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DATE: August 1, 2026
SERIES: The Shape of Prayer
MESSAGE: But Deliver Us From Evil
PASSAGE: Matthew 6:13
SPEAKER: Ryan Harmon

In Jesus' final hours with his disciples, as he anticipated the incredible severe trial of the cross, as he awaited the full force of evil being poured out on him, he offered them there in that upper room a somber and sober warning, along with a word of hope. John 16 tells us that he said to them, "in this world, you will have trouble. But take heart, I have overcome the world." In this world, you will have trouble. But take heart, I have overcome the world.

Be filled with confidence because Jesus' victory is sure. That warning and that promise are just as true for us as they were for Jesus' disciples on that evening. But it does raise a practical question for us. I think deep down in all of our hearts, we struggle to believe that could really be true. Is it really possible that as we make our way through life, as we go through deep and long and hard trials, is it possible to walk through those trials with great confidence, knowing at the end of the day we are secure—knowing that we have a God who will keep us safe, knowing that we can walk with confidence—is that possible?

The answer: of course it is. And Jesus intends to teach us how we can do it. That's what we want to consider tonight. Open your Bibles with me to Matthew chapter 6. Matthew chapter 6, we're going to be in verse 13. Now this evening is the final week where we are going to be taking just one phrase of the Lord's Prayer and reflecting on it. We've been doing it all summer and our hope all along has been not only that we would analyze its words—that is important. Not only that we would understand them—that's important. But also that they would start to take shape in us, they'd begin to form our very life of prayer.

We've seen each week that these words of Jesus', although they are brief, they convey deep truths, tell us deep things about who God is, deep things about who we are. And both of those topics, both of those ideas are very important. It's important that we think rightly about God. It also is very important that we think rightly about who we are as human beings. This prayer helps us with that.

And so we began, as we started our look at prayer, we began by just understanding and affirming that prayer always starts with God. That's where we begin. We affirm that he's our father, he's our protector, our provider, that he is



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everywhere, but he is also eminently close, closer than we think. We affirm that he is the only one worthy of being hallowed, of being magnified and praised, that his kingdom is the kingdom that we long to see come and its fullness, that his will being done is both my and the world's greatest need. All of those things were affirmed in the first three requests of this prayer.

Then we turn to the second three requests, and we learn some very important things, things that we maybe need to be reminded, of about who we are. It's very obvious, but it still is good to be reminded—God is God, and we are not. That's important for us. God is God and he has no needs, completely self-sufficient, and we are not. And we are full of need. We are very dependent as creatures.

But we also, in this prayer we affirmed that if we direct our prayer toward God, if we rely upon him, we have come upon, we've discovered, someone that's adequate to every single one of our needs. So we prayed give us this day our daily bread. We have physical needs and we turn to God, we ask that he would provide for our physical needs, day by day by day.

We pray "and forgive us our debts as we also have forgiven our debtors." Human beings, we have a deep spiritual need. We have sinned against a holy God. We have incurred a debt and we can't pay it off. We have to be forgiven. But not only that, we also ask that he will help us, he will empower us by his very grace, to respond to his forgiveness in such a way that we become forgiving people, that we forgive others when they have wronged us. Can't do that on our own. We are deeply needy.

Finally, last week, Matt walked us through the beginning of verse 13, the phrase that says "and do not lead us into temptation." This phrase is essentially a request that God would spare us from having to walk through trials that are simply too much for us. The heart of this request is an admission—we are needy, we are limited. It's an admission, even, of something like our own weakness—and do not lead us into temptation—it's to acknowledge that as human beings, we are fully aware as we walk out this life of faith, we do not, on our own, faithfully walk through deep and severe trials well. We struggle with it. This is a request, "Lord, don't let me step into that which is too big for me. Don't give me more than I can handle. And I know myself, I can't handle too much." That's what's at the heart of that request.

As I have reflected on Matt's words last week, I have become more convinced that this phrase in the prayer, I believe, is one of the most difficult for us to honestly and with a heartfelt posture, own and pray. I think it's a difficult prayer for us, "and do not lead us into temptation." The reason it's difficult for us is because our tendency is to begin to have overconfidence in our own abilities and in ourselves.



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That's what we tend towards. As we are approaching trials, as something's on the horizon, our tendency is to proudly say, "I got it. I got it, I can handle it."

And that is directly the opposite of what is at the heart of this request. This request humbly says, "I don't know that I can handle it. Lord, I am weak and frail and desperate. So spare me, spare me from that which is too big for me." See, pride clings to self-sufficiency. But humility depends upon God. Recognizes our own weakness. This is so difficult for us. But I'm sure all of you can resonate with that tension, a tension that almost wants to play the hero to think we can do it on our own. This prayer is a humble admission, we can't.

As I was thinking about this part of verse 13, it took me to a number of years ago as I was walking with a friend through his struggle with pornography. So thankful that he was willing to admit this struggle to me and we can walk and talk about it together. He was torn up over it. He desperately wanted to be free. But here's what I found as we talked about it. Occasionally, there would come out little evidences that he was still resistant to admitting his own weakness. There was still a little part of him that had a self-sufficiency that thought, "I'll handle it."

Part of the way this came out is that we knew his phone was a major trial and temptation for him. His phone granted him access to a world that, in the history of humanity, we never been able to have that kind of free access to that degree of bad stuff. Now, we knew this was, this was a struggle for him, this was a trial for him, it led to temptation for him. But we also knew that the wise thing to do would be to cut off access to certain apps that tended to pose problems again and again and again. We knew both those things, he knew both those things. And yet, he would consistently say to me, "I think I got it this time. I think I'm strong enough this time. I think that last time was the last time. Not gonna happen again. I'm good." But the honest truth, the humble admission, is he didn't have it.

This prayer is an acknowledgment. It's an acknowledgement that we can't handle very severe trial, and we are begging God to keep us from walking into it. Or asking him to help us understand our own frame, know that we are weak, that we are fragile. And of course, the first step, the first step in turning is to acknowledge, to own in humility, our weakness and to repent of proudly thinking we can handle it all by ourselves. We can't, and so we pray do not lead us into temptation. As we pray that, we are asking God to keep us from that which we can't handle, keep us from that which we can't handle.

But as Matt mentioned last week, as all of us know from experience, as we walk through life, we will experience a number of trials. We talked about Jesus' words in that upper room. He said, "in this world, you will have trouble." In other words, it is a guarantee. Trouble is a guarantee. And Matt mentioned last week that so often when we experience trial, right there along with the trial is temptation. Nearly



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every trial we face brings with it a temptation. And temptation gives way to, in time, if we give into it, temptation gives way to sin. On the other side of the door of temptation sits evil and sin. It's because of that, Jesus gave us this prayer. He didn't stop with the phrase, "and do not lead us into temptation." He continued and he said, "but deliver us from evil." Deliver us from evil, Lord.

Deliver us is a word that—I'm not going to say it's a bad translation. Our translators know much more than me. But I would say this to you, I don't know that that word conveys the emotion, the urgency, the force, of what we are being told to pray here. Deliver us feels a little bit like a fairly patient word, a fairly peaceful word. Deliver us. But it seems out of place when we consider that we're asking to be delivered from temptation, from trial. That's the context, and that we're being asked to be delivered from evil, deliver seems a little soft, if you ask me.

This word could also be translated, and it is in a number of other places in the New Testament, it could be translated as "rescue." Rescue us. Now, that's a more forceful word, that's a vivid word. We need rescue. The root of the Greek word that is translated "deliver" or "rescue" could also mean something like "to grab something or someone and drag them across the ground out of danger." It could mean "to snatch up" or "to draw up" someone or something to pull them out of harm's way. This word also conveys a sense that it's not simply picking up something and rescuing it—it's running to them, pulling them close to you, holding them dear in order to keep them safe. Now that's a more emotional image, that's a more evocative image.

While we were living in Madrid, one of the most frightening things that we encountered, nearly on a daily basis, was walking the streets of Madrid, a city of 6,000,000, with a toddler. That was terrifying. We went over to Madrid when Sam, our oldest, was nine months old, and of course, we were there for four years, so his twos and his threes were right there on these crowded, busy streets of this massive city. And like all the other boy his age, one day, he wanted us to buy him what we call a balance bike. And so we did. We bought him a lightning McQueen balance bike. And Sam would ride that bike around the city. We'd be walking on these sidewalks, and most of the time he would be very safe. We'd see his feet go down, he'd drag his toes as he was coming up to an intersection.

But on a few occasions, I would watch him barrel down the sidewalk, and he'd be going very fast, and I knew danger was at the end of that sidewalk, and so I would take off in a dead sprint, and I'd catch up with Sam, and I'd grab him and pull him near in order to keep him from the oncoming traffic in Madrid. I don't think if I were to describe that moment—I wouldn't describe it as, "I delivered Sam from safety or from harm." I would say I rescued him. I clung to him. I pulled him close because the danger of that street could take his very life.



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So when we pray “but deliver us,” we are turning to God and we are pleading with him to rescue us from threatening danger. And there is nothing more threatening and nothing more dangerous for us as human beings, than what comes next. Deliver us from evil. Rescue us from evil.

We could come up with a simple definition of evil. I would say evil is that which is contrary to or opposed to God and his ways. Contrary to or opposed to God and his ways. The opposite of good. Synonyms for evil would be things like crookedness and wickedness, brokenness, sin. Sin is evil. So in a general way, when we pray “deliver us from evil,” we are coming to our God and Father and we are asking him simply that he would prevent us from falling into sin and evil when we pass through great difficulties and through trials. Knowing trials are gonna come, Lord, I am begging you—save me, snatch me up before I step into sin. If I start to give in to temptation, snap me up, snatch me up, draw me into your arms, protect me from that which seeks to destroy me.

It's a good thing to pray. It's a good thing to pray and keep in mind as we walk through trials. And all of us, as we've said a number of times this evening, we are going to walk through trials. They are guaranteed to come. Every single one of you are gonna walk through a trial, a number of trials, possibly even this evening. And every trial brings with it temptation, and ultimately temptation to sin.

It's important that we understand trials can be very big, and some of you in this room are walking through very big trials right now. But we have to remember they can also be quite small. And regardless of the size of the trial that we encounter, they always present an opportunity. Every single trial is an opportunity to either turn to God, cling to him, and learn to trust him more...Or to try to walk through it in our own strength.

Now, if we do that, if we try to walk through trials in our own strength, what that will often mean is we will do it sheerly through gritted teeth and willpower. And what will inevitably occur is we will get very weary, very tired, and very bitter. And in time, it will lead to the next step when we try to go it alone. Eventually in our weariness, we will give over to the temptation, and we will enter into sin. We will.

Trials can be big or small. The heart of this prayer is certainly that we would be people, and the heart of the Christian life, is that we'd be people that consistently learn over and over again to cling to God more and more. But this prayer, this prayer is offering up a word to God that when we are walking through a trial and we see temptation and maybe we start to reach for the door, we are praying that God would snatch us up. Snatch us up as he sees us barreling down the hill towards sin. Protect us. Keep us safe.



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Trials, these opportunities, they are great opportunities to learn to grow. That's why God allows us to walk through them. Sometimes I think we make trials into too big a thing. And because we aren't thinking about so many experiences and so many different moments and circumstances in our life, as trials, we miss out on incredible opportunities to learn to cling to God right where we are.

See, trials can be very minor. But those minor trials can help us, can help us learn to find God in the midst of difficulty. Just this past week, a week ago, my wife and I decided to take our kids on a very brief vacation to Colorado. Our kids had never seen the mountains, believe it or not. We choose to go up to Northwest Iowa and places like that for vacation. Scenic Northwest Iowa. So we wanted to give them that opportunity. So we drove out to Colorado. We were heading to Colorado Springs, we were leaving on a blistering day, when we crossed the border from Nebraska into Colorado. The temperature gauge on our car dash said 106 degrees. Very hot. Everything was going fine, but then suddenly the check engine light came on, and the engine gauge, the temperature gauge, shot through the roof. And suddenly, we were pulled over on the side of the road.

That is a trial. So, we let the engine cool down, drove about 3 miles, let the engine cool down again. Eventually, we found a mechanic in Ovid, Colorado. That's a trial, because Ovid was not on my kids' bucket list for their Colorado trip. In that moment, what do you do? When you encounter trials in your life, do you approach them as incredible opportunities to learn to trust God, to cling to him in the midst of that trial? Or do you try to just grit your teeth and get through it? Or what's worse, are you in a habit of just giving over to the temptation to sin, to just let loose and lash out in anger?

Trials we walk through, they present opportunities to us. Every trial brings with a temptation. Temptation brings us to evil's front door, so to speak. And our hope is that as we grow, we will be more and more inclined to cling to God in the face of trial. But our prayer, our prayer is also that God, in his mercy and grace for us, will deliver us, will rescue us, from falling into sin—when trials come, that he would snatch us up and rescue us. Deliver us. Deliver us from what? Deliver us from evil.

Now, evil we've talked about in a general sense, but we need to spend a little more time on this word. Because there's an interesting thing about this word in this prayer. Some of you may have noticed it even in your Bibles. There's a little footnote that gives us a different definition. Without getting into all the grammar, more and more scholars are inclined to believe that when Jesus taught his disciples to pray this prayer, he wasn't teaching them to pray to be delivered from evil in a vague and general sense, but in a very specific and a very personal sense. This is a prayer against being caught up by the evil one. Deliver us from the evil one.



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The evil one—biblically the one that we call the devil, the one that we call Satan, the evil one. Jesus is directing his disciples, pray that God rescue you from the attack, from the activity, from the efforts of, the evil one. Now, if evil generally is that which is contrary and opposed to God, then the evil one, Satan himself, he is the spiritual agent at work behind all of it.

Now, in our day, we can admit that the devil is something we don't talk about a lot. Just like sin in our culture, the devil and Satan, the evil one, talking about that has kind of gone out of fashion. If you would go to a coworker and you'd say, "you know, I'm a believer, I believe my Bible, therefore, I believe there is an evil being that is at work in the world to bring about ruin and destruction," I think your coworker might be a little dumbfounded. They might not know what to do. They might ask you, do you also believe that there's a pot of gold at the end of every rainbow?

See, for our world, the devil, Satan, the evil one has moved into the realm of fantasy. But for us as believers, we have to acknowledge the Bible makes it abundantly clear, there is a devil. There is Satan. There is an evil one. And he is opposed to God and to his ways, and he has a very clear job, and his job is this: ruin and destruction. That's what the evil one, that's what Satan is up to in the world. So when we pray, when we pray, "but deliver us from evil," we are not only praying that we are in deep need, that God would spare us, would rescue us from evil in a generalized sense—that's true, it's a good thing to pray. But we are also acknowledging that we live in the midst of a world where there is a spiritual battle that is waging. And there is one, there is an evil one, that is diametrically opposed to God and his ways. And he is seeking with every trial to cause us to stumble.

In my experience, as I think about the devil and his tactics, the two that he loves to use the most, are *deception* and *accusation*. He's a liar. Revelation tells us he's a liar. The devil loves to tell us lies. Some of them might sound like this as you're walking through a very difficult moment—it seems like the whole world is falling down around you, the devil would like to say something like this:

*God maybe isn't all that good.
Maybe he's not in control.
Maybe he's good, but not good to you.
Maybe he doesn't care in this moment.
Maybe in this moment, sin would be a better choice.*

He's a deceiver. He lies to us. And he's an accuser. And as we walk through difficulties, he hurls accusations at us to cause us to doubt, to cause us to be filled with guilt. Those might sound like this.

Maybe you're not good enough.



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*Maybe you deserve this.
Maybe God's punishing you.
Maybe God's just tired of you.
If the people in this Christian community knew how bad you were, they'd reject you.*

He's an accuser, and he lies as he makes his accusations. We are in the midst of a spiritual battle. Peter in his epistle to the Christians said, "be on guard." Be on guard. And here's why: your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. That's what he's doing. We are in the midst of a spiritual battle, and this prayer acknowledges that and asks that God would rescue us as we make our way through life.

It's because of this that I, I'll admit that one of the things that's most—I don't know about discouraging, it's shocking to me as a pastor—is when I find people who are bored or apathetic in the Christian life. Just are bored with it. Do we not know? Do we not know? Do we not understand? We are in the midst of a spiritual battle. And the field of battle is your very life. The trials you walk through on a daily basis, that's a moment, it's a moment to cling to God. It's also a moment that Satan would love to use to drag you into ruin, to mess up your life. Or in the midst of a battle, that's why we pray that's why we pray, "deliver us." Rescue us, God, in your grace, in your mercy, rescue us from evil. Rescue us from the evil one. From the evil one.

Now we need to remember as we walk through this life, as we embrace the reality that we are in a spiritual battle, it is critically important that we both acknowledge that and that we also reject the idea that somehow we are going to become the heroes in the battle. Remember, we are needy. We are desperate. The deep truth is that none of us, not a single one of us can go toe to toe with the evil one. But Jesus can, and Jesus did.

This prayer takes place in the sermon on the Mount, and you might remember that immediately prior to the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus went to battle with the devil, went out in the wilderness. That was the battlefield. Went toe to toe was Satan. Satan threw his worst at him. Told him lies. Accusations. Twisted God's word. And with each occurrence, on three different occasions, Jesus responded with the very truth of God's word, and Satan in that moment was defeated by Jesus. And the defeat in the wilderness, the defeat and the temptation that began Satan's demise, would finally reach its culmination on the cross.

See, what Jesus began there in the wilderness, he finished on the cross. He went toe to toe with Satan and he won. Therefore, when we pray, "but deliver us from evil," deliver us from the evil one, we are calling out to the one that has already come out of the battle victorious. Because of that, because of that we can be confident in the midst of this world. Because of who he is. And when we cling to



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him, when we are with him, he is the one who is able to rescue us. Because of that, that we can walk with confidence.

Jesus told his disciples in the world you will have trouble, but take heart, be of courage. Here's why: I have overcome the world. The ultimate place of that overcoming was the cross. The cross is the guarantee that while Satan can still stir up trouble in this world, his end, his demise, is guaranteed. His days are numbered. The day of Satan's final demise, the date is set. It is already on the calendar. God knows precisely when it's going to occur.

Now, up until that day, God in his wisdom and his sovereignty is allowing Satan to cause a bit of trouble. But we as believers, as we walk through this life, as we endure trials, we can do so filled with confidence, not because we are strong, but because Jesus is, and we are with him. We are with him. Now this truth, here at the end of this prayer, should cause us to mount up in worship. To praise Jesus for the victory. To praise him that he is more powerful than the evil one. That while the evil one might annoy us and frustrate us, the evil one cannot take us out of Jesus' arms. Can't. And so we praise him. We go back to the very beginning of this prayer when we took on the request that God's name would be hallowed. This truth of Jesus' victory should cause us to be hallowers, worshipers. We magnify and glorify Jesus.

Interestingly, that's just what happens at the end of verse 13. What's interesting about the end of verse 13 though, is that some of you might not have it in your Bible. Verse 13 might be a footnote. In your Bibles, it may end with that phrase, "but deliver us from evil." Now this ending to the prayer, the one that we all know by heart, has been recited by churches for thousands of years. I bet you know it. It ends like this, "for yours"—join with me—"yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever, amen."

So now a question as we finish this prayer is why is it not in some of your Bibles, or why is it a footnote, or why is there a footnote if it is in your Bible, that says something about "mss," manuscripts? And here's the interesting reason. It is most likely that Jesus did not pray this final phrase of the prayer. We believe that because our earliest manuscripts, the earliest copies that we have of the gospel of Matthew, don't include this phrase, Jesus just ends abruptly, but deliver us from evil, period. Nothing added.

But what we believe most likely happened is that very soon, very soon, within a hundred years of Jesus' death, as the church was growing, this very prayer became a point of worship for the church. And as the church would pray this together, they determined it would be good to end this prayer that we are praying corporately, to end it with great shouts of worship, affirming who God is. And so we have copies from early church meetings that show us they did end this prayer,



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"for yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever." So while this phrase isn't exactly scripture, it is absolutely scriptural—it affirms what this entire prayer has said: his is the kingdom, his the power, his is the glory.

This phrase, I believe, is a fitting way for us to end it together, as we pray it together, because it returns us back to first things—returns us back to God, to remember. It's because God is who he is that we can walk confidently through life. It's because God is who he is that we can bring our daily request to him. It's because God is who he is that we can go to him and ask that he would forgive us. It's because God is who he is that we can come to him and say, rescue us from the evil one.

Jesus ultimately accomplished victory on the cross. His, properly, is the one now that we should say is the kingdom. He is the king. His is the power. His is the glory. But we are with him because he, in his goodness, has made a way for us, needy and desperate as we are, to be with him. And because we are with him, and because he has all the power, we're free to walk through this life with a deep confidence, even in the midst of trial.

Our Father, we thank you. We thank you for the words of this prayer, all the truth that it proclaims. We thank you, that you are greater than we can possibly imagine—you are more loving than we can possibly imagine. And in your love and mercy, you sent your son to die on the cross, that we might be with you now and forever. And we thank you that because of you, because of who you are, we need not fear the evil one. But we walk confidently asking you to rescue us when we begin to veer towards sin. And help us to be people that walk confidently as we cling to you in this life. We pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.

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