

When You Pray - Protection

"Prayer is a strong wall and fortress of the church: it is a godly Christian weapon." ~
Martin Luther

This week we continue and almost wrap up the Lord's Prayer....

Matthew 6:9-13 (NKJV)

In this manner, therefore, pray:

Our Father in heaven,

Hallowed be Your name.

10 Your kingdom come.

Your will be done

On 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 do not lead us into temptation,

But deliver us from the evil one.

For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

We've seen God's character, His position, His authority, His plans. We've seen how he provides for our physical needs, and our forgiveness, and today we look at His protection

Matthew 6:13a (NKJV)

And do not lead us into temptation,

But deliver us from the evil one.

Do you believe that God is good? I mean really believe it? It's a biblical truth yet there are many that struggle to believe it.

In fact the go-to scripture to reaffirm that God is good is kind of a tricky one if read out of context.

Mark 10:18 (NKJV)

So Jesus said to him, "Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is, God.

If you don't understand that the rich young ruler does not recognize Jesus as God, you could take this to mean that Jesus is saying He's NOT God....when in fact it's really a test of the ruler's heart to see if he recognizes Jesus as the Messiah.

Aside from this there aren't many NT scriptures about God's goodness. There are some Psalms and other OT scriptures. But an even better way to see that God is good is to....

Read the scriptures and SEE the character of God. Who Jesus is and what He does reveal that He is good. It's so much more powerful than just the statement that God is good. You can see it, you can experience it in your own life!

Psalm 34:8a (NKJV)

Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good;

Doesn't it mean more to experience it? We can relate this to love....actions speak louder than words, right? It's important to tell people that you love them but how much does it mean if they can't tell by your actions, by experiencing that love in the way you are with them....

God is good and He wants you to experience His goodness. He has been trying to show you every single day! This is a certainty.

We need this as our foundation today....God is good.....now look at how Jesus told us to pray:

Matthew 6:13a (NKJV)

And do not lead us into temptation,
But deliver us from the evil one.

He says when you pray, pray like this: "God don't lead me into temptation". But I thought we just made the case that God is good.....why would He lead me into temptation?

First, we need the understanding that God is not the one that tempts you. He is good.

James 1:13 (NKJV)

Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone.

God doesn't tempt.....BUT.....He just might lead us into temptation.

Luke 4:1-2 (NKJV)

Then Jesus, being filled with the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, 2 being tempted for forty days by the devil. And in those days He ate nothing, and afterward, when they had ended, He was hungry.

Who led Jesus into the wilderness to be tempted? The Holy Spirit. But God is good....

There's a key component here that is vital to this passage. Jesus, being FILLED with the Holy Spirit.....was led by the Spirit into the wilderness....

God won't lead you anywhere that He won't go with you. That would be bad, God is good. God doesn't lead someone who is NOT filled with His Spirit to be tempted that would be bad, God is good.

James 1:14-15 (NKJV)

But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. 15 Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death.

See temptation is not the problem.....our desires are the problem. The KJV says lust instead of desires....we are drawn away by our own lusts, craving, longing for what is forbidden. These things when conceived, when we let them grow and deliver ourselves to them, then it becomes sin and ultimately death....that's the result of sin....

That does not sound like a place I want to go....why would God lead me there?

1 Corinthians 10:13 (NKJV)

No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.

This is why.....you are already overtaken by temptation in your life....it's why you sin. No temptation has overtaken you EXCEPT such as is common to man.....normal human temptation. That HAS overtaken you.

There are times where temptation seems like it's too much to handle. That's when we use this verse to say something that it DOES NOT SAY...."God won't give me more than I can handle".....that is a lie from satan....

You are already overtaken....sounds like you already have more than you can handle....what He will do is make a way of escape so you may be able to bear it! Do you know that if you bear something then for a while you are still under it? But you can bear it....being under it you can handle it.

The other day Kristi was lying on the couch and I went over and layed on top of her, just giving her a hug, but I know my weight is too much for her to bear if I were to just lay on top of her, so I used my arms to support my weight. Then Xander decided to add to the pile and lay on top of me, I still was supporting my weight and most of Xander's with my arms, Kristi was still on the bottom of the pile, but she was able to bear the weight.....but only because of my protection.

It's kind of like that with temptation. You are under it but God is, by His strength, protecting you from more than you can bear....but that doesn't mean you aren't still under it. But here's how

you can bear it. He provides a way out.....1 Corinthians tells us that....He will make the way of escape. The only way you can handle the pressure of temptation is by knowing there's a way out of it and it's the Way, the Truth, and the Life.....it's Jesus! He is the way out!

So why would He lead you to a place of temptation? Because He wants you to get out from under it. He wants you to gain victory from it. He wants you to know there is a way out but you won't even look for it if you don't recognize that you need to escape it!

And He knows that satan is not going to give up piling the weight on you....

Luke 4:13 (NKJV)

Now when the devil had ended every temptation, he departed from Him until an opportune time.

If God would lead you to a place where you may be tempted, remember it's still not HIM who tempts, it's your own lusts and desires, and He wants to free you from them.

So then why when you pray do you say:

Matthew 6:13a (NKJV)

And do not lead us into temptation,
But deliver us from the evil one.

If dealing with temptation is a way of overcoming temptation, why would we pray to not be led into temptation?

If your heart is turned toward Jesus...if you have given your life to Him, you accept the sacrifice He made on the cross when He died in YOUR place for the price of YOUR sin....then your heart is moved to a place of wanting to please Him, wanting to live for Him.

See when we are tempted, we are tested, we are tried. We have a choice to make....do we cave under the pressure, under the weight of the desires of a wicked heart? Or do we bear that weight, submit to God, and take the way of escape....

There are times when I fail those tests. There are times when I cave under the pressure and I don't bear the weight. I know this because I sin. I do things that grieve the heart of God. I fail.

Because of that....I don't want to be tested. If in school every test was a one challenging question pass/fail test, most of the time you wouldn't want to take it. You'd be looking for anyway possible to avoid that test. Is there any other way?

See the “do not lead me into temptation” is really a heart desire that out of your love for Jesus, you want to avoid the danger and trouble that sin creates. You want to avoid the test not because it’s impossible to pass but because of the hurt of failing.

It’s the expression of the redeemed soul that despises sin and wants to escape all possibility of falling into it.

We know that trials are a means for our growing spiritually, morally, and emotionally. Yet we have no desire to be in a place where even the possibility of sin is increased.

Look at what Jesus prayed as He faced the cross:

Luke 22:39-46 (NKJV)

Coming out, He went to the Mount of Olives, as He was accustomed, and His disciples also followed Him. 40 When He came to the place, He said to them, “Pray that you may not enter into temptation.”

41 And He was withdrawn from them about a stone’s throw, and He knelt down and prayed, 42 saying, “Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done.” 43 Then an angel appeared to Him from heaven, strengthening Him. 44 And being in agony, He prayed more earnestly. Then His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground.

45 When He rose up from prayer, and had come to His disciples, He found them sleeping from sorrow. 46 Then He said to them, “Why do you sleep? Rise and pray, lest you enter into temptation.”

Jesus prayed when under the weight of temptation. Jesus faced every kind of temptation that is known to man. He was sinless, not temptationless. He was a man.....therefore He had human desire....it’s just that He did not let desire conceive and grow into sin.

He had the temptation to avoid the cross. He had the temptation to not bear the weight of the sin of the world. Man am I glad He went through with it.....God is good!

He is praying for the Father to let this pass if possible but if it has to happen, He’ll do it. And both before and after He prays, He tells the disciples to pray that they don’t enter into temptation, that they don’t give into it.

I like how it’s recorded in Matthew’s account:

Matthew 26:41 (NKJV)

Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.”

The Spirit of God that dwells within you.....it is willing to take on this temptation and defeat it....destroy it....but the flesh is weak....the flesh, the human nature wants to give in and give up.

This is why we need the second part of this prayer if we are tempted....

Matthew 6:13a (NKJV)

And do not lead us into temptation,
But deliver us from the evil one.

J C Ryle said - "We are taught to ask God to deliver us from the evil that is in the world, the evil that is within our own hearts, and not least from the evil one, the devil. We confess that, so long as we are in the body, we are constantly seeing, hearing and feeling the presence of evil. It is about us, and within us, and around us on every side. We entreat him who alone can preserve us, to be continually delivering us from its power."

Only God can deliver us.....save us....from the power of sin, from the influence of the evil one. It's only Jesus that provides that way of escape....so if we must face temptation, we must ask God to deliver us from its weight and its hold.

Do you believe that God is your protector?

Psalm 32:7 says "You are my hiding place. You protect me from trouble. You surround me with joyful shouts of deliverance."

Can you believe for that today?

If you have a need, please come forward and pray. And when you pray ask for the Lord's protection and deliverance.....and He will come to you.....and He will rescue you!