

## The Lord's Prayer Part 9 But Deliver Us From Evil

We return today to these words of the Lord's Prayer, where we will again consider these very special words of verse 4, "and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil". And we will again acknowledge that these words present difficulties to our sensibilities, words that are hard for us to reconcile.

Last week, our focus, for the most part, was on the first part of the verse, "and lead us not into temptation". But the words in the second part of this verse are a very important continuation of that plea that we are making to God, that He would not lead us into temptation, but that He would instead deliver us from evil.

And while some translations of these scriptures render these words, "lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil", both the NKJV and NIV translations render these words to read, "lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one".

That's because there is a clear implication within the context of these words that this plea is that God would not only protect us from the general influences of evil, but especially that God would protect us from the schemes, the influences, and the temptations of the devil himself.

And the reason for that can be seen in the worst of temptations that are shown to us within these scriptures. It was satan himself who brought the first temptations to Adam and Eve. And it was satan himself who tempted "Job". And it was satan himself who tempted the Lord Jesus.

And then also, as we consider all the many Christians who were mercilessly slaughtered and martyred by the Roman emperors, like Nero and others. And then also, in more modern times, such as took place during the days of the reformation, when many, many Christians were martyred, burned alive because of their faith in Christ. I must tell you that I see all of that cruelty coming directly from the hands of the devil himself.

And so, to my best understanding of the words of this prayer, these words can also read "lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one", from the wiles, the schemes, the beguiling of satan himself.

Listen as we read the words of this precious prayer again, this reading given in Luke chapter 11 as rendered in the NKJV,

1 Now it came to pass, as He was praying in a certain place, when He ceased, *that* one of His disciples said to Him, "Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples."

2 So He said to them, "When you pray, say:

Our Father in heaven,

Hallowed be Your name.

Your kingdom come.

Your will be done,

On earth as *it is* in heaven.

3 Give us day by day our daily bread.

4 And forgive us our sins,

For we also forgive everyone who is indebted to us.

And do not lead us into temptation,

But deliver us from the evil one." (Luke 11:1-4)

And for more clarity, may we also again read the more familiar words of the Lord's Prayer as it was given in Matthew chapter 6.

9 Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. 10 Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in 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 lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen. (Matthew 6:9-13)

Folks, as I consider all the many temptations and sufferings that the saints have endured, especially like those that I have just mentioned to us, Job, and all the many martyrs, I confess that I don't know what I would do personally if I were to encounter such severe temptations.

Yes, I would like to think the best of myself, that when I am tempted and tried as so many of those martyrs, I would be brave and steadfast in my allegiance to the Lord. But again, I confess that I don't know what I would do. And so, I want to earnestly pray these words of this prayer, pleading for the Lord's divine protection and deliverance. And not only for myself, but also for my loved ones, you, saying, Lord please, lead me and my loved ones not into temptation, but deliver me, and them, from the torturous hands of the evil one, satan.

And no, as we said in the message last week, God does not Himself ever tempt us. We are clearly promised that in those words given to us in James chapter 1.

But yes, as we have said, it is clearly a part of the holiness of God that you and I would be subjected to a need to make choices within many of the circumstances that we encounter each day.

And within those circumstances, God is very purposeful. What satan would intend for temptations, God uses as a means of “testing” our faith and of “maturing us” in it. We are told that in James chapter 1, where we read,

<sup>2</sup> My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, <sup>3</sup> knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. <sup>4</sup> But let patience have *its* perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing. (James 1:2-4)

And please understand that the “testing of our faith” is not for the purpose of revealing something to God. No! God already knows how faithful we are and how faithful we will ever be. The “testing” is for the purpose of revealing our faith to us, to ourselves, so that we can grow and mature in it.

That kind of “testing” can be clearly seen in the “testing” of Abraham’s faith as God instructed him to sacrifice his son, Isaac, on Mount Moriah. And also, that “testing” could be clearly seen as we read about all the many sufferings endured by the Old Servant Job. Yes, satan was tempting, but God was using those circumstances to “test and to mature the faith” of His servants.

And no, when we are in the middle of being overwhelmed by the trials and the temptations of some of our sufferings, we might not be able to see much of a difference between the “temptations” of satan and the “testings” of God. But we really must hold fast to the truth that we do know for sure. And that is that God is “Holy” and that He Himself is “Trustworthy” to never tempt us.

Considering these words then, let’s begin by first reminding ourselves of one of the guiding principles that we affirmed in an earlier message, and that is that while many of the things that God does, might bring very difficult and painful circumstances into our lives, everything that He does, and will ever do, is always truly good. As we read in Psalm 119, “God is good and He does good”!

And to add to that, we have the assurance in Romans 8:28 that if we will be faithful to remain firm in our love and commitment to God's purposes, He will make even the worst of the bad things that people and even satan himself brings into our daily lives to turn out for our good. "God truly is always good and He always does good".

And also, as we studied in our last message, every person, every creature, and every circumstance, whether they be good or evil, is available and useful in the hands of God as He carries out His righteous plans and purposes. And it does not make God evil if He chooses to use that which is evil to carry out the purposes of His righteousness.

Let me repeat those words again because the implication of them is not easy to receive or to accept. Those words again, "it does not make God evil if He chooses to use that which is evil to carry out the purposes of His righteousness."

And no, you and I can't do that. We are not holy! But God is Holy! And because He is Holy, God can use any instrument of His choosing to bring about righteousness within His beloved children.

These scriptures are filled with examples and occasions of God using some of the most evil of people and circumstances to carry out His purposes. He used Pharaoh in the lives of Moses and the Hebrew people to bring glory to Himself as He freed the Israelite nation from slavery in Egypt. And God used Nebuchadnezzar to chastise the rebellious people of Israel and to carry them into exile. And again, as we said regarding the sufferings of Job, God even uses the devil himself to carry out his divine purposes.

But most important of all, God used the merciless slaughter of His dearly beloved Son, suffering beyond all measure and understanding to bring about the righteousness that is needed to save those who will give their hearts to Him, even you and me.

But if you struggle to accept this very difficult truth about God, that "it does not make God evil if He chooses to use that which is evil to carry out the purposes of His righteousness," please be patient in your faith and God will make it become clear to you.

It all has to do with the very special love that God has for His dear children, first for Israel and now also for you and me! As we have said on so many other occasions, when you and I received Christ as our Savior, something bigger than we could ever imagine took place within us. A very special, eternal relationship was born within us, a relationship that is like no other. In our salvation, you and I have actually become the sons and daughters of God. We are clearly told that in John chapter 1. Listen!

<sup>12</sup>. . . As many as received him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name. (John 1:12)

We are now God's own beloved children and heirs with Christ to all that God has within His kingdom, its privileges, its provisions, its protective watch-care, and on and on.

But think with me for a moment. In God's family, as sons and daughters, we are in a very different position than any other people. The scriptures speak about "hired men" and "servants". But as sons and daughters, we are not at the level of hired-men and servants. We are far above all those. We are sons and daughters, sharing not only in the provisions of the kingdom, but also in the responsibilities for it.

Which brings us back to our consideration of these very special words within the Lord's Prayer, "and lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from the evil one". Because we are God's beloved children and because we have the special responsibilities as family members, God knows that He needs to prepare us for those responsibilities.

We have only to look at the special "hands-on" care, provision and discipline that God exercised over His Israelite children to know that He has much the same in store for you and me.

Folks, the Old Testament is not just a compilation of stories. It is a blueprint of God's plans for everyone He adopts as sons. And so it is with you and me. From since the very first moment that you and I received Christ as our Savior, God's plan has been fully in motion. Beneath the surface of our visible existence, God has been faithfully at work making provision for all that we need.

But we must also understand that His provision includes "discipline". As we learned in last week's message, in Hebrews chapter 12, God has provided us

with a blueprint of His loving plans for us as His sons. He tells us there in Hebrews 12, that He "disciplines those he loves, and he punishes everyone he accepts as a son."

All those very good things that take place each day come from the hand of God. And yes, they do often flow through other people, but it is God who is providing it for us.

But that is also especially true for the difficult things that take place each day. Those difficulties and sufferings most often flow through the hands of people and circumstances, people who are unknowingly being influenced and guided by the schemes of the devil.

But from God's perspective, those people and those circumstances are useful instruments to bring you and me to righteousness. God's hand is always at work, taking the responsibility of a loving Father to train and to discipline us, His beloved children.

And at the heart of all that takes place is the matter of our "faith", and how our faith is able to be worked out and revealed within us.

Faith is one of those things that simply does not exist unless and until it is tested and tried. Let me say that again and please think with me for a moment, "Faith cannot exist unless and until it is tested and tried."

In other words, as long as all of our needs are being met by provisions that are readily available to us, we have no need to have faith that it will be provided. We already have it. It is only as our provision is in doubt, or has been taken from us, that we are compelled to turn to the One who can help us.

That is so with our very basic provisions like, food, or a place to live, or matters of our health, and even love and friendship. As long as all those things are readily available to us, we have very little need for faith.

That is one of the reasons why Jesus said that it is very difficult for a rich man to get into the kingdom of God. With great wealth in hand, a person has no need for faith.

But this matter of faith also must extend on beyond the meeting of our basic needs. It also must be a guardian over the “wants” and “lusts” that often consume our thoughts each day, the want and the lust for more money, for a better position in life, the desire to have control over the things and people around us.

Those were the very things that satan paraded before the eyes of Jesus as He was being tempted in the desert. Thankfully, Jesus turned the answer to each question back to faith and to obedience to God the Father.

And that is the intent of God's heart as He uses the wiles of satan and the temptations of this world as His instruments to bring about righteous faith within you and me.

No, God does not desire that you and I be tempted. But at the same time, He does also understand the nature of our souls. And He knows that it is only as we are tested and tried that our faith is born, is built up and is revealed in us.

One of the best illustrated examples of that is found in the trials and the sufferings of that dear old servant Job. For a season, God loosened the leash around satan's neck so that satan could pour out myriads of sufferings upon the back of dear Job. Through satan's hand, thieves and murderers robbed Job of his livestock and killed his servants. Satan caused violent weather to blow the house down on top of Job's children and kill them. Then satan inflicted boils and sores all over Job's body. Then Job's friends forsook him, and even Job's wife turned against him. And again, behind all of his suffering was the wily hand of the “evil one”, satan.

But folks, the real reality was, all of Job's trials and his sufferings came ultimately from the Hand of God. It was all part of God's plan and by His permission. Neither satan nor any of those other vile people could do any of those things except by God's permission.

Thankfully, Job endured the suffering and was sanctified by it. He said of God, “Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him”.

And the same was true with the Lord Jesus as He was led by God's Spirit into the desert to be tempted by satan. As we read in Hebrews chapter 4, Jesus

endured the testing and trials and proved His worthiness to be called our intercessor High Priest, our Savior and our Lord. Listen!

<sup>14</sup>Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast *our* confession. <sup>15</sup>For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all *points* tempted as we *are*, yet without sin. <sup>16</sup>Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need. (Hebrews 4:14-16)

Faith, your faith and my faith is born out of, it is built up in and it is revealed by suffering and discipline. It is the only way, and God is a Faithful Father who will not hesitate to use all the means available to Him to bring His sons and daughters to righteousness.

One last thought before we close. God's discipline is at work in every moment of our life, even during our most faithful of times. As it was with Job whom God Himself described as being "blameless and upright," God's hand is always at work.

That's because God has the highest and best desires and expectations for His beloved sons and daughters. He sees who we are now, and also who He wants us to become.

And just as a great artist knows how to put the finishing and perfecting touches on their artwork, so even more so does God want you and me to be perfect, as perfect as His beloved Son, the Lord Jesus.

Listen to these words given in 2 Corinthians chapter 3,

<sup>18</sup> . . . we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord. (2 Corinthians 3:18)

And what is our response to be? We are to join with God our Father as He transforms us into the image of His dear Son, crying out as King David did, saying,

<sup>23</sup> Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: <sup>24</sup> And see if *there be any* wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting. (Psalm 139:23-34)



Let's pray!