



4/5/2020. **“Lead Us Not into Temptation, But Deliver Us From Evil”**

Scripture: Matthew 6:13; 21:1-11; 27:32-44; 1 Corinthians 10:12-13; Galatians 5:16-25

Lenten Series: Living the Lord’s Prayer

Palm / Passion Sunday

Theme: Though we all will face temptations and trials in this world by God’s grace in Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit, we can overcome temptation and grow in faith and service to God.

We have been journeying this season of Lent reflecting upon Living the Lord’s Prayer.

Early on we recalled that after his baptism, Jesus was led by the Holy Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil. It was after forty days and nights of prayer and fasting, when Jesus was hungry, that Satan came to tempt him.

Let me ask, have you ever been tempted, or fallen to temptation, to say or do something you knew or realized was wrong? I know I have. And in these days of dealing with a pandemic, with increased expectations, demands, and restrictions, we may be challenged even greater in some ways. This morning’s news reported a number of cities and states which have seen a considerable rise in calls of domestic violence and abuse. Apparently, most were already in abusive relationships. However, the increased restrictions on mobility or victims having to work in at-risk environments have caused even greater felt need and expressions of control by abusers.

Today is Palm/Passion Sunday, the beginning of Holy Week, and the final week of Lent as we journey with Jesus to the cross. As we just read of Jesus’ triumphal entry into Jerusalem, he was surrounded by his disciples, as well as many fans and followers, crowds of people who wanted him to be their messiah king. There were also those in authority who wanted him to be more in keeping with their rule and ways. And there were some who may have already wanted him dead and gone, so that they would not have to deal with repercussions from their Roman rulers. They might all have been tempted in some way or other to seek their own agenda for Jesus. Worst of all, as Jesus knew, there was Satan, the adversary, who sought to thwart God’s plan of salvation.

By way of The Lord’s Prayer, we consider the reality of temptation in our own lives, and the good news of God’s word which tells us how to overcome it.

Jesus taught us to pray, **“Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.”**

Or, as the NIV translates it, “Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.”

† The good news is that **though we all will face temptations and trials in this world, by God’s grace in Christ and by the power of the Holy Spirit, we can overcome temptation and grow in faith and service to God.**



The Apostle Paul warns, “¹² So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don’t fall!
¹³ **No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to humankind.**”

Yet he also assures us, “And **God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it.**” (1 Corinthians 10:12-13)

A note in the NIV says that the Greek words for *temptation* and *tempted* can also mean *testing* and *tested*. That is why the NRSV translates this verse in Matthew 6:13, “*And do not bring us to the time of trial, but rescue us from the evil one.*” And the Ecumenical Version of the Lord’s Prayer uses the wording “*Save us from the time of trial.*”

The two words used by and translated in Matthew as “temptation” and “tempted” are used in various ways in the bible, referring to an experiment, attempt, trial, proving trial, . . .; an enticement to sin, temptation, whether arising from inner desires or from outward circumstances.

It also may be adversity, affliction, trouble sent by God and serving to test or prove one’s character, faith, holiness. They may refer to temptation (i.e. trial) of God by men; rebellion against God, by which his power and justice are, as it were, put to the proof and challenged to show themselves (i.e. “testing God”).

Testing can be in a good sense (to try or test something out). Or it can be in a bad sense; to test one maliciously, craftily to put to the proof one’s feelings or judgments; to try or test one’s faith, virtue, character, by enticement to sin; such as the temptations of the devil.

So, the first thing we should realize and understand from the bible is that while God may test our faith or give us trials to endure to discipline or teach us, and God may allow us to be tempted by Satan, the adversary, **God does not directly tempt us deliberately seeking or desiring to make us stumble or fall.**

James says (1:13-15): “¹³ When tempted, no one should say, ‘God is tempting me.’ For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone . . . ¹⁴ But one is tempted by one’s own desire, being lured and enticed by it. ¹⁵ Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.” Such was the case in the Garden of Eden and ever since.

Further, as earlier noted, temptation is that desire which seeks to draw us away from God and God’s intended way of life and blessings for us.

We are all prone every day to thoughts or desires which violate God’s commandments – whether taking God’s name in vain, failing to observe Sabbath time, dishonoring our parents, lying, stealing, and others. While some temptations we face are prompted by purely selfish interests, others may manifest even as we seek to feel and be loved, and in trying to fully love others as ourselves. Some temptations may not seem or be so harmful – at least not to others – but can lead us to hurting ourselves; physically, mentally, emotionally or spiritually.



*** **But here is the good news: Looking to Jesus, with the Holy Spirit leading us, we can be aware of the thoughts and desires which may tempt us. With the Holy Spirit's power, we can transform and overcome them rather than let them have power over us.** We can let them pass out of our hearts and minds and out of our lives. We can let them go, rather than hold on to them.

Led by the Holy Spirit, we are no longer under the law as it was. For the fruit of the Spirit, as Paul said, “is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.” (Galatians 5:16-25)

As James goes on to say (1:16-18): “¹⁶ Do not be deceived, my dear brothers. ¹⁷ Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows. ¹⁸ ***He chose to give us birth through the word of truth, that we might be a kind of first fruits of all he created.***”

Still, though we may be blessed with knowing Jesus, we must be on guard not to be influenced by Satan. Shortly after Peter confessed that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the living God, when Jesus told his disciples that he must be killed and on the third day rise again, “²² Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. ‘Never, Lord!’ he said. ‘This shall never happen to you!’ ²³ Jesus turned and said to Peter, ‘Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns.’ (Matthew 16:22-23 NIV)

And even when Jesus was on the cross, he was tempted to use his power to save himself. Others mocked and insulted him. And “One of the criminals who hung there hurled insults at him (and said): ‘Aren’t you the Messiah? Save yourself and us!’” (Luke 23:39 NIV)

† **So what kind of temptations do you fight or struggle with?** How might you be tempted to fall short of God’s calling and way in this challenging time?

Whatever it may be, **remember you are given the word of truth and life in Jesus Christ and in the bible. You are given the presence and power of the Holy Spirit within you.**

As the writer to the Hebrews encouraged (4:14-16): “¹⁴ Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has gone through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. ¹⁵ For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, **but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are – yet was without sin.** ¹⁶ Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

When we pray, “Deliver us from evil”, we are approaching God’s throne of grace for mercy and strength in Christ. As Hebrews says earlier of Jesus (2:18): “**Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.**”



So read, listen and learn God's word. Meditate upon it. Let it be written on your heart.

Acknowledge, confront and let go of the causes of your temptations. Let me, or someone else, know if you need help. Join an appropriate group for support and accountability, whatever your stage of faith and practice.

Most often just sharing our struggles with other people we can trust takes some of the temptation's power away. At the very least, share it in earnest with the Lord.

“Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.” Let us live that prayer day to day – by asking God to keep us from temptation, saving us from the time of trial, and by trusting God to deliver us from the evil one when he does come our way.

And let me encourage and challenge you to practice one or more act of kindness in this coming most Holy Week, demonstrating the Holy Spirit's presence in you and through you.