

Grace, mercy, and peace be to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ! Amen! Dear brothers and sisters in Christ:

Last week, we heard the first three petitions in the Lord's Prayer.

- First, God's Name is holy in itself, but we pray that it may be hallowed in us and in the whole world and that the Word and the honor of God may be kept holy against blasphemers of His Name. This is done when His Name and His honor is in our teaching and life.
- Second, His kingdom comes when His Word increases and is powerful among us. We have His kingdom through His Word and Sacraments now and when His kingdom comes when we die, or Christ returns first.
- Third, that all those be restrained who oppose His Name and the kingdom of God, for the will of God is that ***"everyone who looks on the Son and believes in Him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day"*** (John 6:40).

Each of these petitions, or requests, also serve us as our weapons against Satan's spiritual warfare. Tonight, we will conclude our look at the Lord's Prayer with the fourth through the seventh petitions.

*"Give us this day our daily bread."* Now, what is meant by daily bread? Well, consider a breadbasket, which contains the necessities of our body and of the temporal life. So, "daily bread" is everything that we need to survive. It's literal bread from the baker's oven. It's drink, clothing, shoes, house, home, land, animals, money, goods, a devout husband or wife, devout children, devout workers, devout and faithful rulers, good government, good weather, temporal peace, health, self-control, good reputation, good friends, faithful neighbors. "Daily bread" is not an accidental thing. "Daily bread" is the gift of God.

Now, this "daily bread" God gives to even the wicked and the godless. But nevertheless, we know and acknowledge that every "daily bread" comes from God.

So, in this petition, we pray against everything that hinders daily bread. This petition is against tempest, war, and those who loot and steal that which belongs to their neighbor. But nonetheless, the Lord wants us to pray in order that we acknowledge daily bread as His gift.

Now, on to the next request: *“And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.”*

No one does as he or she should do. But at the same time, we get stuck in the mire of being proud and think that we are thoroughly holy.

So, all of us must say, *“Forgive us our trespasses.”* We must pray to God to give us a conscience unafraid, which is assured that your sins are forgiven. This petition serves those who are conscious of their sins. For one who falsely thinks that they are righteous by their own doing are only liars. ***“If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us”*** (1 John 1:8).

In this petition, may everyone acknowledge the need for which you feel. We must all admit and confess that we do not do enough for our neighbor. Therefore, we must daily pray for forgiveness of sins.

God promises the forgiveness of sins, but we must also forgive our neighbor. To this, Luther writes, *“If you have someone whom you do not forgive, you pray in vain. Therefore let each one look to his neighbor, if he has been offended by him, and forgive him from the heart; then he will be certain that his sin too has been forgiven ... if you forgive, you too will be forgiven.”*

The life of the Christian is a life of repentance and forgiveness, and thus we pray to God our Father, *“Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.”*

Now we can pray, *“And lead us not into temptation,”* which means “not into evil enticement.” What exactly is temptation? Temptation is sin that cling to us. There are three temptations: the flesh, the fallen world, and the devil.

First, let’s look at the temptation that is of the flesh. Our flesh says, “Pornography isn’t hurting anyone. Go ahead and click that link.” Or, “If you’re not feeling loved by your spouse, go ahead and find love elsewhere.” Or, if you are a salesman, “I know the product is only worth this much, but I’m going to charge double, because what the customers don’t know won’t hurt them.”

The flesh seeks to satisfy its lust in gluttoning, guzzling, and loafing.

Second is the temptation of the fallen world, which tempts us with envy, hatred, and pride. Say your neighbor irritates you to anger when you are making a bargain and all of a sudden you become impatient, the fallen world comes upon you and up you go – *you blow your top*.

Or you could want to conform to this fallen world. These are the worldly temptations. You live your life for the Facebook likes. You live your life following the winds and ways of this fallen world to eventually find yourself believing that a man can be a woman and a woman can be a man and a child can become a cat. Yet, five minutes ago, you thought that to be crazy, but now you are one with the world, so you are fine with wrong being right. To this we ought to pray: “O Lord, bring it to pass that the flesh and the world shall not seduce me!”

Third is the temptation by the devil. He tempts us by causing us to disregard God’s Word. “Sunday is fun day. It’s been a tiring week; I have to sleep in on Sunday, because I was out late on Saturday, so I just can’t get to church Sunday morning – or even Monday evening.” Or, even if you do come to church to hear the sermon, you don’t take it in, you have no delight, no love, no reverence for the Word of God.

St. Peter reminds us, our ***“adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour”*** (1 Peter 5:8). But rarely does he make a frontal attack that we can prepare for as we defend ourselves. Instead, temptation most commonly sneaks up and attacks from behind. Temptation ambushes us in ways that we never see coming.

Consider this: You are new to the area. You find a new doctor, new dentist, new friends, and a new church. You attend church a few weeks, then you miss a few weeks. You attend one week, then miss five weeks. Before you know it, you are no longer attending the Divine Service at all. God has become distant and drifted off the radar screen. In other words, a Christian doesn’t just wake up one morning and decide to renounce the faith. Instead, you drift away without ever realizing it. Temptation most commonly sneaks up and attacks from behind. In this petition, we pray to be preserved from this.

Satan attacks us with unbelief and indifference. But we have the promise that God will deliver us from these temptations of the flesh, the fallen world, and the devil. Our whole life is nothing but temptation by these three. Therefore, we must pray: “Dear Father, let not our flesh seduce us, let not the world deceive us, and let not the devil cast us down.”

And so we conclude the Lord's Prayer saying: "*But deliver us from evil.*" What is this evil that we pray against? We are praying against the evil one, the devil, Satan himself. So, we can sum it up this way: "Deliver us from the wicked devil, who hinders our prayers. O Lord, deliver us!"

Satan is evil himself, but the "evil" in this petition is everything on earth that is evil, such as sickness, poverty, death – whatever evil there is in this fallen dominion of Satan, of which there is very much here on earth.

In short, O Lord, deliver us from the devil.

Then as we conclude the Lord's Prayer, God's name will be hallowed, His kingdom come, and His will be done, and we are delivered from all things.

We pray these words of the Lord's Prayer so that God tramples the devil under foot. We pray these words for there is a great need for daily bread.

In these seven petitions are found all our anxieties, all our needs, and all our perils, which we ought to bring to God. These are great petitions, but God, who wills to do great things is greater. Therefore, let us learn to pray well since God wants us to do this. Through prayer, we experience the power of God, through which He is able to give us great things, to make us good, to keep the Word, to give us a holy life, to give us a weapon against Satan. In our prayers, we enlist the aid, the support, and the power of our heavenly Father. Amen.

The peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus, our Lord. Amen.

**+ SOLI DEO GLORIA +**