

And Lead Us Not Into Temptation But Deliver Us From the Evil One
Matthew 6:9-13

Today is the last Sunday of the sermon series **The Kingdom Prayer**. In September, we will start a new sermon series, "**Remember Your Call**," covering each of the chapters from the Book of Jonah. So, please read chapter one of Jonah this week before you join the worship next Sunday.

Let me show you a picture on the screen. I took this picture of the Lord's Prayer on a plate from my friend's house. He is a retired UM pastor who served at Monroe First UMC a long time ago. As you can see, the plate does not display the entire Lord's Prayer; it only has, 'Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.' Nevertheless, it's still a wonderful reminder of the Lord's Prayer.

As we can see in today's scripture, Matthew does not contain the following doxology we always pray: "**For thine is the Kingdom and the power and the glory forever, Amen.**" This doxology is found in the later manuscripts of Matthew's Gospel, but it is absent from the earliest manuscripts. The doxology is especially included in [the Didache](#), also known as "[The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles](#)." The Didache is an early Christian document that dates back to the late 1st or early 2nd century. Even though it is not included in the New Testament canon, it provides important information on the beliefs, liturgical practices, and structures of the early Christian communities. That is why we have the doxology, following the example of the early Christians, in our Lord's Prayer.

Let us reflect on the meaning of today's prayer, "**And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from the evil one.**"

First of all, we should remember God is sovereign over everyone and everything. When we pray, "**And Lead Us Not Into Temptation But Deliver Us From the Evil One**," we acknowledge that God is our ultimate problem solver. God is sovereign over all, including the evil one, in any situation and at any time. Our God is omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent.

Second, we must recognize that we can be tempted every single day and that we are currently engaged in spiritual warfare as God's Kingdom agents.

In Matthew chapter 4, Jesus was tempted in the wilderness by the devil. We have the same story of Jesus' temptation in Mark 1 and Luke 4. The three temptations Jesus faced are: "**Turn stones into bread**," "**Throw yourself from the highest point of the temple**," and "**Bow down and worship me for the worldly**

power and splendor.” The temptations are about our identity as God’s children who have to fully depend on God for the realization of God’s Kingdom on earth. Even Jesus Christ was tempted by the devil to reveal the real challenges we are facing every single day. After Jesus defeated the devil’s temptations, we can find these words from Luke 4:13: **“That completed the testing. The Devil retreated temporarily, lying in wait for another opportunity.”** (Luke 4:13 MSG). Like Jesus Christ, we are exposed to the temptations of the devil. What kinds of temptations are you experiencing? How do you deal with the temptations in your lives?

I took several classes on spiritual warfare in seminary from Charles Kraft and Peter Wagner, both of whom were missionaries before teaching at the seminary. Charles Kraft was a well-known Christian anthropologist and an expert in the field of Christian communication. He said, **“I have taught Christian anthropology and communication throughout my life, but I have come to realize that everything centers on spiritual warfare. Without understanding spiritual beings and the attacks of Satan, we will fail in our ministries and missions.”** Peter Wagner was a professor on Church Growth in my seminary. He also said, **“It’s not church growth we should focus on; it is our spiritual engagement with our enemies.”**

Let me quote Timothy Tennent from Asbury Seminary on the same point: **“It is in the New Testament that we fully realize that behind all of the foolish, rebellious, wicked actions in the world stands Satan, who seeks to set up his own diabolical kingdom in contrast to the Kingdom of God.”** (Timothy Tennent, *Foundations of the Christian Faith* (2021), 304.)

Then how should we engage in spiritual warfare?

1. Develop a new pattern in your life to deal with temptations.

It is important for us to find the routines of the temptations we encounter. We should know how and when they are coming. Also, we have to honestly review the way we have responded to temptations.

"You might remember that our power comes from our intimacy with God. If we fail to defeat temptations, it's a sign that our power is lacking, which also indicates a need for a deeper relationship with God. Please think about what steps you can take to have a more intimate relationship with God.

2. Use your spiritual armor: the Word of God and prayer.

Jesus Christ fasted and prayed in the wilderness (in the Judean desert) for forty days when he was tempted by Satan. Jesus meditated on Moses’ Deuteronomy in the wilderness before starting his public ministry. He would quote from Deuteronomy (**Deuteronomy 8:3, 6:16, & 6:13**) to counter the devil’s temptations.

Even the devil used the Scripture to tempt Jesus. “**Throw yourself down. For it is written: ‘He will command his angels concerning you, and they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.’**” (Matthew 4:6, quoting from Psalm 91:11-12 NIV).

What does this mean? Satan can misuse the Bible to deceive us. That is why we need to study the Word of God seriously, correctly, and regularly to maintain a connection with God, gain wisdom and guidance, and protect ourselves from misunderstandings or manipulations of Scripture.

“**12 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. 13 Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. 14 Stand firm then, with *the belt of truth* buckled around your waist, with *the breastplate of righteousness* in place, 15 and with your feet fitted with *the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace*. 16 In addition to all this, take up *the shield of faith*, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. 17 Take *the helmet of salvation* and *the sword of the Spirit*, which is the word of God.” (Ephesians 6:12-17 NIV)**

The belt of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, the shoes of the gospel of peace, the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit all point to the same thing: the Word of God.

Then, in Ephesians 6:18, we are encouraged to pray in the Holy Spirit at all times. “**Do all this in prayer, asking for God's help. Pray on every occasion, as the Spirit leads. For this reason keep alert and never give up; pray always for all God's people.**” (Ephesians 6:18 GNT)

After this, Apostle Paul asked the Christians in Ephesus to pray for him.

“**Pray also for me, that whenever I speak, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should.**” (Ephesians 6:19-20 NIV).

This means that Apostle Paul could also be tempted to compromise the Gospel with other false teachings of the world, which Satan is doing now. What he needs is a fearless heart focusing on who he is as God’s ambassador.

Whenever you remember me, please pray for me so that I can preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ uncompromisingly and fearlessly.

3. Remember, your church is the place where you can share your temptations and receive support and encouragement as you engage in spiritual warfare.

John Wesley and his followers emphasized the importance of participating in small groups, such as class meetings or band meetings, where people could honestly share their spiritual states and be encouraged and supported by other members.

With band meetings, people would meet together in groups of three to five people of the same gender and ask each person the following five questions at every meeting: “1) What known sins have you committed since our last meeting? 2) What temptations have you met with? 3) How were you delivered? 4) What have you thought, said, or done, of which you doubt whether it be sin or not? 5) Have you nothing you desire to keep secret?” (Kevin Watson & Scott Kisker, *The Band Meeting* (2017), 164-165.)

I hope and pray that Carleton United Methodist Church will be faithful to its call to be a shadow, sign, and appetizer to God’s Kingdom on earth, especially by having strong small groups like class meetings or band meetings where people can honestly share their spiritual state and receive encouragement, support, and comfort from one another.

As we finish our sermon series, *The Kingdom Prayer*, I’d like to encourage you to pray the Lord’s Prayer every single day with the new understanding from our sermon series. As you may know, my sermon scripts are available on our church website if you ever want to revisit them.

We are to depend on God every moment and every day. Remember that we are to be filled with and reveal God’s holiness, Kingdom, and will in our lives. Your prayer is your promise and commitment to the words in your prayer. Even though we are not perfect, we are the reflection of God’s Kingdom on earth. So we are to grow continually by confessing, “**Our Father ... Giive us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil**” (the We-ness of the church). We are engaged in spiritual warfare with our enemies. Our intimacy with God is a key to countering the attacks of Satan. Then, we will finally sing the song of victory, “**For thine is the Kingdom and the power and the glory forever, Amen,**” before the loving presence of God in His Kingdom.