

**Through the Lord's Prayer:
Our Father Protects Us
Sermon on Matthew 6:13
Saint Mark's, Watertown, WI
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Jesus Christ himself invites us: *Ask, and it will be given you! Seek, and you will find! Knock, and the door will be opened to you!* So, let's be sure to pray! Amen.

God's Word to us during this final week of a six-week sermon series on prayer is Matthew, chapter six, verse thirteen—the last two petitions of the Lord's Prayer:

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

This is the Word of the Lord.

Introduction: This Sermon Will Have a Pointed Application

Dear fellow Christians—whom God earnestly enjoins to pray:

This is going to be a little bit of an unusual sermon....

You know how usually in a sermon: we'll read God's Word, explain it, and apply it. And the applications sort of naturally flow from God's Word, and they're usually not all that pointed—so that they apply to everybody.

Well, in this morning's sermon: I'll read God's Word all right, and explain it, and apply it. But there's something on my heart, this morning, of which I am going to make an especially pointed application—to all of us.

So, let me get right to God's Word....

Theme: Through the Lord's Prayer, Our Father Protects Us

God's Word to us today – the Lord's instruction on prayer, the final two petitions of the Lord's Prayer – these assure us that: (*) THROUGH THE LORD'S PRAYER, OUR FATHER PROTECTS US. The first of these, the sixth petition of the Lord's Prayer, tells us: (1) THE HOLY SPIRIT CARRIES US AWAY FROM TEMPTATION. The second of these petitions, the seventh and final petition of the Lord's Prayer, tells us: (2) JESUS CHRIST RESCUES US FROM THE EVIL ONE.

Background: Jesus Gave the Lord's Prayer in His Sermon on the Mount

You know the background.... Jesus was in the middle part of his ministry. On a mountain in Galilee, he gave some of his most extensive instruction to a crowd of his disciples; he delivered his Sermon on the Mount. Among other things, Jesus gave instruction on prayer; he gave us the Lord's Prayer—a prayer so important that he would repeat it, word for word, on another occasion.

Part One: The Holy Spirit Carries Us Away From Temptation

In this prayer, which you and I have rightly repeated thousands of times, Jesus taught us to ask: *And lead us not into temptation.* Or: Lord, *Do not carry us into temptation.*

Lord, *Do not carry us into temptation....* At first, that might strike us as a little unusual. I mean: Does God carry us into temptation? Well, we do know that God himself does not tempt us. We read that in our first reading today—James chapter one, verse thirteen: “God does not tempt anyone.” We also know that God actually helps us

against temptation—First Corinthians, chapter ten, verse thirteen: “God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.”

So: *Do not carry us into temptation...* What does that mean? It means we’re praying: “Lord, when we are tempted to sin, when we are tempted to doubt what you’ve revealed us about yourself—Lord, keep your promise to us, prevent us from continuing in sin, prevent us from doubting you.”

And has the Lord answered that prayer of ours? Oh, thousands upon thousands of times, hasn’t he?! If we fell into sin and unbelief every time we were tempted, we would be far down the path to hell; we’d be knocking on the doors of hell. Instead, so very often, the Holy Spirit has reminded us, “Jesus scrubbed you clean in your baptism. You have every incentive to remain clean. Jesus has fed you with his own body and blood. You have all the strength you need to resist these temptations.” And then again, very often, the Holy Spirit has simply guarded us from temptations altogether.

That’s what it means when we pray: *And lead us not into temptation....*

Part Two: Jesus Christ Rescues Us From the Evil One

Now, the seventh and final petition of this prayer we’ve properly prayed so often goes as follows: *But deliver us from evil.* Or probably a little more exactly: Lord, *Rescue us from the evil one.*

See, that could say: *Rescue us from evil.* But it’s probably a little more naturally translated: *Rescue us from the evil one.* Also, this way: the prayer that starts with us running into the arms of our good Father has us running away from the clutches of our chief enemy, the most evil one.

So: *Rescue us from the evil one....* What does that mean? It means we’re praying: “Lord, we acknowledge that the devil is dangerous. Satan is more powerful than we are. And he wants us. He wants us back. We need you to rescue us! Please, deliver us!”

And has the Lord answered that prayer of ours? Oh, of course! In fact, he did so – fully and finally! – twenty centuries ago, in the darkness, on a Friday afternoon, on a little hill, outside Jerusalem. There Satan already brought against us all the harm he could ever do to us. All God’s anger, all God’s fury, over all our rebellion and all our disobedience—all of that was already exercised against us, or rather against Jesus Christ for us. As the Bible says: “He was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him; and by his wounds we have been healed.”

That’s what we’re referring to when we pray: *But deliver us from evil....*

Conclusion: This Sermon’s Pointed Application

So, those are the last two petitions of the Lord’s Prayer—and the explanations of them, which I think are fairly complete. Now, for the application.... And the application today hinges upon one thing I left out of the explanations to these petitions. That’s that little word: “us”. *And lead US not into temptation, but deliver US from evil.*

Pastor Heiges referenced that already last week. In fact, it’s a theme throughout the Lord’s Prayer. In the Lord’s Prayer, I’m not praying for me. We’re praying for us. *OUR Father, who art in heaven: ...Give US this day OUR daily bread, and forgive US OUR trespasses, as WE forgive those who trespass against US.* And now: *And lead US not into temptation, but deliver US from evil.* Nine times, in effect, Jesus instructs his disciples to pray for one another. So, nine times Jesus instructs us to pray for each another.

And it's not too much of a stretch to say we're praying not just for each other—but for other brothers and sisters of ours, whom we love, across the world and across the generations.

And that's what's on my heart today....

Some of you know that: a couple weeks ago, I attended our synod convention. It was my turn to serve as a delegate. And I could tell you all about the trip to and from New Ulm, Minnesota, for the convention—and the laughs I shared with my fellow delegates. I could tell you all about staying in the dorms—I forgot how primitive dorm life is, and how hot it is in those rooms during the summer! I could tell you all about the food—that was delicious.

But what I want to say about the convention was this, “The highs were very high, and the lows were very low.”

I listened to the devotions by Professor Nass from Martin Luther College and President Wendland from Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, and they were absolutely magnificent. And I thought, “How fortunate to have men like these instructing our future pastors and teachers!” And I saw the presentations on our mission work in Thailand and Central Africa and Hong Kong, which were just tremendous. And I thought, “Wow! Is it ever amazing how many people the Lord is reaching through us all across the world!”

And then I and my fellow delegates learned how seriously short of financial support all this work is. I mean: I knew we were hurting. But it's much worse than anybody thought.

The plans are to recall three of our world missionaries this coming year, and ten the next. That's besides the many missionaries we've already recalled during the past couple of years. We'll have forty-four missionaries left. Two years ago we had seventy-one. We will be pulling out of entire world mission fields. Now, how many souls across the world will risk going without the good news that Jesus has rescued them?

Our schools are also threatened. And it's not just the preparatory schools—from which more than half our pastors come: Michigan Lutheran Seminary in Saginaw and Luther Preparatory School here in Watertown. It's also our college for training pastors and teachers: Martin Luther College – MLC – there in New Ulm. MLC is using up all its special funds to operate this coming year. And after that, the school will have to figure out where to come up with five million more dollars annually. It makes a person wonder: How many souls in future generations will risk going without the good news that Jesus has rescued them?

See, when we pray: *And lead US not into temptation, but deliver US from evil*, we're praying for those brothers and sisters of ours also—across the world and across the generations. We love those souls, and we want them to avert temptation and to be delivered from the evil one through Jesus Christ.

And so, I guess we're also praying, “Lord, lead US not into the temptation to consider our money our own. It is, after all, from you. Lord, lead US not into the temptation to be concerned only with ourselves. After all, you bought us with your blood in order to serve you and others. Lord, deliver US from the evil of such idolatry. And deliver others, too. Lord, lead us to open our hearts and to open our wallets and purses and checkbooks for the sake of our brothers across the world and for the sake of our own children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren, who are going to need pastors and teachers to instruct them.”

And I'm convinced that God will answer those prayers of ours—and give us opportunity to turn this around. In fact, we've got a great opportunity to help already this coming week. This coming week we celebrate our summer mission festival here at Saint Mark's, and Pastor Timothy Dolan from Luther Preparatory School will preach. If you want to support the work of LPS, use the mission festival envelope in your packet of

envelopes—or mark any envelope with your name and the words “mission festival”. And any time you want to support our worker training system and our world mission efforts, use the box marked “missions” on any of your envelopes.

You know, my fellow Christians, this is so very doable. It’s like one of the district presidents said at synod convention, “We could all, right now, take thirty dollars out of our pockets, give it to God as an offering, and by next weekend we wouldn’t even miss it.” And that’s true, isn’t it? In fact, we proved it at the convention. I think it was four hundred guys came up with twenty thousand dollars; that would be fifty bucks a pop.

Now, if every family I see in front of me this morning offers to missions thirty or fifty dollars once a month, I’m pretty confident we could double our mission offerings—and we’d be doing our part toward getting the gospel to people across the world and across the generations.

Christ’s blood is just too precious – and these souls for whom Christ shed his blood are just too precious – for us to forget this obligation of ours ... this August, this September, this October, and in fact: every month, until Christ returns.

“For Thine,” O Lord, “is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever.” Amen.

Christ himself promises us: *Whatever you ask for in prayer—believing, you shall receive!* So, let’s be sure to pray—even harder than we ever have before! Amen.