

## SERMON

Matthew 6;13

But Deliver us from Evil

Nunawading and Waverley, 24-10-21

Dear friends in Christ,

There was a time when I was moving into radical theological ideas. Then, in a congregation I served, I encountered evil. A few people were malicious, were gossips, criticisers, always ready to blame and attack. When opposed, they would double their efforts to cause trouble and stir up others against you. As I reflected on this behaviour, I realised that the holy Bible was true in all that it spoke about. Evil is mentioned there and is the reason the Lord gives us the prayer, **deliver us from evil**.

What evil are we talking about here? Evil that harms us in our bodies and minds. Also, the **evil one**, the devil and his demonic realm. Jesus once said, **let your yes be yes. Anything else comes from the evil one**. He is thinking of what is true, what you can say yes to but false beliefs and ideologies can be very dangerous. These can lead to movements on the far right and left, riots on the streets, acts of terrorism, revolutions etc that are marked by violence and propaganda. Finally, evil can be seen in the persecution of the church and of other people.

Our Father in his word tells us to **test the spirits** and that is our starting point in the seventh petition. In prayer, we can work out what is behind things and the aims people may have. Something may look all right, such as euthanasia, but you will realise that it involves the promotion of killing; and there is enough killing going on in our world without adding to it.

You will experience evil personally, as the poor couple in Western Australian have felt in the abduction of their child. Another example might be a teenager coming under bad influence and then behaving in unsafe or hateful ways. A boss is dishonest and won't pay entitlements. Even in the church, it is sad to say that groups can form around an issue like women's ordination and become hateful.

Prayer is so vital here. When we experience malevolence then the Lord's Fatherly deliverance is vital for us. We can do much and we ought to resist and fight with God's word and whatever legal means we have but there will be limits and you will be forced to pray, **deliver us from evil**. Listen to how an ancient person who trusted in the Lord responded to evil:

My God, whom I praise,  
do not remain silent,  
for people who are wicked and deceitful  
have opened their mouths against me;  
they have spoken against me with lying tongues.  
With words of hatred they surround me;  
they attack me without cause.  
In return for my friendship, they accuse me,  
but I am a man of prayer.

Sometime, evil is beyond us and our Lord is telling us, this is a matter of prayer. Be a man and a woman of prayer. Consider King David who spent hours in prayer for his son born to Bathsheba, who became sick. The Syrophoenician woman begged Jesus for a crumb from the table. Prayer is real pleading, like blind Bartimaeus or the persistent widow. In the parable, she would not give up demanding and answer from the local judge. Hear what Jesus said: **And will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones, who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off?**

He is **the deliverer**, who looks down on those who are victims of evil and will act to save us. In fact, since we are the Father's children, we should be audacious in prayer and ask him to turn abuse into actions that serve us. This is a real wrestling with God when we are not prepared to take no or silence as an answer. However, we need to pray for patience because sometimes a resolution to evil takes years.

I want to end here by saying that our Father gives us an ultimate deliverance. We can observe all the evils in this world opposing the coming of his kingdom and be fighting against them; many of them are inflicted on the environment and then at the end of our lives say with Luther, 'mercifully takes us from the troubles of this world to yourself in heaven.' Like the thief, a victim of the evil of crucifixion, we ask to be received into Jesus' kingdom.