

The Marks of a True Believer
Message Nine
“Deliver Us From Evil (the Evil One)”
Matt 6:5-15

- 5 And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.
- 6 But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.
- 7 But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking.
- 8 Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him.
- 9 After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.
- 10 Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in 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 lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.
- 14 For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you:
- 15 But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

The True Believer steadfastly seeks God’s deliverance from all forms of evil, especially the deceptions of the evil one, Satan.

Introduction:

As Jesus closed out His Model Prayer, His Great Pattern of Prayer for all ages and times, He dropped in a topic that has been often ignored, neglected, and/or minimized by the Church in many centuries, but none more than the Church in this time. His people should pray concerning the activity of “the evil (one)” in their lives. Many scholars believe that this is the correct understanding of this text.

As concerning the devil, many, if not most, believers have thought and do think themselves generally invulnerable from him, from his demons, from his schemes and plans. In fact, my personal judgment is that this is an area of either unconscious or deliberate pride for millions who name the name of Christ. Yet, the Lord Jesus Himself as well as His two greatest apostles warned the Church concerning the devil and his works. Jesus demonstrated in this prayer that he would have us earnestly praying daily to be kept from Satan’s plans against us.

Peter warned.

1 Peter 5:8-9

8 Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh

about, seeking whom he may devour:

- 9 Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world. KJV

And Paul cautioned us.

Eph 6:12-13

12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

13 Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. KJV

So, we are prompted to question ‘why?’

Why pray for deliverance from the evil one on a daily basis? Is he still in our lives even though we are converted? If so, what is he doing?

Is he making the battery die when our car refuses to start?

Did he break the light switch which quit working?

Or the lawn mower?

Or the washing machine?

Is he the one who makes the computer quit on us just as we need to do something?

Or makes it rain on inconvenient days?

I think many people see him as some kind of tormenting gremlin who simply aggravates us by causing annoying things to happen to ruin our days. But we have almost no evidence, if any at all, in scripture that he is up to any such things. His work is far more sinister and far more deadly than stalling cars and maddening computers.

So, what is he up to? Does he seek to use those circumstances to provoke us to respond in ‘less-than-godly’ ways? I am certainly convinced of it. The apostle Paul’s affliction, to which he referred in 2 Cor. 12:7, that ‘thorn in the flesh’ was a ‘messenger of Satan’ sent to torment him. But it was also of the Lord Who promised Paul sufficient grace to deal with the affliction in a godly way.

His (the devil’s) presence is constant, Jesus reminded us, and since Jesus would have us pray daily and urgently concerning the matter, the danger to ourselves, to our lives, and to our service to God must indeed be great. Yet I would dare to venture that few of us have had any real and tangible sense of the work of Satan in our lives this last week. Other than thinking that he caused our car trouble or something in the house not to work, we just did not have any sense of him at all. And, I am pretty sure that I am not far from the truth to say that we did not so powerfully feel his presence as to be urgent in our petitions to be kept from him and him from us.

Our urgency, our intensity, in any matter always betrays our actual level of interest. Whether it is learning that our favorite team has won a game or that our most determined enemy has fallen ill, the manner and nature of our response tells volumes about us and the real nature of our

relationship whether to the team or the enemy. When we truly sense danger our level of intensity rises to match the nature of the perceived threat and when we perceive safety the concern lowers to almost zero. Judging, then, by the lack of intensity that I see around me concerning our danger with regard to the devil, it seems to me that we all perceive ourselves as pretty safe, not in any real danger.

But neither Jesus, Paul nor Peter would have us feel safe. They urge upon us concern, diligence and prayer that we might be prepared for Satan's attacks.

John took another approach, informing us that those who do the will of the devil should not consider themselves to be children of God and neither should those around them.

1 John 3:8-10

- 8 He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.
- 9 Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.
- 10 In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother. KJV

So, what is the danger? What can the devil do? Some people seem to think that if they are not sitting on a flying bed with their head spinning around and their mouth spewing green bile and profanities they have not been overcome by the devil. (RE: The Exorcist)

What does the devil do to people anyway?

We know from scripture some of the gross things.

In some he can cause insanity. Mark 5:1-5 tells of the maniac of Gadara who lived in a cemetery and was constantly screaming and cutting himself. Matt 17:14,15 tells of a man coming to Jesus and His disciples with a son who was 'lunatic' constantly seeking to hurt himself in some way. Please know that I do not believe every case of insanity to be demonic but many are.

In others the devil caused people to be unable to speak, Matt 9:32,33, and some were also made blind, Matt 12:22. Some people were caused by the devil to cry out in opposition to the gospel.

Luke 4:33-35

- 33 And in the synagogue there was a man, which had a spirit of an unclean devil, and cried out with a loud voice,
- 34 Saying, Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art; the Holy One of God.
- 35 And Jesus rebuked him, saying, Hold thy peace, and come out of him. And when the devil had thrown him in the midst, he came out of him, and hurt him not. KJV

Seeing some of the rank hatred of the gospel as spite against it among many in our country, I

wonder.

The devil can also cause crippling conditions as the woman who was completely bent over due to demonic influence upon her in Luke 13:11-13.

But he also has been shown to have devastating spiritual impact upon genuine believers. In the case of Peter he caused an outburst of seeming good and reasonable words which were contrary to God's revelation and condemned by Jesus as of the devil.

Matt 16:21-23

- 21 From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day.
- 22 Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee.
- 23 But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.

He can induce apparent Christians to lie to the church and to the Holy Spirit as in the case of Ananias and Sapphira, Acts 5:1-3.

And, he can cause misery in the life of a believer who is turned out of the church because of sin.

1 Cor 5:1-5

- 1 It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife.
- 2 And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you.
- 3 For I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already, as though I were present, concerning him that hath so done this deed,
- 4 In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ,
- 5 To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. KJV

We know from 1 Cor 7:5 that he tempts believers to be immoral.

He also has the capacity to appear to be one of God's angels and to empower false teachers to *seem* as if they are teachers of truth.

2 Cor 11:4, 13-15

- 4 For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him.

2 Cor 11:13-15

- 13 For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the

- apostles of Christ.
- 14 And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light.
- 15 Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works. KJV

This is possibly one of the most profound ways that he is attacking the church today.

Do you think that you are safe from false teachers? Consider the folks at Corinth who had learned scriptures from the best, or the Galatians to whom Paul presented this question: “O foolish Galatians, *who hath bewitched you*, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you?” (Gal 3:1) There is a mysterious and ‘bewitching’ quality to some false teachers, those who are being directly energized by Satan himself. Even serious believers can be seduced by them.

Can you recognize a false teacher who is so deceptive that he might steal Paul’s own converts and students away from him and what he had taught them?

Are you sure you haven’t already been stolen away from truth?

As we assemble here together this morning we are not all in the same place. Each of you are filtering my words through a system of beliefs that is the product of all of the teaching you have absorbed over your life. Some of them came from preachers you heard, some from books you have read, some from the belief system of your parents, and some you have formulated for yourself. So, every face that I see represents a different filter and a somewhat different set of ideas, thoughts, opinions, and beliefs. (I now understand why many of the reformers wanted everyone to learn the catechism.)

But, what about you? Are all of those elements in your ‘filter’ valid? Do you even understand that they are there and do you recognize what they are? If not, how can you be sure that the devil hasn’t dropped some critical error into the mix that is now confound your understanding of every biblical truth you hear?

Do you begin to understand the reason why the Lord Jesus would have you cry out in desperation every day, “Keep me from the evil one”? You remember, do you not, that He warned His Own disciples concerning being deceived?

Matt 24:4-5

4 And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you.

5 For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.

Matt 24:11

11 And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many.

The writers of the NT continually warned against deception and yet how few of the people of God perceive the danger in such a way that they pray with intensity to be delivered from evil and the evil one, “Lord, please keep me from the deceptions of the kingdom of darkness and the one who rules it!”

In Rev 2 Jesus had a serious and strong warning for the pastor of the church at Ephesus, “you have left, drifted away from, the intense love you once had for me and now I am about to take away from you My enlightening grace, the Manifest Presence of the Holy Spirit.” Shall we presume that the Evil One had nothing to do with that? Shall we think that the one who attacked and resisted Paul while he was at Ephesus simply left this powerful and effective preacher to his own devices?

In chapter 3 of Rev we find another minister of the Word being rebuked for having grown lukewarm in his service for God and threatened with being “spewed out” by the Lord, rejected and cast down from his pastorate. Success and prosperity had seduced him away from intense devotion to Christ. Being overwhelmed by the evil one in this case looked for all the world like becoming successful... except to the Lord Who absolutely despised his awful condition. The devil can likewise deceive us as he has many since the book of Revelation was written.

This may be the way that the devil has seduced and deceived the majority of Christians in our day. We are “rich and increased with goods” like the Laodicean pastor, not perceiving that we have spiritual needs worthy of intense and continual prayer.

If the Lord were to open the eyes of those who profess an evangelical faith in Desoto County, MS like He offered to do for the pastor at Laodicea (3:18) our churches would be overflowing with weeping souls today. No one would be able to preach for the noise of souls crying out to God. Come February, the Landers Center would not be able to hold the people seeking God for a revival. But the devil has used our affluence and our comfort to deceive us into a warm and lazy state of unconcern, a state, as I said earlier, despised by the Lord.

And then, there is one more deception, worse than all the rest and the most dangerous one of all. It is the deception of believing that one is a child of God when he is not. Jesus told of people who will show up at the Last Judgment fully convinced that they are children of God when, in fact, they are not. How great this deception is and how profoundly do those who have it hold on to it! There is really nothing quite like it in all the world.

Matt 6:23 ...If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!

It is a great darkness that shuts the light of the gospel out of his soul. How many I have seen in these last fifty years completely convinced that they are children of God and yet obviously are not! If anyone, ever, needed to cry out, “keep me from the evil one” it is this one and, yet, he is less likely to do so than one of those tree dwelling savages of New Guinea hearing the gospel for the first time.

Is there any wonder, then, that Jesus would have us daily crying out for preservation from the deceptions of Satan?

It abides true that the intensity of our actions speaks to the depth of the need we feel.

Do you fear being deceived?
Are you crying out daily so as not to be?

At the end of the day, all we have is our perception of reality, our sense of whether things are well with our souls or not. All around us is darkness, deception and lies. Unless the God of this Universe has opened our eyes and minds to truth and is keeping them open then slavery to the devil and everlasting torment are our future.

These few words, inserted into this model prayer so long ago, form the most reasonable prayer that a conscious, rational being can pray.

God's Work of keeping us is our only hope.

Pray with me, "Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen."