

March 2nd, 2025

Sermon: When we Pray: Deliver us from Evil

Main text: Matthew 6:13

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What does this story tell me about God?

2. What does this story tell me about people (or about myself)?

3. If this is God's word for my life, how will I obey it?

4. Who am I, going to tell?

Key points, and quotes to reflect on and discuss from Brett's message:

Brett shared that he wants... "to remind us of the lens through which we're looking at this series. Ryan referenced it a couple of weeks ago as well. When we gathered as a teaching team to read this series text and to discern together how to walk through it, we essentially came to this: through this prayer that Jesus taught his disciples, we seek to align with Him. We seek to grow in intimacy with Him through a life of prayer."

Brett points out that... "today's text: dealing with temptation or tests. I think it's important to point out some specific wording again. The prayer starts with God, but when it shifts to **us**, the word used isn't "me." The last portion of this prayer uses the words "**us**" and "**our**." **The picture of the kingdom given to us is not individualistic, it's primarily communal.** We're not saying that we don't personally interact with a prayer like this – we have a personal relationship with Jesus and so there is naturally a personal element to it - - but that isn't all that's going on. We are in this together."

"And so, let's hear our text today, but again starting from verse 9 in Matthew chapter 6 – this is the word of God:

"Pray then in this way: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we have also forgiven our debtors. **And do not bring us to the time of trial, but rescue us from the evil one.**"

Brett shared this important point as a part of his message:

...as I prepared for this message, and even today as I continued to try to refine it, my heart is heavy because we're talking about trials. About tests. Temptation. These are realities each of us are facing, and while it is important, true and right to share the triumph of Jesus even over those moments we find ourselves in, it is also important to emphasize that it is *still difficult*. *Excruciating* at times. As we continue in this passage today, let us not forget that we are human. At the same time, let us not forget that Jesus was fully God but *also fully human* and he *knows* our pain and suffering. He is present, He is steadfast, and He is alongside us in that pain."

"The Greek word there is **peirasmos (PAY-Rahz-moze)**. Tim Mackie from the BibleProject defines it as "a test that is designed to reveal truth." And in the Bible, tests have a positive purpose: to reveal someone's character and invite them into a relationship of trust (Mackie). The word **peirasmos** rarely if ever before in the New Testament means "temptation" in the sense of being tempted to do something you shouldn't, but again: testing. That's not to say that being tested wouldn't include temptation, it can, but it's a broader descriptor. Testing can include refinement, ascertaining the strength of character, and temptation – and it can include results like greater purity, self-confidence, growth in faith, or sin (**Gaebelein**). In his writing *The Imitation of Christ*,

Thomas à Kempis says:

"By temptations and trials our progress is tested; from them great merit may be gained...it is no great thing if a man becomes devout and fervent when it costs him nothing, but if he bear himself bravely in a time of trial, there is every hope of his advancement.)"

"So, as we walk this journey, leaning on the power of the Holy Spirit just as Jesus did, know that Jesus is with us. He is with us because He conquered death. His resurrection is pointing to our future as well. Regardless of how far down the path of sin we have been or are currently, Ronald Rolheiser reminds us: "The resurrection tells us it is never too late...We must believe that the stone will be rolled back, and we must be ready to poke out our timid heads, take off the linen bindings of death, and walk free for a time, breathing resurrection air." Christ's resurrection shows us the outcome of following Him by the power of the Holy Spirit. Because of Jesus' resurrection, we hear these words in 1 John 2:1-2:

"But if anybody does sin, we have an advocate with the Father—Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world." (NRSV)

As followers of Jesus, we don't need to fear punishment from God, or fear that He's turned His back on us. Wherever we are on that difficult road, if we are going to go through a test of any type, then we pray that God would deliver us by His presence and power. We pray that we can remain faithful to Him and trust that the Father will deliver us through and over the trial—even though the trial is difficult, or even excruciating. Tests are where we can be reminded that the Father is with us (Tim Mackie)."