

Sermons on Matthew

The Lord's Prayer

Part Eight
Deliver Us From Evil
Matthew 6:13

With Study Questions

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In this __manner, therefore, pray:

_Our Father in heaven,

Hallowed be Your _name.

¹⁰□Your kingdom come.

_Your will be done

On earth __as *it is* in heaven.

¹¹□Give us this day our __daily bread.

¹²□And __forgive us our debts,

As we forgive our debtors.

¹³□And do not lead us into temptation,

But __deliver us from the evil one.

__For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory
forever. Amen. -(Matthew 6:9-13)

Preface

It is the inconsistent thinker who buys a dozen Krispy Kreme donuts, puts them on his kitchen counter, then goes into his prayer room and beseeches God for the strength not to eat them.

Years ago I remember asking a couple if they were going to let their daughter go on a date with a young man alone in his car. They asked me, "Why would we do that to her? Why would we willfully put her in a situation where she—anybody—would be tempted?"

James teaches that this inconsistent thinking is that type of thinking employed by the "**double-minded**" or *two-souled* person. James warns that this type of man should "**. . .not suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord**" (James 1:7b). My father used to say of people like this that they are "talking out of both sides of their mouth."

A Kingdom Prayer

Briefly reviewing Jesus' instruction on how we should pray, we've come to recognize that the Lord's Prayer revolved around the kingdom of God. We are to pray that the Name of God, who is the King of kings and Lord of lords, should be hallowed (or holy or set apart) from all other

names. We are to pray that God's kingdom would continually advance on earth. The goal of this kingdom is that God's will be done on earth as it is in heaven—which above all things is the veneration of the Lamb of God.

_Blessing and honor and glory and power Be to Him __who sits on the throne, And to the Lamb, forever and __ever!_ (Revelation 5:13)

We are to pray for provision of "daily bread" that the mundane necessities be met for the spiritual end of the advancement of this kingdom. The warriors in this kingdom are defined as debtors to their King, who sacrificed His own Son that they might receive all the inheritance of heaven. These debtors are to bestow upon others that similar forgiveness they have received. It is a kingdom of forgiven forgivers.

Places We Don't Want to Go

We now come upon the final petition in the Lord's Prayer, which is "**_And do not lead us into temptation, but __deliver us from the evil one.**" (Matthew 6:13) This final petition should easily resonate on the heart of every Christian. The truly forgiven person does not view this gracious forgiveness as a license of sin. Christians have been set from the law of sin and death (Romans 8:3). But are warned that we should not use that "**..liberty as a cloak for __vice, but as bondservants of God.**" (1 Peter 2:16b)

We are, therefore, asking that God will keep us from those places in life which are tailor-made for our corruption. We are asking that God will not bring us to a place of temptation. The same word (*eisenekosin*) is used when men brought a paralytic to Jesus through the housetop (Luke 5:19).

Recognizing God's sovereignty over every fork in the road, there are places where we simply do not want God to take us. We don't want to be tempted by the devil for forty days in the wilderness. We don't want to be tempted to deny Jesus three times before the rooster crows, as with Peter (Matthew 26:34). We don't want to be tempted to choose a loved one over God, as was the case with Abraham (Hebrews 11:17).

Even though this kingdom, a kingdom which brings the message of redemption to the world, is made up of saved sinners, these saved sinners should not be content in their sin. They should make every effort to avoid not only the sin, but also those environments conducive to moral and spiritual failure. After all, Jesus had just taught "**Let your light so shine**

before men, __that they may see your good works and __glorify your Father in heaven.” (Matthew 5:16)

That God chose “not many wise” (1 Corinthians 1:26) does not mean we are to be content and slothful in our foolishness. We should seek and pray for wisdom (James 1:5).

Where Does God Lead?

We are praying that God not lead us to a place of temptation. The word “temptation” (*peirasmos*) is translated elsewhere as “trial” or “test” or “pressure.” This is what God did with Abraham. God tested Abraham’s faith by calling him to sacrifice Isaac. This is what James tells us we are to be joyful in:

My brethren, __count it all joy _when you fall into various trials... (James 1:2)

This is something the Holy Spirit led Jesus to just prior to the recording of this Sermon on the Mount.

Then __Jesus was led up by _the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. (Matthew 4:1)

The testing of faith is what Job is all about.

-Then the Lord said to Satan, “_Have you __considered My servant Job, that *there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, one who fears God and _shuns evil?*”⁻⁹⁻ So Satan answered the Lord and said, “_Does Job fear God for nothing?⁻¹⁰⁻ __Have You not __made a hedge around him, around his household, and around all that he has on every side? __You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land.⁻¹¹⁻ __But now, stretch out Your hand and touch all that he has, and he will surely __curse __You to Your face!”⁻¹²⁻ And the Lord said to Satan, “_Behold, all that he has *is in your __power; only do not lay a hand on his *person*.*” (Job 1:8-12)

This, of course, brings up an interesting question. Why would we need to pray this? Is it actually possible that God would lead us into

temptation? This seems implicit in the prayer. Unless we're going to take the position that God's sovereign hand never extends past the fork in the road to temptation, we must conclude that He either leads us not into, or into, temptation.

But is this not inconsistent with the plain teaching of James?

Let no one say when he is tempted, “_I am tempted by God_”; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone. ⁻¹⁴⁻ But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. ⁻¹⁵⁻ Then, __when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, __brings forth death. (James 1:13-15)

So James, by the Holy Spirit, places the responsibility for temptation squarely on the shoulders of the one being tempted—with very dire consequences, I might add.

A closer observation reveals that The Lord's Prayer is not inconsistent with the teaching of James. Jesus is not teaching us to pray that God won't tempt us, but that He will not lead us into temptation. Clearly God may have His own wise, just, and holy reasons for leading us into temptation. But like Job, He does this to prove, strengthen, and refine our faith. This, like so many other concepts, must be considered from two angles: the devil, the flesh, and the world mean it for evil; God means it for good.

And we should not view that as something grievous, or unjust by God, or strange. Peter writes

Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial (*peirasmos*) which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; ⁻¹³⁻ but rejoice __to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that __when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy. (1 Peter 4:12, 13)

Nonetheless fiery trials are not something Christians should seek. Twisted and perverted are the monastic vows of self-abasement. If God chooses, for His own good reasons, to place us in positions of difficulty, we are to embrace His sovereign choice and joyfully seek to endure the trial, keeping ourselves unstained by the world (James 1:27). Let us be reminded that

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)

If the Christian finds himself poor, sick, destitute, persecuted, angered, or enticed, he should seek to respond to this condition in a godly manner, recognizing

__ . . it has been granted on behalf of Christ, __not only to believe in Him, but also to __suffer for His sake (Philippians 1:29b).

But this does not mean we are to seek these conditions. On the contrary, poverty, sickness, destitution, persecution, and various allurements are all situations which could tempt us to deny our faith, which is always the premier target of the enemy. Consider the wisdom of Agur:

**Remove falsehood and lies far from me; Give me neither poverty nor riches— _Feed me with the food allotted to me;
⁹□_Lest I be full and deny *You*, And say, “_Who is the Lord?_”
Or lest I be poor and steal, And profane the name of my God.
(Proverbs 30:8, 9)**

Agur did not wish to be tempted to view his God as expendable by having too much food. He did not wish to profane His God by having too little. This is how we ought to pray. We ought to pray that God would grant us that which is necessary to keep us from being tempted to curse Him *in* our hearts or jettison Him *from* our hearts.

Deliver Us

The second part of this petition is that God would “**deliver us from the evil one.**” This could be rendered “the evil things,” or “evil” as an all=

encompassing concept. This request for deliverance (*Rhuomai*) is very active. It was the word used by those mocking Jesus on the cross:

He trusted in God; let Him deliver Him now if He will have Him (Matthew 27:43a).

The concept is quite clear. Christians are to pray that God would keep them from situations where they might stumble. This kingdom of priests, Christ's ambassadors, are to seek to be a holy people (1 Peter 1:16). The Apostle Paul quotes from Isaiah:

***Therefore "Come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you."* (2 Corinthians 6:17)**

This dictate has tempted some religious sects to an unbiblical retreatism from the very culture in which they live. But Jesus prays just the opposite.

I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one. (John 17:15)

There is simply no easy way out. No one was more separate *from* the world—yet engaged *in* the world—than Jesus. He was criticized for His association with "tax collectors and sinners" (Matthew 9:10), yet He always did that which was pleasing to His Father (John 8:29). And this is the model which we are to follow.

It is the double-minded man who prays that God would lead him out of temptation while he expends all his energies running full force into it.

We live in a culture of temptations galore. We have unlimited access to information and entertainment, which is both a blessing and a curse. Houses adorned with satellite dishes, and computers spoon-feeding us 'the information superhighway' have become like weaponry for our souls. But weaponry can both protect and destroy. Our prayers must be hearty and fervent. And our actions must not be inconsistent with our prayers.

The kingdom of God, as it has been manifest in churches in our modern culture, has become benign, impotent, and retarded. Much of this is due to a wholesale denial of, or insidious nudging away from, the great truths unearthed during the Reformation: salvation by grace alone,

through faith alone, in Christ alone, who we know infallibly by the Scriptures alone, to the glory of God alone.

And I have little doubt that this apostasy from the great doctrines of biblical Christianity is a result of the clergy falling into the temptation of catering to the needs of men, rather than the glory of God; this sadly results in a God who is not glorified, and men who remain in a state of discontent.

Be that as it may, let us not be deceived. Our willingness to flirt with and engage in the gross immorality which surrounds us has made the church lose its saltiness, and we continually see the remnants of the true church being trampled underfoot (Matthew 5:13). If the kingdom of God is to be instrumental in God's redemption of world, we must pray that God lead us not into temptation. And when we find ourselves tempted, we must muster all of our heart, soul, mind, and strength to resist (James 4:7). Peter exhorts us to

Be __sober, be __vigilant; __because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.

⁻⁹ Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world.

⁻¹⁰ But __may the God of all grace, __who called __us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, __perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle *you*. ⁻¹¹ __To Him *be* the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen. (1 Peter 5:8-11)

Questions for Study

1. What characterizes a double-minded person (page 2)?
2. Review the Lord's Prayer (pages 2, 3).
3. For what are we asking in the sixth petition (pages 3, 4)?

4. How should we respond to trials/temptations when they arrive (page 4)?
5. Is it possible that God would lead us into temptation? Does this mean that God is tempting us to sin (pages 5, 6)?
6. Discuss Agur's prayer (page 6).
7. What should the Christian's relationship with the world consist of (pages 7, 8)?

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