**The Lord’s Prayer**

**7th Petition**

**Deliver Us From Evil**

**(Deliver Us From the Evil One)**

*Good Friday – 04/07/2023*

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

**The Seventh Petition** And deliver us from evil. *What does this mean?*

We pray in this petition, in summary, that our Father in heaven would rescue us from every evil of body and soul, possessions and reputation, and finally, when our last hour comes, give us a blessed end, and graciously take us from this valley of sorrow to Himself in heaven.

What better day, than today to consider this petition, “deliver us from evil.” It was on the cross that our deliverance from evil was accomplished though the death of the righteous and Holy Son of God on the cross.

It is good for us to consider that this petition could be read in two ways. How many would be comfortable if I prayed this petition, “But deliver us from the evil one” I can hear it now, some people would claim that I am saying it wrong. Well, in the original Greek it might be translated more faithfully by saying exactly that, “deliver us from the evil – ONE!”

Such a reading may even help us realize that we do not just face come vague notion of evil, but very real evil. Too many people dismiss evil, and especially an “evil one,” as superstitious nonsense. How many movies and books have taught us that the realm of the demonic is nothing more than another work of fiction? Is it a good idea to let Hollywood teach us the truth about God

In this petition, our Lord directs our attention to the fact that we are constantly being confronted with the embodiment of evil. Do not doubt for an instant, there is an evil, mysterious figure at work behind all the dangers in our life and all the darkness in the world.

Believe it or not, Keith Richard and Mick Jagger of the Rolling Stones understood this. They rightly place “Lucifer” (their name for Satan) at numerous points in history. They claim that he was in St. Petersburg when Stalin slaughtered millions, that he rode a tank in Germany’s blitzkrieg, that he is the one who moves us to do evil things. What is more, is that as today is Good Friday, they claim He was behind Pilate’s washing his hands to seal the fate of Jesus.

Behind every temptation is *the tempter*! (Matt. 4:3) Behind every lie is the *father of lies*! (John 8:44) Behind all the death, bloodshed, and mayhem stands the *murderer from the beginning.* (John 8:44) He is the ‘sum of all evil.’ He would overthrow and usurp God – if he were able.

The evil one is called the devil, or Satan, or Beelzebul, or the serpent of old, the enormous red dragon (Rev. 12:1), and the beast (Rev. 13:1). No matter his name, “it is he,” Luther declares, “who obstructs everything that we pray for. God’s name of glory, God’s kingdom, God’s will, our daily bread, a good conscience, and a right heart with God, and so forth.”

Christ commands us, in the midst of all this evil, which is perpetrated by the evil one, to pray for deliverance. Jesus knows the danger of this threat – He has faced him – doing so in our flesh. Jesus also knows that neither you nor I can stand against the devil on our own. We cannot deliver ourselves, we must be delivered. He is too dangerous for us because he is craftier and wiser than us.

Why is this? Because we do not recognize him! If only he appeared like in the cartoons; red skin which flickers with flames, a pointed tail, and holding a pitchfork. Then we would know him and avoid him. He is the *father of lies* and hides behind things that are good.

Satan does not tempt by saying, “Hey, I am Satan, come follow me! I want to teach you to do evil and wicked things, vile thinks which you will later learn to regret, and which will be your eternal downfall. Come join me for eternity in torment and pain.”

If he were to come to you with this invitation, the alarm bells would be ringing, and you could make your escape before it was too late.

Satan ain’t no fool! He isn’t stupid! He comes to offer you something positive, something that appears really good. “Come with me! I will teach you something truly interesting. I will show you things pleasurable – something that will truly thrill you. I have a way for you to *live it up*, your chance to escape, relax, and feel good.” And if you think Satan cannot be subtle, don’t forget that he was even adept at using Scripture in his temptations of Jesus in the wilderness.

First, he tempted Jesus to turn stones into bread. Making bread to satisfy his hunger doesn’t sound like a bad thing. But the greater temptation was wrapped up in goodness and mercy. Think of the possibilities – turn rocks into bread – provide crowds with bread – eliminate world hunger. Imagine the power!

There is an old German proverb, *whose bread I eat: his song I sing.* What an opportunity Jesus was given by Satan. Think of all the people He could lead to God, even claiming he was doing it “for God’s sake.”

Next Satan promises to give Jesus all the kingdoms of the world. Imagine the good He could do if He could direct every law, every policy, every program in such a way that it would be good for *ALL* people. All Jesus needed to do was make a slight bend of His waist toward Satan.

Of course, last was the temptation to throw Himself down from the pinnacle of the temple. It was the Sabbath. Great crowds would be there. Can you imagine how many would be astounded by such a miraculous feat? Jesus’ popularity would soar to the heights! Isn’t that what people want to see from a Messiah before they will place their trust in Him? Something astonishingly miraculous will do it, right?

Think about it! How much more effectively are people moved by sensations and experiences, the things of the heart, than they are by words of truth or examples of humility. How many evaluate their pastors not on the content of their sermons, but whether or not they look down at their notes – or keep their head up and make eye contact? Good preaching is not about whether it was he truth proclaimed – but if they made them feel good?

If Jesus could appeal to the senses, He would surely find it easier to win hearts. If Jesus would just jump, He would begin His work with twelve hundred followers instead of just twelve.

Do you see now how craftily Satan clothes his appeal in the appearance of goodness? Which of you could stand up to such an assault? Who could even begin to see beyond the façade of something so positive, good, and beneficial – and to realize that all of this must begin by worshipping the devil?

This is the confrontation that began in the garden centuries earlier, “Did God truly say?” It began in the Garden of Eden, was renewed in the wilderness, ramped up in the Garden of Gethsemane, and concluded on the cross. The old evil foe cannot move Jesus to renounce the Father and embrace the things of the world.

Jesus is not swayed by the tugging of emotional heartstrings as you and I often are. Nothing moves Him to doubt or forget the words of His Father, “You are my beloved Son. With you I am well pleased.” Nothing moves Him to doubt:

Not the cat-o-nine-tails which rips gaping wounds in His flesh,

Not the crown of thorns which punctures the flesh of His skull until it can go no further for skull bone prevents it.

Not the nails which pierce His hands and feet, impaling Him to the cross.

Nor even being raised up so that all His weight hangs from those wounds.

None of this is enough to move Jesus to forget the words of His Father.

Jesus makes His final stand against the devil at Calvary. It is a fierce and bloody struggle that come to death – but which ends in life. Through it all, Jesus knew the truth without a doubt – for He is The Truth.

All along, Jesus could see the way to the Father clearly – for He is The Way.

In all of this, Jesus knew the difference between death and life because He is the way, and the truth, and the life.

This Jesus carries a name that fulfills this petition in our prayer. David the Psalmist declares it of Him, even before He was incarnate, “The Lord is my rock, my fortress, my ***deliverer***.” (Ps. 18:1)

Dearly beloved, once again, as He has through all the petitions of His prayer to us and for us – Jesus directs our attention to where it should be – upon Him and not upon ourselves. We began, “Our Father in heaven” and conclude “deliver us from the evil one.” It is the One who answers our prayer, who teaches us how to pray. It is Jesus, for He is the Christ who delivers us from the evil one now and forevermore. Amen.