’t change the direction of this nation!”
 - Maybe not, but you can change the direction of your thinking, of your home
 - And it has to begin with you
- And that means guarding your heart and your mind so that you do not get pulled into the thinking and actions of this world
 - Paul wrote to the new church of Rome in **Romans 12:2** - *Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.*
 - Do not conform, IOW, keep your mind on the things of the Kingdom, not of how this world operates
 - It takes a renewing of your mind and an awareness of what is going on around you

Look again at the words of Jesus in **Matt 26:41**

- He is praying in the Garden of Gethsemane just prior to His arrest and the 3 disciples have fallen asleep when He told them to sit together and pray
- *Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.*

Let’s take a few minutes this morning and examine the key words of that verse

- **Watch**
 - IOW the word is not about glancing about you
 - It means to give strict attention to something
 - Used in the context of guarding against some calamity that might come on or suddenly overtake you
 - Guarding your self against temptation, the things of the world, is an act of vigilance that must take place at all times every day.
- **Pray**
 - This is the same word used to describe the prayers of Jesus when He was agonizing over what was about to happen and He was calling on His Father to, if possible, find another way
 - It is not a passive prayer but one of intensity and purpose
 - It is a part of the spiritual battle that Paul writes of
 - **Eph 6:12** - *For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers*

of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

- Also, in **Gal 5:16-17** - *So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh. They are in conflict with each other...*
- That struggle is through an awareness of what is going on around you and then battling against the things of the world in prayer

○ **Fall**

- I am not crazy about how the NIV translates this word
- It makes it sound like you tripped accidentally or were not aware that the trap of temptation was there
- That is not what this word means
 - The translation means to go in or to enter
 - It is not accidental it is intentional with full awareness
 - When you are watching diligently, you will know not to enter into something that is not of God
 - **I Peter 5:8** - *Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.*

○ **Willing**

- Predisposed; ready
- The Spirit of God in you is predisposed (prepared) to follow the truth of God according to His word
- That is why it is a constant battle between the spirit and the flesh

○ **Weak**

- Sick, feeble, without strength
- This is not meant to be understood in the physical realm
- But without strength in the spiritual realm
 - This is how some people resist temptation while others seem to be bothered by it very little
 - But it is a struggle we must address everyday
 - Billy Graham once said about temptation:
 - *God promises no easy life or days without troubles, trials, difficulties, and temptations. He never promises that life will be perfect. He does not call His children to a playground but to a battleground.*

- To be different than the world is to engage in the spiritual battles of life, but...
 - You must be vigilant to the temptations of the world
 - You must pray for the strength of God to help you to resist
 - You must not even begin to enter into the things of the world
 - You must know that the Spirit of God dwells within you if you are His child and you are ready to walk in the ways of God
 - You must recognize how weak you are without Him

Evil is on the increase

- This is because our culture has for many years been telling God that we don't need or want Him telling us how to live our lives
- I fear we are going to be seeing more and more of these types of evil acts
 - And we will continue to see those people who celebrate these horrible actions
 - **Isa 5:20** – *Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter.*

It is up to us, the children of God, to show a different way

- We can never, ever celebrate evil
- It does not matter who that victim is we can never embrace and excuse the darkness
- But you must guard your heart and your mind
- And surrender yourself anew to God every day so that you can be a beacon on light because of His presence in your life.