

Lead Us Not into Temptation, but Deliver Us from Evil

PSA Sunday, March 6, 2011

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The want to be rescued from things that are out of our control, things that we often perceive as evil, is a want that we have known since we were born.

How often do we hear a baby cry? Crying over the frustration of things not going their way, but with no way to communicate their problems, it is out of their control. We too are frustrated with things in our lives out of our control - the loss of a job, health issues, loss of a loved one - things out of our control. But just as a parent comforts their child, finding a way to meet the baby's needs, so God reaches out to us, comforting us, helping us find solutions, or maybe just walking with us during trying times.

Evil is prevalent throughout our world, and not only are we vulnerable to it, but the ones we love are also vulnerable to all that evil can do to them. We pray to God because we are fearful and because we trust that not only is he listening but we trust in his goodness to protect us. Much as the psalmist cried out to God to protect him from evil in the 140th Psalm saying

¹ Deliver me, O LORD, from evildoers;
protect me from those who are violent,

⁴ Guard me, O LORD, from the hands of the wicked;
protect me from the violent
who have planned my downfall.

⁷ O LORD, my Lord, my strong deliverer,
you have covered my head in the day of battle.

⁸ Do not grant, O LORD, the desires of the wicked;
do not further their evil plot.

Today, we pray the same things:

We ask God to deliver us from the threat of terrorism.

Deliver us from sickness.

Deliver us from the chaos of natural disasters

Deliver us from the dangers that our loved ones who serve our country face.

Deliver us from the phone call that every parent dreads.

Deliver us from our own foolishness, from the evil we do as well as the evil that threatens us.

However, the cry of the psalmist is not the desperate wail of someone who doesn't know where else to turn, but the assertion of people who have come to know God in praise and thanksgiving. It is a claim on the goodness of God.

We do not simply pray "deliver us from evil" because we recognize our own fear and need and vulnerability. Rather, we pray because we know God is listening and that God will deliver us.

The Lord is a deliverer!

We often think of the story of Moses and the Israelites, being delivered out of Egypt. What a challenge it must have been to deliver an estimated 2 million people from Egypt, where they had been for over 400 years. God delivered an entire nation. Not from the threat of attack from outsiders, but he delivered an entire nation to another location, to the Promised Land. Moving 2 million people from one location to another on foot! God heard the cries of the Israelites and delivered them from a Pharaoh, a government that had ruled them for over 400 years. He delivered them out of Egypt - where the only way out was through the Red Sea. But God delivered them despite all these obstacles, despite the vast number of people - most of whom knew nothing other than being an Egyptian slave. If God can deliver the Israelites from the Egyptians - He can deliver you and me - even when we have to pass through a Red Sea.

The familiar 23rd psalm talks about us being delivered from evil, "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me."

Terrible things happen in the valley of the shadow of death, things far more painful and trying than death itself, but we know we are not alone, "thou art with me" and so "I will fear no evil", for I am given the courage and the strength and the endurance to pray for God's goodness and mercy saying "deliver us from evil".

Wilson, Patrick J. "Deliver Us from Evil". Williamsburg Presbyterian Church. 9 May 2010.