

Prayer – Protection and Deliverance
Matthew 6:13

Good morning. My name is John and I'm happy to share God's Word with you this morning. If you're visiting this morning, I want to express my gratitude for visiting our church family this morning. For those who have been away for a while, welcome home!

It is interesting that the last sermon in the prayer series that we have been studying during the summer says, "*deliver us from evil or deliver us from the evil one.*" With what happened this past week, just a few blocks from here, we need deliverance from the evil one. This coming Saturday, we will be having a prayer vigil, a day of fasting and prayer for Ecuador. We would like to invite you to attend anywhere between 9:00 am – 1:00 pm. You may come for an hour or the whole time. But it will be focused prayer for Ecuador and the upcoming elections.

We're in a sermon series called "Prayer – A Relational Conversation with God." The disciples saw Jesus do miracles, teach, and preach with authority. However, they never asked Jesus to teach them to teach, preach, or do miracles. The one thing that they did ask Jesus was to teach them to pray,

The first week we touched on the theme, "Don't Worry." The next week we looked at the believer's war room, that private place where you and I meet God every day. I continue to be encouraged by the messages with photos of the place where you have your quiet time with God each day. Some of the photos are beautiful, overlooking the mountain ranges here in Quito. So, if you have a special place where you meet God each morning or day, please continue to send those as they are such an encouragement.

The following week we looked at God, the creator of the universe, wants us to approach him as father. He lives in a dimension that is not limited

by time or space. We are to hallow his name as He is in a category by himself. Then we looked at God's kingdom, both his future reign and his present reign from heaven. For us to enjoy all the benefits of his kingdom, we must voluntarily surrender ourselves to him. Then we looked at doing God's will here on earth as clearly shown in the scriptures.

The first several weeks, we looked at the Lord's Prayer as it relates to God our father, or God our daddy. Then we looked at the part of the Lord's prayer that focuses on us, his children and God's supernatural work in our lives. We saw that God is the sole source of our needs and that everything else is a resource. God may allow the resources to dry up and move us to the next place to meet our needs. But remember, He is the sole source for which we get our needs met. And last week we looked at forgiveness, both legal forgiveness and relational forgiveness. Relational forgiveness deals with unilateral forgiveness which frees us from being held hostage to the past infractions and sins committed against us and transactional forgiveness which deals with reconciliation.

Now today we will finish the Lord's prayer with the last part of the prayer.

Please open your Bibles to Matthew 6 and we'll now begin reading God's Word.

Matthew 6:9-13

⁹ Pray then like this:

***“Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name.^[a]***

***¹⁰ Your kingdom come,
your will be done,^[b]
on earth as it is in heaven.***

*¹¹ Give us this day our daily bread,^[c]
¹² and forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.
¹³ And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.^[d]*

Today we will focus on the last verse:

*¹³ And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil, (or the evil one.)*

Of all the prayer requests or model prayers that Jesus gave his disciples, the next line, “***And lead us not into temptation***” seems to be the most controversial petition in the Lord’s prayer. Theologians have argued about this phrase and many people have misunderstood it’s meaning. ***Lead us not into temptation.***

The question is: does God lead us into temptation? It would seem strange that Jesus gave this phrase to consider because in ***Psalms 23:3*** says, “***He leads me into the path of righteousness for His name sake.***” So, does God lead us into temptation? As we study today, I pray that God will give us an understanding of what this really means and be blessed to what the message that Jesus is giving to us.

When there seems to be a paradox with scripture or a difficult scriptural passage, the best way to interpret scripture is by the scriptures. So, what does it mean? The controversy comes with the definition of two English words. Not the Greek New Testament word, but the translation into English that has caused us difficulties. The Greek word used here is ***Peirazo (pi-rad-zo)*** which means to test or scrutinize or to entice or tempt. The way to distinguish which word is being used in the bible is by the context.

In *James 1:2-4* the bible says:

² Count it all joy, my brothers,^[b] when you meet trials of various kinds, ³ for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. ⁴ And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

But later in the text the bible says in *James 1:13*:

¹³ Let no one say when he is tempted, “I am being tempted by God,” for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one.

We have the same word *pi-rad-zo* used in these verses. In verse 2, the bible says that it is good when we have trials in our lives because we learn to persevere and become mature or complete. When we pass the test, we get rewarded. But temptation, it can lead you to unmitigated disaster. Because it can drag you down. Testing and trials can lift us up, but temptation can bring us down. Tempting and testing are opposed to each other.

When we pray *lead us not into temptation*, what we are saying is that we are crying to God and saying, “Lord, don’t permit me to be in a situation where I might fail you.” God leads us through trials. Trials are adverse circumstances designed by God to help develop you spiritually. Trials are negative events that God causes, or God allows. But every trial is for one purpose – to grow you spiritually. Therefore, if it goes from God’s heart through His fingers into your life, you can view it as a trial.

However, Satan doesn’t want you to look at it that way. If he can distract you from trusting God through whatever you are going through, then he will get you to look away from God’s purposes in your life.

1 Peter 1:6-7

⁶In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, ⁷so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

In a trial, God puts you in a situation where you have to depend on Him. It may be that someone else is looking at you to see if they would want to be a Christian, a child of God or not. And by the way you react to a trial declares the glory and testimony of God to that unsaved person. It's easy to lift your hands and sing praises (Bless the Lord oh my soul) to God on Sunday, it's another thing to be going through a dark storm or circumstance in your life (a funeral home, a hospital bed, at home having just lost your job) and still give glory to God.

Now, a temptation by the devil is designed to defeat you. God has designed a negative experience to develop you. Satan brings temptation into your life to defeat you and attempt to separate you further from God. The interesting thing is that trials and temptations usually happen around the same event or circumstance. Most of the things we deal with aren't a trial over here and a temptation over there. There are temptations that are obvious, but what Satan tries to do is to take advantage of a trial and turn it to a temptation.

For example, Satan will take food and turn it into gluttony. He will take sex and turn it into immorality. He will take money and turn it into greed, or theft, or debt. Satan will take something that God made good, mess with it and twist it, and take a trial that God wanted to use to develop us and turn it into a temptation in order to defeat us. Though we might not understand if it is a trial or temptation, we must assume it is both. Often God will use the devil to bring us a trial for which the devil will try to use it to his advantage and tempt us.

You may think, does God really use the devil to bring us trials? Look at ***Matthew 4:1***

Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.

The bible says that the Son of God was led by the Spirit of God into the dry place of testing in order to be tempted by the devil. Don't ever think that Satan lured Jesus into temptation. He was led by God the Father through God the Holy Spirit to the time of testing. Satan's motive was total destruction.

So, when life hits you and you are being tempted and tested, the question is, "which way are you going to go?" Are you going with God as a test or with Satan as a temptation? The reason we ask these questions is because the testing and temptation often happen at the same time. God wants to test us to mature us and take us to the next level, while at the same time Satan wants to distract us and defeat us in order to drive a wedge between us and God so that we may not live with the full power and presence of God in our lives.

When we are going through a deep trial we may be discouraged and say, "why is the devil doing this to me?" It may be because God has invited him to or allowed him to as part of His testing of your life which the devil will try to use to tempt you away from God. The thing you will have to decide is which way you are going to go? Who are you going to trust? Where will be your focus during the time of trials and testing? Are you going to follow God when it doesn't make sense? Are you going to follow Him when you don't like what you're going through?

That is the choice that Job had to make when he said in ***Job 2:10***,

¹⁰ But he said to her, "You speak as one of the foolish women would speak. Shall we receive good from God, and shall we not receive evil?"^[a] In all this Job did not sin with his lips.

So, the Lord's prayer would mean, ***“lead us not into any situation that we can't handle.”*** Like we said earlier, the prayer is to ask that we would not be given a trial where I would fail you or be overrun by a temptation. Or if I've already been beat up by the devil, or been defeated by him, we can pray, ***“deliver us from evil or the evil one.”***

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Now, let's look at how temptation works. Let's look at James ***1:14-15***

14 But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. 15 Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death.

In these two verses, God gives us the pattern of temptation. That pattern has not changed since the Garden of Eden. The pattern of temptation always starts with desire. ***Enticed by his own desire.*** What Satan does is to create a craving for something outside of the will of God. He wants you to want it. In the Garden of Eden, God told Adam in ***Genesis 2:16-17***

16 And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, “You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, 17 but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat^[d] of it you shall surely die.”

But when Satan talked to Eve, the bible says in ***Genesis 3:6***

6 So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise,^[b] she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate.

Eve saw, then was delighted, and then ate of the fruit, because Satan created a desire. The devil knows you so well, he knows your tendencies. He's not omnipresent or omniscient. But he has the network of his demons that has a file on you and me. He knows our desires, our tendencies, the things that would draw us away from him.

In Luke 22:31-34 we see what Jesus says to Peter about Satan's desire to trip him up.

³¹ “Simon, Simon, behold, Satan demanded to have you,^[d] that he might sift you like wheat, ³² but I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned again, strengthen your brothers.” ³³ Peter^[e] said to him, “Lord, I am ready to go with you both to prison and to death.” ³⁴ Jesus^[f] said, “I tell you, Peter, the rooster will not crow this day, until you deny three times that you know me.”

As in the case of Job in **Job 1:12**, Satan has to ask God's permission to bring a testing or temptation in our lives. The wonderful thing is that God has Satan on a leash. He cannot do what he wishes, but he will only do what God allows him to do in our lives. Here in these verses the bible says that Satan has asked to sift Peter as wheat. I've seen wheat being sifted. Up and down and moving from one side to the other. A terrible place. But the wonderful thing is that Jesus told Peter, **“but I have prayed for you.”** That is so encouraging to know because in **Romans 8:34** the bible tells us these words.

³⁴ Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us.

Jesus is praying for you. He is praying for me. He is praying for us now! Jesus told Peter, **“I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail.”**

So, the first thing we see about temptation is that Satan creates a desire, a craving designed to entice. Now back to *James 1:14-15*

14 But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. 15 Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death.

It is important that we have the right perspective about desire. The bible says that it is the desire that leads to disobedience. ***Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin.*** Here we see a pregnancy. But you will notice that the bible doesn't say that the desire was sin. He says that when it conceives it becomes sin. So, hopefully that will make you feel a little bit better. ☺ That fact that your flesh wants to sin is not the problem. Because that's what the flesh does. The old nature within us. If we don't recognize that, we will always go around defeated, and that is what Satan wants to do to you.

The Apostle Paul tells us these words in Romans 7:15-20

15 For I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. 16 Now if I do what I do not want, I agree with the law, that it is good. 17 So now it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me. 18 For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out. 19 For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing. 20 Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me.

So if you were an alcoholic before you were a Christian and now your flesh still wants or desires alcohol now that you're a Christian, that's what the flesh does. It's not the desire that is the problem, but the decision to act on that desire the problem. The one thing that can bring you peace is that you know that your flesh will always have those fleshly desires because of the old nature within you. That fact you know that

will help you not beat yourself up when you are tempted. However, and we'll see in a moment, God wants to bring deliverance in your life from the temptations of the evil one.

Let's go back to our verse:

James 1:14-15

¹⁴ But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. ¹⁵ Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death.

Sin brings forth death. Let me tell you this. All the time. ☹ There are no exceptions to this. But let me explain this. When the bible talks about death here, he's not talking about being in a coffin. When Adam and Eve sinned, they didn't drop dead physically at that moment. They lived for many years after that moment of sin. They eventually died physically. But what happened was that they were separated from God, God's presence. They were removed from the Garden from the presence of a Holy God. So, when we talk about people dying in their sins and go to hell, we mean by that, that they are eternally separated from God. So, to put this in context, there are many Christians, children of God, who are separated from God, separated from God's fellowship, like what we talked about last week. They live their lives defeated because they refuse to recognize and call sin – sin. Or they water sin down and say it was just a mistake or it really isn't that bad.

So, now what do I do. The Lord's prayer says:

***¹³ And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil, (or the evil one.)***

Lead me not into anything that I can't handle. Wherever you lead me, help me to handle it so that I may not bring dishonor to your name. Remember the first line of the prayer – ***hallowed be your name.*** And if

I've already been caught and defeated by the devil, if I've already sunk my teeth into the hook and I'm addicted, or I'm struggling or whatever it is, what is it that I should do.

What we should do is to change our focus. Stop looking at the destruction and defeat in your life. Don't give sin the attention that it is asking for. But change your focus. The secret to overcoming temptation that leads to sin or getting out of the sin that you are already caught in. It is in the same chapter and the following verses of *James 1*.

¹⁶ Do not be deceived, my beloved brothers. ¹⁷ Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.^[a]¹⁸ Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first fruits of his creatures.

There are four things that I want to share with you about overcoming temptation. They revolve around one word. Focus. You must change your focus. What you are focusing on will control you.

The first thing to focus on is the goodness of God. ***Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above.*** When you see sin, or the devil trying to tempt you to sin or you are caught in sin, James says to change your focus and see how good God has been to you. What are the good things that He has given you. If you look close enough, long enough, you will find that God has been better to you than you and I deserve. The little things in life, the medium things, the big things, you will see the goodness of God. So, how do you see the goodness of God? You enter into a time of thanksgiving. Remember from the first week of the sermon series, you take out your Johnny Rocket notebook and start to write down all the good things that God has done for you.

The second things that James tell us to focus on is the faithfulness of God. ***Every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.*** Let's talk about lights right now. He's talking about the sun, moon, and the stars, the lights in the heavens. Let's look at the biggest star which is the sun. Did you know, and I know you know, that the sun always shines. It has shined every day, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year since Genesis 1:3,4,5. There hasn't been a time where the sun does not or has not shined. So, he's saying that if you're going to have victory in your life, you must focus on the God who does not move amidst all the circumstances in your life that are always moving. That is why a verse that we all should memorize is 1 Corinthians 10:13

13 No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.

So, just to summarize this. This is how the faithfulness of God works. When God is testing with you in a severe trial or if Satan is trying to draw you away from God through a temptation, God will control how long it will last and how deep it goes. He will not allow you to be tempted above what you are able. But not only that, but he is also so faithful that when we are in a trial or under the attack of a temptation, he will ***provide a way of escape.*** There will be an exit sign shown to you. Not after the temptation. But when the temptation or testing is given to you, God will at the same time give you a way of escape. ***So that you may be able to endure it.*** Listen now. The only way to finish a test or to get victory in a temptation is that you must go through it.

The third thing that James tells us to focus on is the Word of God. ***Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth.*** In the midst of a trial or temptation, you must focus on what God says, not by how you feel.

Matthew 4:4

*“It is written, “Man shall not live by bread alone,
but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.””*

Matthew 4:5

...for it is written, “He will command his angels concerning you,”

Matthew 4:10

*For it is written, “You shall worship the Lord your God
and him only shall you serve.””*

Why must we quote the Word of God when we are being tempted? Because the devil is allergic to scripture. And every time we take the Word of God and show the promises of God, the devil starts to sneeze. The devil can't handle when the child of God defends himself with scripture. The devil loves to hear what you think, how you feel, but he takes off. We're to resist the devil, flee from temptation, but resist the devil.

The fourth things that James tell us to focus on is God's perspective.

that we should be a kind of first fruits of his creatures.

Firstfruits. We normally talk about firstfruits when we're talking about giving, giving our tithes to God. But he's not talking about money here. God says that you are the firstfruits. The firstfruits was the cream of the crop. It is what you offered God first because it was viewed as the most precious. It was honoring God to give him the first, it gave him honor. The bible says that you are firstfruits. To put it this way, when the devil is trying to defeat you and bring up your sin and past, don't let him let you forget who you are in Christ! Even if you think you are nothing, remember that you are a child of God, the son or daughter of the King of

Kings and the Lord of Lords. You are the apple of His eye, la luz de su hojo, cheseme Khodavand!

This morning I want to tell you that God is a delivering God.

Psalm 50:15

***And call upon me in the day of trouble;
I will deliver you, and you shall glorify me.***

Psalm 107 says that He's a God of deliverance.

Psalm 91:14-15

***¹⁴ "Because he holds fast to me in love, I will deliver him;
I will protect him, because he knows my name.***

***¹⁵ When he calls to me, I will answer him;
I will be with him in trouble;
I will rescue him and honor him.***

2 Timothy 4:17-18

¹⁷ But the Lord stood by me and strengthened me, so that through me the message might be fully proclaimed and all the Gentiles might hear it. So I was rescued from the lion's mouth. ¹⁸ The Lord will rescue me from every evil deed and bring me safely into his heavenly kingdom. To him be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

God can deliver you from circumstances, people, the devil when you focus on Him.

⁹ Pray then like this:

*“Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name.^[a]*

*¹⁰ Your kingdom come,
your will be done,^[b]*

on earth as it is in heaven.

¹¹ Give us this day our daily bread,^[c]

*¹² and forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.*

*¹³ And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.^[d]*

Let's pray.