

**SERMON: MATTHEW 6:9-13 and LUKE 11:2-4****FATHER, DELIVER US FROM ALL TRUE HARM**

*Our Father Who art in heaven. Hallowed be Thy Name. Thy Kingdom come. Thy Will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation. **But deliver us from evil.** For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.* (COMMON WORDING OF THE LORD'S PRAYER.)

What does it mean “to draw”? I suppose the most common answer would be to make a picture with a pencil - “Susie likes to draw.” But “draw” has another meaning -- “to draw water out of the well, rotten meat draws flies, this sweatshirt hood has no draw string, to draw money out of the bank, go get the tractor so we can draw some dirt up to the shed.” The word “draw,” at its root, means “to drag or to pull.” The Greeks talked about dragging or “drawing” an injured comrade from battle or from danger. Their word came to mean less about dragging things across the ground and more about rescuing, saving, delivering from harm. The same in English. “Draw” is the word that is used in the 7<sup>th</sup> Request / the 7<sup>th</sup> and final Petition of the Lord's prayer. “Draw us, drag us, deliver us from evil.”

The word “deliver” is an interesting word in itself. We think of “deliver” to mean “drop off” -- the mail, a package, or a pizza. But the word “deliver” really means “to set free.” A mail carrier “delivers” your mail. The mail is yours, it has your name on it; but the post office has possession of it because post office has been given the responsibility of getting the mail to you. The mail carrier “sets it free” from the “clutches” of the post office to hand it over to you. Just as one might hear about people trapped at a mountain resort because of a snow avalanche, being “delivered” by a rescue team. Deliver means to “set free,” or to rescue.

In this 7<sup>th</sup> Petition, the final Request, we ask our dear Father to draw us away from, to rescue us, to set us free from, evil. We are talking to Him who made us as His holy children, and who adopted us sinful run-aways back into His family because of His Son who was punished for us. We have asked our Father to lead us to honor, hallow, keep sacred, His “names” and His “good-name” in all our words, in all our actions, and in all we teach from Scripture. We have asked Him to bring His kingdom, His great reign of salvation to us already now on earth and finally forever in heaven through the Holy Spirit working in our hearts and others' hearts by means of the Word. We have asked that His gracious and perfect will be done meaning that the devil's corrupt will be broken. Our Father's will is to bring us to heaven; the devil's will is to get us to hell. We ask our Father to do whatever it takes to defeat Satan and get us to heaven—whether we always see clearly His plan of events for us or not. We have asked our Father to supply all our daily needs for this body and life, for which we truly say Thank You. We have asked Him to continue to forgive our sins, our debts, against Him through Jesus, because without Jesus' sacrifice for us, we are unable to pay; likewise we pray for strength to forgive others. We have asked Him not to lead us near to—i.e., to keep us away from—the evil temptations of Satan, the evil tests by which Satan hopes to break us and separate us from our loving Father; for on our own we will surely fail to stand our ground. Finally today in the last petition, we see how Jesus teaches us to pray to our Father, asking Him to draw us, to deliver us, rescue us, from all evil and harm.

What are some evil things that can happen? To the body—break a leg, lose a finger, damage hearing, damage eyesight, get an ulcer, get arthritis, suffer a heart attack, undergo depression or mental imbalance, lose speech, lose memory, etc. Father deliver us from evil. To the soul? Despising the Savior, disregarding His sacrifice, doubting God's love, pushing away the Holy Spirit, considering the Bible as myths and legends not real Truth, walking in unrestrained sin, etc. Father deliver us from such evil! Evils to property? Wreck the car, theft, vandalism, fire, tornado, flood, loss of livestock, drought, etc. Father deliver us from evil! Evil that can happen to honor and reputation? Being accused of a crime you didn't commit, gossip being spread to bring you down, making a poor decision that negatively affects many others etc. Father deliver us from evil!

God can and does deliver His people from evil. The Bible says, “*God delivered righteous Lot*” from the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (2 Peter 2:7). Paul wrote, “*I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion. The Lord will deliver me from every evil work* (II Timothy 4:17-18). Also “*Finally, brethren, pray for us, . . . that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men; for not all have faith*” (II Thessalonians 3:1-2).

What do you say? How well has the Father answered this request for you? “Well, He's delivered me some times, even a lot of times, but not all the time.” Likely you can recite several incidents that brought you suffering and loss, circumstances from which you were not delivered and spared. What about that?

Here we need to define “evil.” The English word “evil” means that which is “over and above,” that which is “beyond the limits.” Interestingly, the word “eaves”—that part of the house which protrudes beyond the limits of the walls—is related. “Father, deliver / rescue us from that which is beyond our limits.” The Greek word for evil is connected to our word “ponderous,” something “that is heavy, makes one toil, afflicts, distresses, puts one in a sorry plight.” We say, Lord, deliver us from burdens in life, that weigh us down, set us back, and cause us toil and pain.” Evil comes from Satan and sin.

But God doesn’t always do that, does He? Why? Is it because He doesn’t know your distress? God knows all things. Is it because God doesn’t have the power to do anything about your situation? God is almighty, and there isn’t anything God can’t do. Is it because God is punishing you for your sins? He already punished His Son for the sins of the world and yours, *He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities, the punishment for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed (Isaiah 53:5-6).* Is it because God doesn’t love you? God so loved the world (“world” includes you!), that He gave His only begotten Son (John 3:16). Also *“In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins” (1 John 4:10).* Is it because God was caught by surprise and didn’t take measures ahead of time to prevent it? No. God is the great HE IS, the great I AM. Nothing gets by Him.

God outmaneuvers Satan at his own game. If something is truly “evil,” it brings harm, leading one away from heaven to hell. Satan intends harm. God twists and turns Satan’s plan. He bends it to serve His own good purpose, which is Heaven for you, and it becomes something good for His children, not harm. “We know that all things work together for good to them that love God” (Romans 8:23). Is God always aware of what Satan is up to? Yes, He is. Could He stop him? Yes He could, Why doesn’t He? All I know is that He uses it for good.

What is the worst evil that could befall you? Any of the things I listed above? No, not the worst. “Ok, the worst thing that could happen is that I die, right?” No. When Christians die they go to heaven—nothing bad about that. The worst thing, the worst evil, that could befall you is that you die and go to hell! “Father, deliver us from evil, please!” In Jesus, He has and He does. You are justified by faith in Jesus. Your sins are off the books. There is nothing to condemn you. In Jesus, Satan and his evil cannot really harm you, only suffering in this life which God overturns according to His own purposes.

Can we say that God “allows” Satan to bring us “harm”? Only in that God will let no real harm come of it, to His children. Think of the things Joseph’s ten older brothers did to him. They hated him and sold him as a slave to Egypt, figuring never to see him again. Twenty-two years later when Joseph was second in command to Pharaoh in Egypt, his brothers were in his hand. They had come to buy grain in Egypt during the famine, unwittingly, from him! When Joseph finally told them who he was, they were frightened figuring Joseph would get even. But Joseph said, *“Do not therefore be grieved or angry with yourselves because you sold me here . . . God sent me before you to preserve a posterity for you in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance. So now it was not you who sent me here, but God” (Genesis 45:5, 7, 8).* And when their father Jacob died *“As for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive” (Genesis 50:20).* God knew the hateful things that the devil was getting Joseph’s brothers to do to Him. But GOD would use it and send Joseph to Egypt to save many lives, especially the family of Israel from whom the Savior would come.

Also consider Job. The devil was sure if God took some of Job’s blessings away, Job would curse God. The devil said to the Lord, *“But now, stretch out Your hand and touch all that he has, and he will surely curse You to Your face!” And the Lord said to Satan, “Behold, all that he has is in your power; only do not lay a hand on his person. So Satan went out from the presence of the Lord” (Job 1:11-12).* God allowed Satan to afflict Job and to bring apparent “evil” upon Job. But God would use this to lead Job to trust Him even more with a deeper childlike faith. God allowed no real harm, no real evil, to beset Job. Through it, God humiliated Satan.

We pray “Father, deliver us from evil.” The ultimate deliverance from evil is to escape from this sinful world and to go to heaven—in spirit, upon death. And at the End, at the great Judgment Day, to go to heaven, body and soul. That is the sweetest deliverance for which we pray!

Martin Luther wrote in the Small Catechism: “Deliver us from evil. *What does this mean?* We pray in this petition as the sum of all, that our Father in heaven would deliver us from every evil that threatens body and soul, property and honor. And finally when our last hour shall come, that He grant us a blessed end and graciously take us from this world of tears [“vale of tears”—valley of tears] to Himself in heaven.”

So be it! Amen!

Pastor Kanzenbach---