

Audio ■ Weapons For Temptation

by Basilea Schlink

This sermon delves into the significance of Jesus' temptation in the wilderness, highlighting the loneliness and intense spiritual battle he faced. It emphasizes the importance of resisting temptation by following Jesus' example of surrendering to God's will and trusting in His timing. The sermon also discusses the responsibility Christians have in the world today, focusing on the need to repent, uphold God's commandments, and proclaim His love and truth amidst a world filled with immorality and lawlessness.

Scripture: Matthew 4:1, Hebrews 4:15, Jeremiah 18:7, Psalms 119:160

Topics: "Resisting Temptation", "Upholding God's Commandments"

Description

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Transcript

Weapons for Hours of Temptation, written by and in part spoken by Basilea Schlink, offers us decisive help for the times of temptation and inner conflict in our lives. The Mount of Temptation lies about 23 miles away from Jerusalem, in the direction of Jericho. Even today it's a place of desolate gorges where a deathly silence reigns.

We can imagine the loneliness that surrounded Jesus at the time of his temptation in the wilderness. A stony path winds its way up in zigzag like fashion, making it easy to walk to the top. Along the sides of the path the scenery changes, alternating between stony slopes and bizarre overhanging rock formations, in which we can see many caves.

When we reach the top we find many flat pancake-shaped stones at our feet. These are just the shape and color of oriental bread loaves. We're surrounded by mountains and we can look far down the Jordan Valley.

The ridge of the Mount of Olives is outlined on the western horizon. To the east, beyond the River Jordan, are the mountains of Moab, including Mount Nebo. Immediately below us lies Jericho, with its luxurious, bright colored tropical gardens.

A panoramic view which must truly have shown Jesus the kingdoms of this world and the glory of them. And so we can see with our own eyes that the necessary conditions are given for the various temptations which the enemy used to tempt Jesus. These are no doubt the reason why tradition regards this mount as the Mount of Temptation.

In the Gospels of Matthew and Luke, we read the following about Jesus' temptation in the wilderness. And Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit for forty days in the wilderness, tempted by the devil. And he ate nothing in those days, and when they were ended he was hungry.

The devil said to him, if you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread. But he answered, it is written, man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God. Then the devil took him to the holy city and set him on the pinnacle of the temple and said to him, if you are the Son of God, throw yourself down.

For it is written, he will give his angels charge of you. And on their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone. And Jesus answered him, it is said, you shall not tempt the Lord your God.

Again the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them. And he said to him, all these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me. 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.

And when the devil had ended every temptation, he departed from him until an opportune time. And behold, angels came and ministered to him. Jesus is tempted for weeks on end in the loneliness of this mountain.

These hours of temptation can have a decisive influence in our lives. How? Here Jesus shows us the way we too can become victorious over temptation. We know only too well that the tempter never finds a better field for his schemes than when a soul is in trouble.

Every human need, whether it be of body, soul, or spirit, is a target for the enemy. And one place where all these needs are especially accentuated is in the wilderness. There a person has to endure all sorts of needs in every sphere of life.

The wilderness is a place of bitter poverty and extreme loneliness, filled with threats and fears and distress. So when Jesus retired to the wilderness for his forty-day fast, the tempter's hour had come. He made full use of it, staking everything on an attempt to make Jesus fall.

We know from everyday life that hardship and distress drive us to seize at any hand that offers help. Satan knew that Jesus had taken on our flesh and blood, and therefore in every respect has been tempted as we are. Hebrews 4.15. So Jesus too must have felt the longing to escape from his distress.

He was very hungry and hunger is painful. Having a human body like ours, how could he not long for food? Did he not need new strength for the work lying before him? Why else should the loaf-shaped stones lie at his feet? Jesus, son of the living God, would surely have the power to turn them into bread. And I wonder if a further temptation didn't rise in his heart.

Wouldn't it have been natural for thoughts like these to keep circling in his head? What proof is there that I am the Son of God? Am I not merely a man among men, the carpenter's son, just a man like everyone else? Now a hand is stretched out to help Jesus in his need. Satan leads him in spirit to the temple in Jerusalem. There he invitingly suggests, throw yourself down from the pinnacle of the temple.

Dare to prove yourself the Son of God, whom all powers must obey. Believe me, you'll see that it's true. Nothing will happen to you.

Then you'll feel like you're the Son of God again, and everyone else will think you are too. Look, I'll give you the strength. This is the way Satan probably argued, but it wouldn't have stopped there.

Wasn't the whole purpose of Jesus coming to bring the kingdom of God to men? Thirty years had already passed. He'd done his work as a carpenter, but where was the kingdom? Satan had an answer for this too. The kingdoms of this world so temptingly spread out at Jesus' feet could be his in an instant.

The anguish and temptation of waiting in vain for his purpose to be fulfilled would end in a flash. Jesus would reign over all the world according to the commandments of the Sermon on the Mount. Yes, he would finally be able to establish his kingdom of peace and love.

What an exultation would burst forth from his people, who'd known so much of suffering and tears. Mother Basileia shares with us. Can we begin to understand how dreadful these hours of temptation were for our Lord Jesus? What a temptation it must have been for Jesus, who had taken on our flesh and blood to grasp the hand Satan was offering and escape his great bodily distress, for he was almost at the point of starvation.

But above all, the torment of waiting in vain so many years for the fulfillment of the promises and the carrying out of his commission. This waiting would be ended once and for all. Whoever among you doesn't really know Jesus yet, lift up your eyes in spirit to see him in this moment of history.

He is shining out, radiating the truth about who he is. For in this hour, Jesus does not grasp the hand of the tempter. He consciously and deliberately accepts his suffering and affliction.

He has a courage to continue suffering and to patiently endure. Yes, Jesus was willing to wait, however long it might be, until the hour of God's help arrived. Jesus persevered, waiting, until God's moment when the Father himself would lead him out of his suffering and distress.

He was confident that by submitting to his powerlessness and humiliation, and by concealing his true identity as a son of God, he would be paving the way for the kingdom of God. As the obedient son of the Heavenly Father, Jesus fought his way through the temptations to the surrender of his will. Not only later in the Garden of Gethsemane, but already in this hour in the desert, he placed himself completely under the will of God.

His yes was his trusting answer to the Father's love. And by this surrender of the will, Jesus overcame temptation. We can only worship and thank the Lord for this hour, because Jesus battled and endured for our faith alone.

I thank you, Lord, I thank you thousandfold, for which is pure, with love I you behold. No one knows us and loves us as much as Jesus. No, he is calling to us in the midst of our temptations.

Come, follow me. So do not grasp the hand of the tempter, no matter how much you long to escape from your affliction of body, soul, or spirit. Don't accept Satan's offer, however much he may promise to grant you the desires of your heart, money, possessions, privileges, rights, honor, or friendship.

Do not be deceived by swift but questionable means to escape your hardships. For example, during and after World War II, when many people were in anxious suspense about the fate of their relatives, great numbers went to soothsayers and fortune-tellers. They couldn't bear the uncertainty of not knowing whether their loved ones were dead or alive.

How harmless, even justifiable, their actions seemed to be. And yet, in this way, these people have fallen into the clutches of Satan, and thereby into deepest misery. In this hour, Jesus is calling to us, don't let yourselves be deceived.

It is Satan's hand which is stretched out to you. His hand seems to offer ready help when there is no answer from God. But whether it concerns news about a loved one, as with the people after World War II, or the solution to a problem, be careful.

It is Satan what seems so harmless and entices you to reap quick results. It's very dangerous. Rather, turn to God, giving him your answer of love, willingly accepting his leadings, and say to him in steadfast faith, Lord, you are my father and I'm your child.

You know how to help me and you will help me when the time is right. Oh my father, thou dost lead me, from all danger thou hast freed me, never left thy child alone. Life of father, all-providing, wisely and in love deciding, how to turn my loss to gain.

Yes, oh father, I can trust thee, who dost help and deal so justly, firmly plann'd with thy sure aim. So I thank thee now already, for thy promise sure and steady, cannot fail to come to pass. Often God does not step in to help us until we have first been tried like gold in the fiery furnace, until we have been purified and made glorious, and until the hours of temptation have borne a rich harvest.

And as we read in Hebrews 11:39, sometimes God has something better in mind for us. All those who have not been miraculously helped through their faith, but who have had to remain in the crucible of suffering, have been allowed to experience this something better. After the last war, the widow of a high-ranking officer was a guest in our home.

During the course of our conversation, she mentioned the death of her husband, whom she had loved dearly. And then the woman said very quietly, you know, my husband wasn't killed in battle. He had charge of a large food supply.

It was his job to oversee the daily distribution of the food rations. In his letters from the front, I sensed how very hard he struggled to carry out his job to the last detail, in full responsibility before God. My husband died, and then her voice faltered a second.

He died of hunger. Later, one of his fellow officers wrote to me that my husband had literally starved to death. This woman's story moved us deeply, for it showed us clearly what it means for a person to follow Jesus, and to not fall away in the terrible hours of temptation.

That officer had had every opportunity to save himself. But how thankful he must be now in eternity, that he didn't grasp Satan's hand and give in to his temptations. That hand would have only gripped him and

dragged him later into the kingdom of torment.

However, this, his way of sacrifice, had led him into the kingdom of joy and glory, to an eternity at the side of Jesus. Sacrifice you came to offer, I give myself anew. Grant me the grace to surrender.

Dear Lord, let me become like you. Bring love in me. Every life is marked by hours of temptation.

It's decisive that in these hours we say yes to God our Father, when he sends us distress and affliction. Every temptation should be an opportunity for us to trustingly place ourselves in the Father's hands. Then the enemy will have no point of attack, and will come out of our temptations as victors and overcomers.

Then Satan is forced to flee, and the angels of God will minister to us. In his own time, God will help us abundantly and make us happy. For he's a true father, and he delights in doing good to his children.

In few of the hours of temptation in our lives, let's pray together. Lord Jesus, I give you thanks that although you were tempted in all respects as we are, yet you remained without sin. Hence, you'll vanquish the enemy.

Teach me to resist the tempter as you did, so that I too may be victorious in the hour of temptation. Grant me the strength to refuse Satan's offer to give me my heart's desire. Help me to be willing to remain in need as you did, and to wait until you yourself prepare a way out for me.

I will trust you, my father, for you know the needs of your child. You'll give me everything that I really need, everything necessary for my salvation. May that be my answer to the enemy in all temptations.

Then you'll make him depart from me. Amen. I pray to heaven a story, may my family be.

I'll sing of God's will in sadness, how he is fulfilled and brings gladness to those who obey and follow God's way. I'll sing his praises forever, his love for I and him. I'll sing in awe of temptation, the born of heaven's salvation, through Jesus we gain the land that was slain.

I'll sing of God's care and kindness, the way of his own providing, the path through the night with blessings of Christ. Several years ago, when Mother Basilea was visiting the Mount of Temptation in the Holy Land, she wrote down some tips for us. These were like spiritual weapons for the battle against temptations.

Although she wrote them for us, we don't want to keep them from anyone who longs to be victorious in the hours of temptation. Here are the four tips, the pieces of our armor for fighting against temptation. Nothing is so helpful in refusing Satan's help in the hour of temptation as to hurl at the enemy the mighty words, I am willing to suffer.

Suffering brings glory. I'll suffer gladly if that prepares me for endless life above. The tempter always tries to offer immediate assistance in the transformation of our depressing situation.

You will overcome him by saying, I can wait for God's timing. His help never comes too late. I will wait, but then he will impart faith to my fearful heart.

So I from day to day in love and trust will pray, and in my heart perceive, one day I will receive all I believe. When we are filled with the longing, the enemy finds it easy to entrap us, but he will flee if he sees that we are prepared to commit the desire to the Lord in the certainty, my father will take care of me. No one provides as well and it's such a perfect moment.

Is he my father? Heavenly father, I'm thy child. It's a pleasure to be found in such loving union. Oh, how blessed to be with thee.

Day and night sent you to me by thy love surrounding. Heavenly father, I'm thy child. Tell me, is there anything in the world more blessed? How can trouble hurt or harm while I rest within myself? God esteems me precious.

There have to be temptations. Without a battle against temptations, there would be no crown of victory. So be willing to fight.

That means be prepared to let it cost you wounds and tears. Only he who fights will overcome Satan by the power of Jesus. So strive in faith that you will win, for Christ can conquer every sin.

Christ's help means always victory. He stretches out his strong right hand. A glory for his hands are ten, and they are only fitted.

Hallelujah, hallelujah. Perhaps you would like to write down the main points of these spiritual weapons. I'll summarize them for you.

First, I'm willing to suffer. Second, I can wait. Third, my father takes care of me.

Fourth, I'm willing to fight. Fifth, I can testify from my own personal life and from the life of our sisterhood. There is great spiritual power in these words.

When we speak them out in fighting against temptation, we will experience that these words unnerve Satan. He will have to yield more and more. And finally, we will experience that Jesus, who won the victory over his own temptations, will also give us the redemption and victory over ours.

Jesus, you are my redeemer. In your quiet world, triumph and love and peace. All powers must pay you homage to you alone.

Hallelujah, hallelujah. And now for the next step. Pray more often with firm faith in the victory of Jesus.

Whenever the victory of Jesus is proclaimed, the enemy yields. He cannot stand to hear the victorious name of Jesus. So call upon the name of Jesus, and you will be more than victorious.

This message was taken from Basilea Schlink's book, *The Holy Land Today*. Our responsibility as Christians today, by Basilea Schlink, is especially important and relevant, for it not only gives us a clear view of our situation today, it also shows us some helpful first steps to take. As Christians, we have been entrusted by the Lord with a special responsibility for the world, especially in this day and age.

Some 2,000 years ago, Jesus called to his disciples, you are the light of the world. And through the apostle Peter, he passes on this challenge to his church with the words, you are a royal priesthood. We know that this calling is a most holy election, for priestly people are called by God to step in the breach for the world, pleading, praying, and making sacrifices of love.

Mother Basilea writes about how she looks back with deep grief to the pre-war years, when she had a girls' Bible study group, which later developed into our sisterhood. At that time, the girls in the Bible study group didn't realize their responsibility as Christians. God waited in vain for their prayers and intercession on behalf of their nation and the world.

Finally, in his grace, God awakened this group through his blows of judgment. It happened in the night of September 11th to the 12th, 1944, when their city Darmstadt was bombed. In 18 minutes, the city was turned into a sea of flames, almost raised to the ground.

Thousands of people died that night, and for days afterwards, dead bodies lay in the streets. It was true that the high school and college girls who came to the weekly Bible study group had been prepared to resist the Nazi regime, bravely acknowledging their Christian faith. But as Mother Basilea writes about this time, all of us still lacked one thing.

We didn't have the true love of God, which includes a real love for people. We were guilty of the sins of apathy and indifference, especially in the last years of the war, when God's judgment fell upon our nation. In this way, we behaved worse than the heathen city of Nineveh.

For the people of Nineveh had let themselves be stirred by a mere warning of judgment. At the words of the prophet Jonah, they had repented in sackcloth and ashes. They began to pray and to cry out to God.

But with us, God waited in vain for our response to his judgment upon our nation. We did not repent. We were not driven to prayer and intercession.

There was no other way for God to bring us to repentance than to strike us personally with the severe air raid on our hometown and the dreadful horrors that accompanied it. That night of devastation and death, however, let the seeds of the word of God begin to grow so that we began to weep over our many sins of omission. At the same time, in the midst of judgment, we experienced the grace and mercy of his forgiveness.

Out of contrition, love broke out, a deep love for Jesus, and thus also for our neighbor. At that time, God in his mercy opened the eyes of the girls' Bible study group to see the calling which he has given his church. We are called to be the light of the world, a royal priesthood.

He showed them the danger of conforming to the world around us and thus shirking the responsibility which God has given to Christians everywhere. This commission that marked the early days of our sisterhood has taken root in the following years. Over ten years ago, the Lord opened our eyes to the fact that we are living in a time like never before.

A flood of immorality is sweeping over the nations and increases from year to year. Today, sex, perversity, atrocity, murder, and brutality are glorified in movies, television, and literature. But what Christian has eyes and ears for the deep grief of God over our world today? What infinite grief for God.

Man created in the image of God is in danger of sinking into the swamp of immorality and lawlessness because he doesn't keep God's commandments. Still more decisive is the fact that laws bearing the stamp of age-old authority are now being dissolved, leading men throughout the world, scientists, sociologists, economists, physicians, and even theologians have officially proclaimed today that law and justice must be adjusted and liberalized to match the altered moral standards of society. Our world is totally changed.

We're living in a time like never before. Murder, brutality, and immorality had always existed, but in the past they were always condemned and punished. People guilty of such offenses were more or less disgraced and rejected by society.

But today fornication is glorified, and criminals and murderers are heroes. Newspapers and magazines boast that the age of true freedom has finally dawned. Mankind may give free reign to his desires.

The basest passions have become the breath of life for many nowadays, setting the pattern for a growing generation. Once before, mankind was ruled by sin and perversity, just before the time of the great flood. And God pronounced his judgment.

The earth is corrupt. It's full of violence. Genesis chapter 6. This judgment was followed by the disaster of the flood.

Jesus prophesied that a time like Noah's, a time of lawlessness, would come again. And sure enough, the world is once more in the grip of brutality and corruption. The entire world lies under the threat of a terrible judgment, this time of a nuclear war.

The prophets speak of the time when the winepress will be full and the vats will overflow. See Joel chapter 3. When the Lord will punish the world for its evil. Isaiah chapter 13.

And Jesus spoke to his disciples of a time of anxiety, when there will be calamity throughout the world. Today, every man, woman, and child is living under the threatening sword of a nuclear war, whether we want to admit it or not. But for the time of universal lawlessness, Jesus, and even before that the prophets of the Old Testament, prophesied especially severe judgment for the nations.

The degree of judgment will correspond to the degree of sin today. Well-known scientists raise their voices in warning. One nuclear physicist writes, It's an uncanny coincidence.

When we consider the biblical prophecies for the end of time, when the terrible waves of destruction will surge over the world, and what exists today in the way of diabolical weapons, one must conclude that today the end of history, the destruction of the world, has become a real possibility. Everyone knows that with all the automatized military apparatus, it would only take one miscalculation, and the world would be launched into a war of death. Thus, we as Christians have considerable responsibility for the nations of the world.

In view of this responsibility, we can only ask ourselves, What must we do to defer this dreadful sword of God's judgment, which could plunge millions of people instantly into terrible agony and death? Because mankind as a whole has lived in lawlessness and sin, the majority of people would be faced with the most terrible judgment of God, and the kingdom of darkness with all its horror, which is a reality. So what must we do in view of our present situation? The word of God gives a clear answer in Jeremiah 18, verses 7 and 8, which especially applies to Christians. If at any time I declare concerning a nation or a kingdom that I will pluck up and break down and destroy it, and if that nation concerning which I have spoken turns from its evil, I will repent of the evil that I intended to do to it.

If we as Christians don't want to be further from God than the heathen people of Nineveh, then there is only one road to take. Our German sisters experienced this when God's judgment fell upon them and their city was bombed in 1944. And what is this road? We must do at least as much as the people of Nineveh did.

When they were in a similar situation and the sword of God's judgment hung over the city, each person turned from his sinful ways. They cried and pleaded with all their might that God would turn from his fierce anger. Likewise, we must devote ourselves to such prayer and supplication.

Yes, we must come together for this purpose. We must let God judge us. We must constantly repent and turn from our old sinful nature.

This is the responsibility God has entrusted to us as Christians today. In this attitude, we can and should proclaim Jesus' call to repent throughout the world. According to the measure of our sin and guilt today, we ought to repent and cry as never before for the grace of God.

That is the Lord's challenge to us today. For years now, out of this concern for our world, we have been led to hold a monthly day of repentance here on our little land of Canaan. First, we let God speak to us through current events, showing us our own personal involvement and guilt.

Then, in our prayer of repentance, we intercede for our own land and the other nations as well. Thousands of friends in Germany and abroad have joined us in praying this way. We also seek to proclaim the call, repent, turn back to God and his commandments in our churches and nation.

One means is through our religious plays, or herald plays as we call them. The one entitled, *Lo, He Comes*, was written especially for this purpose. Our literature is another possibility.

In order to sound the call to repentance, our sisters work in our print shop and publishing house, and also abroad in our foreign branches, where they distribute the literature translated into other languages. Through all our commissions, we seek to pass on the message, God loves us. He never desires the death of a sinner, but rather his repentance, so that God can show mercy instead of judgment.

As Christians, we ought to be ashamed that, generally speaking, it's the leading politicians and scientists, and not we, who give the word of warning about the threatening situation that faces our world today. We Christians are in the privileged position of being able to give clear guidance as to where help is to be found. And this is just what the politicians and scientists cannot do.

They're ultimately at a loss when it comes to the question of what could still save us. People wait in vain for their help, for a clear word of guidance, a word of help and warning. In the confusion of our times, when all values and morals are distorted, light and guidance can be found only with those whom God has set to be the light of the world, the body of Christ.

They can offer the solution by sounding the call to repentance, to turn back. But to what shall man turn back? To that which modern man has lost, to reverence of God and respect for his commandments. Today, in this age of lawlessness, the commandments of God are more decisive than ever before.

Mount Sinai, the holy mountain where God handed down his commandments, has swung into the foreground, and a mighty battle is raging between the powers of darkness and the powers of light. A well-known English theologian wrote in his book, which quickly became a bestseller, the sanctions of Sinai have lost their terrors, and people no longer accept the authority of Jesus, even as a great moral teacher. Such a statement clearly shows that reverence for God has been lost.

It's our responsibility as Christians to realize this fact, for our attitude towards the living holy God and the revelation of his will and commandments will decide today the destiny of the world. God in his holy disguise is all his great measures and his most glorious holy grace all to the realm holy is God Several years ago, Mother Basilea had the opportunity to spend some weeks on Mount Sinai, in complete solitude, drawn apart for prayer, alone with the scriptures. There, where eternal silence rests upon the highest mountains, Mother Basilea was surrounded by the holiness of God.

She writes about this time, I climbed the thousands of stone steps to the summit of Moses Mountain, the mountain of God's revelation. The glory and the majesty of the huge granite mountains were overpowering. Under the dazzling brilliance and the unusual clarity of the atmosphere, Mount Sinai glowed a deep purple.

Bathed in a reddish golden light, it seemed to shine out in great beauty as if to symbolize the commandments God gave here for his chosen people and for all people. By the greatness and holiness of God, I was brought low in the dust. A mighty and decisive revelation of God for mankind took place in this setting of primeval rocks.

It was an unparalleled event when God himself came down in his holiness upon Mount Sinai and proclaimed his commandments. The mountain quaked, thunder pealed, and lightning flashed. All creation trembled as God, the Holy One, manifested himself and made his eternal covenant with his people.

His commandments are eternally valid and absolute, for they come from the mouth of the thrice holy God. Thus, they are as eternal and unchangeable as the one who gave them. The commandments of God are valid forever, for as we read in Psalm 119, verse 160, every one of thy righteous ordinances endures forever.

Thus, whether we like it or not, the commandments of God are of crucial importance for us. For example, whoever has broken the commandment, you shall not bear false witness against your neighbor by passing on unverified negative remarks about his neighbor, or perhaps even by spreading false rumors, has become guilty before God and man. If a person does not confess this guilt before God and man and receive the Lord's forgiveness, his guilt remains.

And one day, before the judgment seat of God, that person will be judged according to this commandment and declared guilty. In the same way, all the other commandments are still valid. Modern man cannot escape them by reasoning that the commandments of Sinai were only meant for the Jewish people and therefore not binding for Christians.

Jesus, however, stresses the importance of the commandments, even making them more inclusive. If we are unloving to our neighbor, angry with him, then in Jesus' eyes we have already trespassed against the sixth commandment, you shall not kill. Or we can take the seventh commandment, which has been established for the protection of marriage.

Today, this commandment has been deliberately demolished under the code of the new morality. Thus the floodgates of immorality, perversity, and licentiousness have been opened, bringing individuals and ultimately entire nations to disaster and ruin. Jesus considered the commandments to be the expression of the demands of the love of God.

He stresses the deepest significance in the value of the commandments, namely that they express the original will of God, who is love. Thus when God revealed his will on Mount Sinai, the ten commandments, Israel didn't hear frightening demands out of God's mouth, as other nations seem to hear from the mouths of their gods. No, Israel heard commandments of love, commandments whose goal was determined by God's very nature, which is love.

Truly this is worthy of adoration. But how could God's commandments be anything other than love? For they were given by the God who wanted to be Israel's husband, Isaiah 54. God's commandments were

given in a covenant of marriage as his heart's most precious revelation of love, as the most wonderful gift to his children.

Thus the first commandment gives us the blessed joyful instruction, you shall love me, you may love me with all your heart, with every breath in your entire being. At the same time, however, it also expresses the measure of love that God expects in return from us. Give me your whole heart, your whole life, the best part of your time, your money and all that you hold dear.

Of what decisive importance it is that we Christians respond to this challenge of God? Are we aware of our responsibility to live out God's commandments of love and to proclaim the call, keep the commandments of God throughout the world? Today we've been chosen by God to proclaim this joyous message to the world, that in keeping the commandments of God, that in keeping the commandments, true life, joy and happiness are given to men. However, this call lacks authority and power and comes back like an empty echo, if we ourselves haven't been struck by it in the depths of our hearts. We must come to realize God's claims of love upon us, committing ourselves completely to him and his commandments, as Jesus emphasizes them in the Sermon on the Mount.

For we can only bear our Christian responsibility for the world insofar as we ourselves practice what we preach. God will equip those who really want to take on this priestly responsibility. Are we prepared to accept the challenge? God's great name and raise his band up high To rally all his faithful ones, we'll shout his better cries God's salvation's truth, take up your post, you are... Text and songs by Mother Basilea Schlink of the Evangelical Sisterhood of Mary, Darmstadt-Eberstadt, West Germany

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/OCA8dEONsBA.mp4>

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