

Temptation and Deliverance

Փորձութիւն եւ Ազատագրում

And Lead Us Not into Temptation, but Deliver Us from the Evil One (NIV)
Մեզ Փորձութեան Մի Տանիր, Հապա Չարէն Մեզ Ազատէ

Matthew 4:1-11

In the last two weeks we covered Jesus' fifth request in his prayer to his Father. I pray that God will lead you during the week to put into practice whatever you are praying for. Always remember that prayers help us come closer to God. Prayers do not change God. Prayers change us.

Martin Luther said that we should sleep at night with the fifth petition and wake up with the sixth petition. True. Before we go to bed, we should examine our lives and give away our "debts" to our father, as well as forgive others like our heavenly Father forgave us. In the morning, on a new day, we ask God to protect us from the Evil One and his temptations. We ask our Father to shield us with Christ so we can face the Evil One, whose desire is to devour us. As Peter says: **"Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour."** (1 Peter 5:8 ESV)

What is going on?

We will study the word temptation. What does it mean? Where do we see this word in the Bible? Then we will discuss deliverance from the Evil One.

In fact, I will start with the **Evil One**. **"...but Deliver us from the evil one" (NIV)**. Jesus uses the definite article: "the evil" (*Tou ponēros the Evil one*). The Evil one is the one who rebelled against God. He is the one who disobeyed God. He is the one who wants to devour us, devour our faith. He is the one who wants us to remain in doubt, be suspicious, to give up from God. How does he succeed? He is a great manipulator. He is a deceiver.

In Genesis, in the Garden of Eden, we see how the Evil One deceived Adam and Eve by asking simple questions to create doubt. **“Did God actually say, ‘You shall not eat of any tree in the garden?’”** (Genesis 3:1 ESV). Another lie: “Don’t you want to be like God?” What was his intention? Did the Evil One really want us to be like God, or he wanted us to live away from God? Until now, he is around us trying to devour our faith, our principles, our priorities, and our desire to know God.

The second word that I want to study is the word **“temptation.”** The word in Greek is *peirasmos*, which could mean **test**, something good to improve someone’s character. It could also **mean temptation**, which is to put someone in trouble, in sin, in order to make that person stumble and fall. So it is a difficult word to translate. A test can come from God. A test or trial is good for our character. Temptation comes from the Evil. Its intention is to destroy, to drag humanity into sin.

Saying all this, what does **“and lead us not into temptation”** mean?

We know that God will not lead us into temptation. God is good, and He will not tempt us. So what is Jesus praying?

The answer is in the second part of the sixth petition. But Deliver us from the Evil One. The word **“but”** is important. The petition is protection from THE EVIL ONE, the source of temptation. The evil one turns tests into temptations. Sometimes tests show up in our lives so that our character improves. Satan, the Evil One is so good in turning those tests to temptations and we will fall in sin (*devour your faith*). So in other words, Jesus is praying to the Abba Father saying: “Oh Daddy, I know you will give us tests, but the Evil One is waiting just to turn that test into a temptation. Deliver us from that evil, oh my Father, my Lord, My daddy.”

Question: Why do we need tests? Can’t our character improve in another way?

Originally the word test *peirasmos* is used to purify the gold.

In the Bible, we have many verses where God is purifying the faith of the believer;

For you, God, tested us; you refined us like silver. (Psalms 66:10)

See, I have refined you, though not as silver; I have tested you in the furnace of affliction. (Isaiah 48:10)

I will put into the fire; I will refine them like silver and test them like gold. They will call on my name and I will answer them; I will say, 'They are my people,' and they will say, 'The LORD is our God.'" (Zechariah 13:9)

These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith--of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire--may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. (1 Peter 1:7)

God molds us. He will use tests and trials. Watch out for the Evil one who can turn them into temptations.

Some advice on how to resist temptations:

I learn from Jesus how he resisted the Evil ONE in the wilderness.

1. The First Temptation: "Who will provide for you?" Hunger

Hunger is a strong drive to do things. Ask me, when I am hungry. Ask anyone who is hungry. Hunger for "bread"; hunger for "power, position, sex..."

The Devil's words: **"If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become loves of bread."** (Matthew 4:3ESV)

Let me remind you the same strategy was used in the beginning:

The Serpent (the beast) approached the humans with the same point: "Aren't you hungry for knowledge? Don't you want to be like God and to differentiate good from evil?"

It was and it is an **effective method that the Devil uses to trap us in sin**. For ages the Serpent has been using this. "I'll provide for your needs; I'll provide for your hunger; I'll satisfy your hunger..."

It is big lie. Evil can never satisfy our need, never. In fact, it will turn our needs into addictions.

What was Jesus' answer?

“It is written: ‘Man shall not live by bread alone.’” (4:4)

Here is my interpretation: “Devil, I am not interested in your kitchen; in your menu; although I am really hungry and I need bread.” “I just asked my heavenly Father to provide me my daily bread. You cannot satisfy my physical hunger or my spiritual hunger. My heavenly Father is the source of those, not you...”

2. The Second Temptation: Control

Satan, the Evil One loves new methods to tempt Jesus:

And he said to him, **“All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me.”** (Matthew 4:9 ESV)

The Devil knows Jesus' mission. This time he wants to “help” his mission. The Devil will give all the authority and control to Jesus if he worships him. It does not matter how you achieve your goal; the end justifies the means.

Jesus was firm. He did not spend time playing with Satan.

“You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve.” (Matthew 4:10 ESV)

There is one chef in the kitchen who will feed me and there is only one God who is in authority and power. Jesus' loyalty to his Father is not for sale.

3. The Third Temptation: Whom Do you Trust?

Satan wants more.

“If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down, for it is written, “He will command his angels concerning you,’ and “On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone.” (Matthew 4:6 ESV)

Whom do you trust? Satan can quote scripture and can misuse it.

Jesus said to him, “**Again it is written, ‘You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.’**” (Matthew 4:7 ESV)

The devil offers Jesus a valid promise from Scripture (Ps 91:11-12). On the one hand, the promise was true – God would protect His Messiah – but on the other, Jesus is keenly aware that forcing God to prove His faithfulness is blasphemous (Exodus 17:1-7).

You see how Satan works. He will use something out of context. He will say part of the truth. He will never tell **you the end result of your choice.**

Application:

- What’s your battle today? What temptation keeps showing up in your life?
- If you knew the end result of giving in to temptation is not going to be good for you, how would you deal with it?
- Think of a way of fixing your eyes on Christ and replacing your temptations with something more beautiful.

Let us approach to the table.

The choir will sing a song that the words are so powerful.

Amen