

Understanding the Lord's Prayer

Session 7: *“And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.”*

Scripture Texts and Citations

“Christians are those who choose to follow Christ, to take up their crosses and follow him to Golgotha and beyond. We freely chose this path, this salvation, this Lord. Thus, the true freedom we seek is not freedom from the pain, hardship, and consequences of discipleship, but rather, the freedom to choose to love and serve the Lord of this prayer.” - TKS

Luke 19: 8-9a

But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, "Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount." Jesus said to him, "Today [literally, 'now'] salvation has come to this house.

Philippians 2:12

Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed--not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence--continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling.

1 Corinthians 1: 18

For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

1 Peter 2:1-3

Therefore, rid yourselves of all malice and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander of every kind. Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, now that you have tasted that the Lord is good.

Luke 13:1-16

¹Now there were some present at that time who told Jesus about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mixed with their sacrifices. ²Jesus answered, “Do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans because they suffered this way? ³I tell you, no! But unless you repent, you too will all perish.

⁴Or those eighteen who died when the tower in Siloam fell on them—do you think they were more guilty than all the others living in Jerusalem? ⁵I tell you, no! But unless you repent, you too will all perish.” ...

¹⁰On a Sabbath Jesus was teaching in one of the synagogues, ¹¹and a woman was there who had been crippled by a spirit for eighteen years. She was bent over and could not straighten up at all. ¹²When Jesus saw her, he called her forward and said to her, “Woman, you are set free from your infirmity.” ¹³Then he put his hands on her, and immediately she straightened up and praised God. ¹⁴Indignant because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath, the synagogue ruler said to the people, “There are six days for work. So come and be healed on those days, not on the Sabbath.”

¹⁵The Lord answered him, “You hypocrites! Doesn’t each of you on the Sabbath untie his ox or donkey from the stall and lead it out to give it water? ¹⁶Then should not this woman, a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has kept bound for eighteen long years, be set free on the Sabbath day from what bound her?”

Luke 13:6-9

⁶Then he told this parable: “A man had a fig tree, planted in his vineyard, and he went to look for fruit on it, but did not find any. ⁷So he said to the man who took care of the vineyard, ‘For three years now I’ve been coming to look for fruit on this fig tree and haven’t found any. Cut it down! Why should it use up the soil?’ ⁸“‘Sir,’ the man replied, ‘leave it alone for one more year, and I’ll dig around it and fertilize it. ⁹If it bears fruit next year, fine! If not, then cut it down.’”

From Abraham Lincoln’s first inaugural:

“We are not enemies, but friends. We must not be enemies. Though passion may have strained, it must not break our bonds of affection. The mystic chords of memory will swell when again touched, as surely they will be, by the better angels of our nature.”

Puritan theologian John Owen (Temptation, Banner of Truth), pp. 10-11:

A temptation...is anything that, for any reason, exerts a force or influence to seduce and draw the mind and heart of man from the obedience which God requires of him to any kind of sin. ...Whatever it is, within us or without us, that hinders us from duty or provides an occasion for sin, this should be considered temptation. It could be business, employment, the course of one’s life, company affections, nature, corrupt purposes, relations, delights, reputation, esteem, position, abilities, gifts, etc., that provide the opportunity to sin or neglect duty. These are true temptations just as much as the most violent solicitations of Satan or allurements of the world. Whoever does not realize this is on the brink of ruin.

J. Heinrich Arnold in “Freedom from Sinful Thoughts”

Martin Luther once wrote that evil thoughts come like birds flying over our heads. We cannot help that. But if we allow them to build nests on our heads, then we are responsible for them. We will never be completely free of temptation; we should not even expect it.

It is one thing to be tormented by ideas or images we do not want, but quite another to pursue them intentionally... Thoughts are giants.’ They press toward concrete realization.

Romans 7:15-17

I do not understand what I do. For what I do I do not want to do, but what I hate [that I] do... I have the desire to do what is good but I cannot carry it out...”

J. Heinrich Arnold

It is impossible to defeat one’s sinful nature by willpower alone, because the will is never wholly free, but bent this way and that by conflicting emotions and other forces at work on it.”

Ephesians 6:12

For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

J. Heinrich Arnold

The struggle is a universal one, and may be overcome at least in part by sharing it with someone the afflicted person trusts.

1 John 1:8-9

“If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.”

J. Heinrich Arnold

In the end, whether a person is possessed by evil... or merely pursued by [it], the same truth applies: only Christ, by means of his Holy Spirit, can drive away their darkness, sadness, and fear.

Hebrews 2: 14-18

Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death--that is, the devil--and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death. For surely it is not angels he helps, but Abraham's descendants. For this reason he had to be made like his brothers in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people. Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.

Benjamin Franklin's rendering of the Lord's Prayer (1768):

Heavenly Father,
May all revere thee,
And become thy dutiful Children and faithful Subjects.
May thy Laws be obeyed on Earth as perfectly as they are in Heaven.
Provide for us this Day as thou has hitherto daily done.
Forgive us our Trespasses, and enable us likewise to forgive those that offend us.
Keep us out of Temptation, and deliver us from Evil.