



Lord's Prayer- Part 3

A newly married sailor was informed by the Navy that he was going to be stationed for a year a long way from home on a remote island in the Pacific. A few days after he got there he really began to miss his new wife, so he wrote her a letter.

"My love," he wrote, "we are going to be apart for a very long time. Already I'm starting to miss you and there's not much to do here in the evenings. Besides that, we're constantly surrounded by young attractive native girls. Do you think if I had a hobby of some kind I would not be tempted?" So his wife sent him back a harmonica saying, "Why don't you learn to play this?"

Eventually his tour of duty came to an end and he rushed back to his wife. "Darling," he said, "I can't wait to see you to make a fuss of you starting with a big hug". She kissed him, then said, "**First, let's hear you play that harmonica.**"¹

10. Lead us not into temptation.

It is interesting that having just covered forgiveness in what we call the Lord's prayer, Jesus, says 'Lead us not into temptation'. But perhaps Jesus realised how quickly we all slip back into our old ways. Remember Paul said:

I want to do what is good, but I don't. I don't want to do what is wrong, but I do it anyway.

Romans 7:19 (NLT)

We so easily fall, so Jesus teaches us to pray that we will not be led into temptation. The word temptation could be translated by the word testing. So we can say as some more modern translation do, 'Do not put us to the test?'

It is important to realise that God does not tempt us himself. At the beginning of the book of Job, Satan comes to God and basically says that the only reason Job is such a good and upright man, is that God looks after him so well and blesses him so abundantly. So God says to Satan:

Very well, then, everything he has is in your hands, but on the man himself do not lay a finger.

Job 1:12 (NIV)

So we can see that it is Satan that afflicts Job with all the bad things that come to him. However this very much tests Job to see what is in him and what he has made of.

¹ A Barrel of Fun - J. John & M. Stibbe



James in his letter in the New Testament makes it very clear that God doesn't tempt us for he writes:

When tempted, no-one should say, God is tempting me. For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed.

James 1:13 & 14 (NIV)

An American minister was reviewing the family bills. He found a bill from the local dress store for \$250 for a new dress. He confronted his wife yelling that she knew they couldn't afford such expense. The wife replied, "I know honey, but I tried the dress on and Satan tempted me. He said, 'My dear, you look lovely in that dress.' So I bought it."

The husband asked, "Why didn't you say, 'Get thee behind me Satan?'"

"I did," she replied, "But he said, 'My dear it looks lovely in the back too!'"

(Source Unknown)

The fact is that we do get tempted by our own desires. But also we do have an enemy who loves to try and trip us up and uses all sorts of things to tempt us. Satan uses the society we live in and it's ethos. We are bombarded each day by so much through the media. I personally think that some of the most insidious things are all the advertisements that bombard us, particularly on television.

We live in a consumer society, and maybe sometimes we don't see the danger in this. In the Christianity magazine was an article entitled, '**Will UK Christianity be consumed?**' (This was by Mark Greene who is executive director of the London Institute for Contemporary Christianity). In this article he wrote :

Consumerism is of course more than materialism in new clothes, more than shopping till we drop, and so on. Yes, consumerism is looking for one's identity and purpose and esteem in the things and products and services we buy: "Foraging for Eternity in a bottle, yearning for some heavenly scent".

Why do so many people always want the latest gizmo or gadget? Why do so many people continue to buy more and more things? Are they not looking for some satisfaction through these purchases, often because the advertisers have these messages. If you drive this car you will have a certain charisma. If you wear this perfume or after-shave other people will treat you as someone special. We forget that it is God that should give us our sense of well being, because of what he says about us and how he values each one of us. So we too can so easily be tempted by all the things around us.



But these temptations do test us, and do have a positive outcome. For in his letter James writes:

In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honour when Jesus Christ is revealed. 1 Peter 1: 6 & 7 (NIV)

A friend of mine in the USA is translating the NT from Greek into English and in his translation he tries to give all the richness that is in the original language. He translates this expression in the Lord's prayer as follows:

13. Also, may You not bring (or: carry) us into a putting to the proof — neither by trial, nor by temptation, nor by examination.²

One of the expressions that used to be used of alcohol was the word proof. This is a definition of proof I found on the Internet.

Proof is another (older) measure of the strength of an alcoholic liquid. It had its origins in days when a simple test was needed that the liquor did indeed contain a *correct* measure (or more) of alcohol. And it was indeed a simple test. Some of the liquor was poured over a little gunpowder and ignited. If the alcohol content was adequate, then it would burn 'just right' with a steady blue flame and eventually ignite the gunpowder. If there was insufficient alcohol then it would fizzle out and the gunpowder would be too wet to burn. The 'just right' condition 'proved' the liquor and it was declared to be '100 degrees proof'.³

When we are tempted or tested we come to know our 'proof' in spiritual terms. When Job was tested by all his trials, God already knew what was in Job's heart. God knows exactly what is in us and where we are at. However, if you read the book of Job towards the end of the book you understand how Job came to know exactly who he was in relation to God. His faith in God was put to the proof so that now he knew that his faith was 'just right'.

Never the less we are unlikely to pray that God will test us and put us under all sorts of trials, we are much more likely to pray that God will bless us and protect us. So Jesus teaches us in this model prayer, that it is ok, to ask that we are not led into temptation. And Paul gives us the encouraging truth in Corinthians that:

No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And 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. 1 Corinthians 10:13 (NIV)

² Translation by Jonathan Mitchell - <http://www.greater-emmanuel.org/jmt/>

³ <http://www.cleavebooks.co.uk/dictunit/notes6.htm#whatproof>



11. But deliver us from evil.

After this comes the next and really the final part when we pray, 'Deliver us from evil'. Many commentators and translators say that this could be translated as 'Deliver us from the evil one'.

Some Christians who feel they are very modern say there are no such things as demons. What we read in the Bible, even when Jesus talks about this area, can be explained away by psychiatry. However, there are some Christians in the charismatic stream who seem to see everything as caused by demons. In his introduction to 'The Screwtape Letter's', C.S. Lewis says Satan is happy with either of these 2 views.

Seems to me that if you read the whole of the New Testament and look at what Jesus said, a more balanced view is that yes we do have an enemy, but as we have seen earlier much of the temptation and problems we experience are caused by our own nature and not some external malevolent spiritual force or personality.

But we do need to aware of and realise that we do have a spiritual enemy. Paul writes in Ephesians.

For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

Ephesians 6:12 (NIV)

And then later he talks about us putting on or being equipped with the spiritual armour to protect us from evil. He says we need to put on the helmet of salvation, the breastplate of righteousness and so on. We need to be familiar with the sword of the Spirit that is the Bible if we are going to fight against evil. And we will need the shield of faith to protect ourselves. So it is not too surprising that Jesus teaches us to pray that we will be delivered from evil of the evil one.

We need to always remember though as Christians that Jesus utterly defeated Satan and evil by his death and resurrection. Paul writes in his letter to the Colossians:

And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.

Colossians 2:15 (NIV)

Jesus has won the victory over evil and all the forces of evil. We are part of the victory in Christ. We may not always see the victory each day where we are, but we can hold on to the fact that in the long run, God has overcome all the forces and destructive power of evil.

But never the less, we can pray deliver us from it. We are praying deliver us from where we are. We are praying to be spared from going into evil. We are also praying that we are delivered out of evil if we have fallen in to any situations.



We need to remember that God is a god of love. He cares about us deeply and intimately. He loves to hear us talk to him and he loves to answer our prayers. So we can pray not only that we are not led into temptation but that we are delivered from any evil.

There is nothing wrong with praying that God will bless us in the days to come for he longs to do this for each one of us.

12. **For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.**

Many believe that this part was added later by the early church and was probably not in the original as given by Jesus. Never the less it is a very good ending to this prayer that Jesus taught us. Earlier in the prayer we prayed 'thy kingdom come'. So here we just acknowledge that it is his kingdom. And with it being his kingdom, that the power and glory are God's. And that they along with God are for ever and ever. Whilst this world and age we live in are not eternal, God the creator of the universe who lives outside of time is certainly eternal. Therefore his kingdom will go on for ever.

Finally we say Amen which has been used by Christians at the end of prayers for centuries.

Common English translations of the word amen include: "Verily", "Truly", "So be it", and "Let it be". Colloquially, it can also mean "I agree," or "Well said." [citation needed]. In Berber, the word 'amin' is used regularly to mean "so be it" or "like that".⁴

So when we say Amen we are agreeing to all that Jesus taught us in this prayer. And we were also saying so let it be. We are asking God that this will indeed come to pass in our lives and through our lives. And implied in this is that we will play our part in bringing it all to pass.

But above all it is not by our effort or endeavours that this prayer will come to pass but rather because as the prayer started out in stating that God is our heavenly dad or Father. He loves us so much that he will make this prayer live in us and through us, because he lives in us through His Spirit.⁵

The following book has been very helpful in preparing this series of sermons on the Lord's Prayer:

The Lord's Prayer for Today; William J. Carl III
Westminster John Knox Press, 2006
ISBN: 978-0-664-22957-3

⁴ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amen>

⁵ Words: 2237