

Matthew 6:13

Jesus Led Me All the Way

Please turn with me to Mathew 6 as we continue looking at this magnificent prayer that our Lord has given us at the heart of the Sermon on the Mount. Here is a question as you are turning over to Matthew 6. Since we have been studying in great detail this prayer, have you noticed your affections changing? Does your heart beat a little faster, and the top of your head tingle just a little when you now think of prayer? Have the thoughts of this prayer to our Father who art in heaven whose name is hallowed changed the way that you pray? I hope so. If anything, this prayer directs our lives to long for God; to revere him, to desire him, to depend upon him, and to hope in him. Let's read the prayer in full.

READ TEXT

At the end of the prayer we are met with three personal petitions: Bread, Forgiveness, and Deliverance. This is the life of the Christian whose life has been exposed to the reality of God. Bread is essential for life; forgiveness is essential for fellowship; deliverance from temptation and evil are essential for the unhindered pursuit of glory.

Our whole life is a journey in pursuit of the glory of the Lord. Thankfully we are not alone in our pursuit, we have the promised power of the very person of God - the Holy Spirit - to lead us all the way. We are confident that he who began this good work in us will deliver us safely to the shores of his celestial city. As Cyprian, the Bishop of Carthage in the 200's once said:

*We ought never to forget, brethren, that we have renounced the world. We are living here now as aliens and only for a time. When the day of our homecoming puts an end to our exile, frees us from the bonds of the world, and restores us to paradise and to a kingdom, we should welcome it. What man, stationed in a foreign land, would not want to return to his own country as soon as possible? Well, we look upon paradise as our country, and a great crowd of our loved ones awaits us there, a countless throng of parents, brothers and children longs for us to join them. Assured though they are of their own salvation, they are still*

*concerned about ours. What joy both for them and for us to see one another and embrace! O the delight of that heavenly kingdom where there is no fear of death! O the supreme and endless bliss of everlasting life!*

*There, is the glorious band of apostles, there, the exultant assembly of prophets, there, the innumerable host of martyrs, crowned for their glorious victory in combat and death. There, in triumph, are the virgins who subdued their passions by the strength of continence. There, the merciful are rewarded, those who fulfilled the demands for justice by providing for the poor. In obedience to the Lord's command, they turned their earthly patrimony into heavenly treasure.*

*My dear brethren, let all our longing be to join them as soon as we may. May God see our desire, may Christ see this resolve that springs from faith, for he will give the rewards of his love more abundantly to those who have longed for him more fervently.*

In the final petition of this prayer there is a reality and a longing. Look at verse 13. The reality, temptation, evil. The longing, deliverance that comes from the hands of one whose wounds have crushed the head of the serpent and brought our healing. Those who dismiss the truth of spiritual warfare do so to their own peril. There are powers at work in this world that we can't even imagine. Powers that are seeking to sift our souls, but the Lord has given us this prayer to aide our warfare.

When talking about spiritual warfare there seem to be two extremes. One is that we don't pay any attention to the Devil and his schemes. The other extreme is we see the Devil behind every bush and blame all evil on him. Both extremes need to be avoided because both extremes are perversions of the truth. If there is any complacency in us about spiritual warfare then this prayer sets our focus to show us its reality. This prayer is a call to war, a call for the church to arise and put her armor on. If our thoughts of spiritual warfare are over dramatic, then this prayer shows us that we must take some responsibility for the temptation that comes along the way. Eve could say the Devil made her do it, but who made Adam do it?

Let's look at the final petition of this prayer. Let's learn two truths; let's learn by praying this way we can be sure that Jesus our savior is leading us all the way.

## **1. Jesus Has Begun the Revolution**

Remember how dynamic it was for Moses to go into Pharaoh's presence and declare "Thus says the Lord, 'Let my people go.'"? Jesus has come to lead the new Exodus, the final Exodus as he takes his people to the promised land. Christ has

come into a world devastated by sin and darkness as light shining into the world. He has come to his humanity and his whole life sings a song that when it reaches our ears it gives this deep sense of longing welling up inside of us.

C.S. Lewis' entire apologetic could be summed up in one word: Longing. Listen to how he put it in his essay, *The Weight of Glory*.

“In speaking of this desire for our own far off country, which we find in ourselves even now, I feel a certain shyness. I am almost committing an indecency. I am trying to rip open the inconsolable secret in each one of you—the secret which hurts so much that you take your revenge on it by calling it names like Nostalgia and Romanticism and Adolescence; the secret also which pierces with such sweetness that when, in very intimate conversation, the mention of it becomes imminent, we grow awkward and affect to laugh at ourselves; the secret we cannot hide and cannot tell, though we desire to do both. We cannot tell it because it is a desire for something that has never actually appeared in our experience. We cannot hide it because our experience is constantly suggesting it, and we betray ourselves like lovers at the mention of a name. Our commonest expedient is to call it beauty and behave as if that had settled the matter. (Speaking of the English Poet William Wordsworth) Wordsworth's expedient was to identify it with certain moments in his own past. But all this is a cheat. If Wordsworth had gone back to those moments in the past, he would not have found the thing itself, but only the reminder of it; what he remembered would turn out to be itself a remembering. The books or the music in which we thought the beauty was located will betray us if we trust to them; it was not in them, it only came through them, and what came through them was longing. These things—the beauty, the memory of our own past—are good images of what we really desire; but if they are mistaken for the thing itself they turn into dumb idols, breaking the hearts of their worshipers. For they are not the thing itself; they are only the scent of a flower we have not found, the echo of a tune we have not heard, news from a country we have never yet visited.”

The good news is that Jesus hasn't just come to put a longing in our heart, he has come to be the summation of all our longings – he has come to satisfy us as he delivers us, as he saves us. This is why he teaches us from behind enemy lines to stand, to face temptation, to flee the enemy and all of his devices, to pray deliver us!

This prayer is a call to war, a call to fight the fight of faith and not give way to the desires of the flesh, but to live a life fully pleasing to God. As our key weapon in warfare he has given us prayer. I wonder how much evil we could engage in, how much temptation we could succumb to if we had the right frame of mind, the frame of mind our Lord is giving us, to get on our knees and pray *Our Father in heaven*

*whose name is hallowed, whose kingdom is coming, deliver me.* It was Leonard Ravenhill who said:

“No man is greater than his prayer life. The pastor who is not praying is playing; the people who are not praying are straying. We have many organizers, but few agonizers; many players and payers, few pray-ers; many singers, few clingers; lots of pastors, few wrestlers; many fears, few tears; much fashion, little passion; many interferers, few intercessors; many writers, but few fighters. Failing here, we fail everywhere.”

There is no need for failure. Because:

## **2. Jesus Has Secured Victory**

We must remember that while Jesus taught us to pray this prayer when he prayed this prayer the answer was, No. As Jesus was praying in the Garden he prayed for deliverance, but then what did he say? Jesus prayed what he also taught us to pray, “Nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will.” We must remember that the servant is not above his master and our Master was led into temptation and delivered to evil (temporarily) all for us; all so that the darkness of that day could yield the dawn of new creation as up from the grave he arose with a mighty triumph over his foes. He arose the victor of the dark domain and he lives forever with his saints to reign. As the Lutheran theologian Albert Schweitzer said, “Jesus was called to throw himself on the wheel of world history, so that, even though it crushed him, it might start to turn in the opposite direction.” The revolution that Jesus began is a revolution that will one day be secure as the borders of his kingdom covers the earth.

Some of you aren't satisfied so far. Since the beginning of our reading the prayer you have been struggling with this whole idea of God leading us into temptation. We are more at ease with the idea of the Lord delivering us from evil than leading us into temptation. What are we to make of all of this? The word here for temptation is *πειρασμός* (*pā-rä-smō's*). This is different than *πειράζω* (*pā-rä'-zō*) used in James 1:13 which says, *Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God," for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one.* What are we to make of this? The same word in our English refers to two different meanings. It is just like when I tell Adalee that I am marrying someone and she says I thought you were married to Mommy. I am performing the wedding of two who are being married, I am marrying them they are getting married. You

know the difference. The same kind of distinction is going on here. Let's see if we can make this clearer. To do so we let Scripture be its best interpreter.

James uses Matthews term in 1:1-2 to show us the difference. *Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet **trials** of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.* God sends trials to strengthen our faith. Temptations are sent to cause us to stumble. God never sends something with the intention of making us stumble. The trial sent by God to strengthen can become a temptation, but when we are tempted we have been led away by our own passions – God is not at fault (see James 1:12-18).

That begs another question. If we are to count it all joy, and if trials are intended to strengthen our faith, they why don't we say, bring it on to a trial designed to strengthen our faith? Most of us know the difference, but let me see if I can put this delicately. If a trial is intended to strengthen our faith why do we pray to not be led into the trial? Because we enjoy the harvest more than the seed-time. Because we enjoy eating the corn more than shucking it. Because we enjoy smelling a rose more than pulling weeds out of our gardens. We enjoy eating the meal more than preparing the meal or the putting up of the dishes. But when the seed-time comes, and we must prepare the meal or put up the dishes we have our Lord taking us by the hand and saying, pray this way: Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

It's not enough for us to just have forgiveness of sins, as great as that is. Jesus has taught us sins must be resisted all together. How long do we have to resist? As long as we have the need for bread. And God has given us the way to resist – prayer. Through prayer we get to put our hopes in the God who has taught us to pray, who promised he would never leave us nor forsake us, a God who has come to us to lead us gently with love and compassion all the way.

Would you pray with me?

What trials are you facing? What sins are you needing deliverance from?