

September 7, 2014

Deliver Us From Evil

Matthew 6:9a,13

Our Father in heaven... rescue us from the evil one.

This is the beginning and ending of the prayer we know as “The Lord’s Prayer.” Now, I know Protestants have learned to end the Lord’s Prayer with the doxology, “For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.” (Is it really necessary to say forever and ever? Redundant isn’t it? You can’t have more than forever. Forever pretty much says it all). This doxology does not appear in most ancient manuscripts nor does it appear in Luke’s version of the Lord’s prayer. But it would have been very unusual for a Jewish prayer to have ended without a doxology. So it is fine to add it to the prayer but remember, Jesus probably ended the prayer with, “deliver us from evil” or “from the evil one.” That is a surprisingly serious and somber note on which to end a prayer. It ends with a note about spiritual warfare.

We are at war! Are you aware of that? War has been declared, battle lines have been drawn, and whether you are willing to fight or you have declare yourself a conscientious objector the enemy is seeking to lure you into a pit, dominate you, and ultimately destroy you.

Revelation 12:9, 12b, 17

This great dragon—the ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, the one deceiving the whole world—was thrown down to the earth with all his angels...the devil has come down to you in great anger, knowing that he has little time...the dragon was angry... and declared war against the rest of her children—all who keep God's commandments and maintain their testimony for Jesus.

“The ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan” carries us back to the Garden of Eden when the devil under the guise of a serpent successfully deceived and tempted Eve to disobey God’s command. The devil is still active today and note what he is doing, “deceiving the whole world.” He is furious “knowing that he has little time.” Knowing his time is short he wants to keep as many as he can away from God and he is determined to do his worst in the brief time he has left. So he has declared war specifically on the church and her children, that’s you and “all who keep God’s commandments and maintain their testimony for Jesus.”

Many don’t believe in the devil, I don’t know why, for he seems to be doing a lot of advertising these days. I know he is real for shortly after starting this message his attacks started. The Bible makes it clear that the devil is very real – a real personal force of evil who is active in the world today. In the English language the difference between devil and evil is just one letter.

Ephesians 6:11b-12 Paul tells us to...

Stand firm against all strategies of the devil. For we are not fighting against flesh-and-blood enemies, but against evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against mighty powers in this dark world, and against evil spirits in the heavenly places.

We are in a life-or-death fight to the finish with the devil and his angels (evil spirits). The devil's ultimate aim is to destroy every human being. He wants us to follow a path that leads to destruction.

John 10:10 (Jesus said)

The thief's purpose is to steal and kill and destroy. My purpose is to give them a rich and satisfying life.

So first satan wants to prevent anyone from coming to faith in Christ.

2 Corinthians 4:4

Satan, who is the god of this world, has blinded the minds of those who don't believe. They are unable to see the glorious light of the Good News. They don't understand this message about the glory of Christ, who is the exact likeness of God.

As long as someone is going along satan's path their minds are blinded and they are almost unaware of his tactics. He doesn't have to work so hard on those who don't believe, he already has them deceived. So the major battles of his war are attacks on God's children. Often that line of attack begins in the area of doubt. Satan used doubt in Genesis when he said to Eve, "Did God really say...?" He used the same tactic on Jesus when he tempted Jesus in the wilderness saying, "If you are the Son of God..." His tactics have not changed. First he raises doubt, then the temptation begins. Beware when you start to rationalize that what you thought in the past you should not do may be okay after all.

The safest road to Hell is the gradual one — the gentle slope, soft underfoot, without sudden turnings, without milestones, without signposts.

- C. S. Lewis

1 Peter 5:8-9a

Stay alert! Watch out for your great enemy, the devil. He prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour. Stand firm against him, and be strong in your faith.

Stay alert! The enemy would just love to catch you napping. Soldiers especially during war must wait and watch, constantly alert for any movement of the enemy. Not only must you stay alert you must stand firm against him. James wrote (Jam 4:7) that if believers resist the devil, he would flee from them. The word "resist" is a term of defense rather than attack. The best way for believers to resist Satan is to remain *steadfast in [their] faith*.

Devil means slanderer or false accuser; and Satan means "the Adversary." They are used interchangeably in the Gospels.

What we must remember God is greater and we have God's Spirit. We must remember that we have an Advocate.

John 14:26 (Jesus said)

The Father sends the Advocate as my representative—that is, the Holy Spirit.

1 John 2:1

We have an advocate who pleads our case before the Father. He is Jesus Christ, the one who is truly righteous.

1 John 4:4

But you belong to God, my dear children. You have already won a victory...because the Spirit who lives in you is greater than the spirit who lives in the world.

Revelation 12:11

And they have defeated him by the blood of the Lamb [Christ's death on the cross] and by [because of] their testimony.

Our victory depends first of all on Christ's victory on the cross, but it also depends on our faithful word of witness for Christ.

Colossians 1:11-14

We also pray that you will be strengthened with all his glorious power so you will have all the endurance and patience you need. May you be filled with joy, always thanking the Father. He has enabled you to share in the inheritance that belongs to his people, who live in the light. For he has rescued us from the kingdom of darkness and transferred us into the Kingdom of his dear Son, who purchased our freedom and forgave our sins.

We have been transferred, now we belong to Jesus.

Robinson Cano transferred from the NY Yankees to the Seattle Mariners. What would he say if during next year's Spring training the Yankees called him and said, "hey, why aren't you at practice this morning?" He would say something like, "I don't work for you anymore, you no longer own me. I have been transferred, I belong to a different team now and I am working for a different team now."

That's what you need to say to the devil, "I've been transferred, rescued from your kingdom of darkness by Christ who I now belong to." The devil is defeated by Christ on the cross and by our testimony for Christ. It is important for you to share your faith with others, that we might defeat the devil. The ones who defeat the devil are those as it said in Rev. 12:17 who keep God's commandments and maintain their testimony for Jesus.

You must be in God's Word, know it and apply it – that is how Jesus resisted the devil; that is how we stay firm in the faith.

We desperately need God's grace because we are in combat with a superior enemy; we need God's help to resist this enemy. We need to realize, however, that Satan's power over us is only as strong as the illusion that he is more powerful than God's help and care. We must trust that "the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world" (1 John 4:4). We must trust in Christ for our toughness, not in our own human effort. This means trusting in Christ, who has already defeated Satan and will ultimately destroy him.

Ephesians 6:13-18 THE MESSAGE

Be prepared. You're up against far more than you can handle on your own. Take all the help you can get, every weapon God has issued, so that when it's all over but the shouting you'll still be on your feet. Truth, righteousness, peace, faith, and salvation are more than words. Learn how to apply them. You'll need them throughout your life. God's Word is an indispensable weapon. In the same way, prayer is essential in this ongoing warfare. Pray hard and long. Pray for your brothers and sisters. Keep your eyes open. Keep each other's spirits up so that no one falls behind or drops out.

That brings us back to our text for today; for we talked about standing firm in our faith, trust the salvation we have in Christ, know and keep God's word, but Jesus taught us to pray: Our Father in heaven... rescue us from the evil one.

Our Father, you are right, we have a powerful demonic enemy who wants to devour us. Rescue us from the evil one who wants to destroy our faith. Help us discern the temptations that come at us. Teach us to wait on you when tempted. Our confidence is in you, Father to care for us today. Keep us strong in your grace. You speak the truth when you say; "the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world." So we will not fear no matter what comes us against us for you are good and your love endures forever.