



Sermon Transcription • Abbotsford

January 21, 2018 - Jeff Bucknam

The Disciple's Prayer - Part 2 - (Matthew 6:11-12)

[Please Note: This transcript has been lightly edited for ease of reading. Also, some headings have been added in square brackets to aid the reader in locating portions of the sermon.]

I grew up going to church, my family wasn't really Christian- we were Christian-y, but not really serious much about it, at all, go to church from time to time. Enough that I have memories about what happened there, I don't really remember any of the sermons. I remember my pastor used to paint his face as a clown during one sermon every year, and that's the one that I recall. I remember there was juice at the end of it, and I looked forward to the juice everyday. I remember standing next to my dad singing. My father's got a really deep voice, and so he would sing these songs and he would go between <in a deep voice> the really deep voice and then he'd <in a high voice> go to the falsetto and then <in a deep voice> he'd go to the deep voice and <in a high voice> then to falsetto. [Laughter] Oh, it made me laugh so hard, my sister and I, and he's say, [in a deep voice] "Stop it, stop it," because we'd be giggling the whole time, he didn't know it was about him. [Laughter] We played Tic Tac Toe, my sister and I, during every sermon. I used to win a lot, in Tic Tac Toe, because she'd let me win. We counted the ceiling tiles, and things. We didn't pay attention to nearly anything that happened during the services, it just wasn't part of our, kind of, upbringing. We were there to show your face there, and to go home and yell at the Seahawks afterwards.

But I do remember, during each service, there was one point where my attention was peaked, where I would immediately just be excited, because I knew what was happening. It was when the pastor would say something to the effect: "And now, let's pray as our Lord taught us." And they'd say, "Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread..." You know the passage, right, it was called "the Lord's Prayer," and I knew this. I knew that, growing up, because it had been repeated every time I went to church, and our church all said it together, and so I knew this prayer. It didn't mean a whole lot to me, I've learned a lot more about it since, it was very similar, of course, to The Pledge of Allegiance, growing up in the States, you know, you wake up every morning and you go to school, and you show up, and the first thing they do is they put your hand over your chest, and you say, <speaking quickly> "I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America, and to the republic for which it stands..." I didn't know what that meant either, it's kind of odd for me to think that's what we did every single day for, after living outside the States for 20 years now. But as time's gone on, I realized what I was saying now. I went to seminary, I actually learned quite a bit about the Lord's Prayer. One of the things I learned about it was that the flower ending, you know the part I'm talking about, "For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever," is actually not part of the prayer in



the original earliest manuscripts. So we have copies of the New Testament that are very very early, right, 2nd century and stuff like that. All of those early copies leave that part of the prayer out. So it's likely that some scribe, some copyist, at some point, was writing along and saying, "Man, this prayer, it probably needs a little addendum, it needs a piece at the end of it that makes it a little more formal, you know what I mean? Slap some gold around it a little bit." So he said, "Well, I don't know, 'Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever and ever and ever and ever. Amen'" And so we have some manuscripts now that are later that have that, and so for years it was included in our Bibles but it's not actually original. When Jesus gave this, he did not give the formal flowery ending.

Another thing that I learned about it, of course, is it's more of a model of prayer than a mantra. I brought this up last week, we were talking about it a little bit. You know, you probably heard- those of you who know the Lord's Prayer and didn't go to church, you know it because, you know, you were part of a basketball team that said it. Or a football team, or some group that said it, kind of as a secret code to release the blessings of winds from the heavens. You know? "Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name," right, you know? Cross yourself, take the dust, throw it over your shoulder, "Abra cadabra...win!" No joke, I actually used to say the Lord's Prayer before I would make a phone call to ask a girl out. [Laughter] No joke. And uh, it didn't really work all that much. That's how people treat it, like that, right, the mantra? It's the secret pull the rabbit out of a hat word, you know? That's not what it is, it's more of a model. It shows us how we ought to pray. What kinds of things should we be praying about when we pray. So look, last week, we started by looking at the first three phrases in it. "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come." And then this week, I want to finish the prayer, okay, with the last three phrases: "Give us today our daily bread, forgive us our debts, and lead us not into temptation." Alright?

[Give Us Today Our Daily Bread]

So we'll start with the first of those, "Give us today our daily bread." And when Jesus is instructing us to pray about daily bread, requesting God to give it to us, what is he referring to? Where does that phrase come from, "daily bread"? Well if you know your Old Testament, if you know the Hebrew scriptures, you'll know the story of Israel, it's contained in the Old Testament. You'll know, immediately in your mind you'll be thinking, "Oh yeah, they used to, didn't God provide the people of Israel bread everyday called 'manna'?" And yeah, that's right. The people of Israel came across the Red Sea, you know, they're released from Pharaoh's army, and this grand moment where they come across the sea, the sea is split, you remember, *Prince of Egypt* style? They go across, they sing a song on the other side to God. "Oh God, we love you, think you're phenomenal, horse and rider was thrown into the sea," was part of that song. And they had a few days where they were excited about God and the future, and then of course, just like every, you know, 10-year-old in the backseat of the car after school, their question was, "Um, I'm hungry." And they did, they started to complain. And they came to Moses, who is God's spokesman, and they said, "Listen, we need some food. We're hungry, did you bring us out here in the middle of the desert so we that would *die of hunger*? Oh, Egypt was so wonderful. Yes, we were under oppression and slavery, but at least we had potted meat." And so Moses came to God, and was like, "You know what, these people grumble a lot, Lord, but I don't have an answer for them because we're out here in the middle of the wilderness, there's no



food. Can you provide some food?” And so the Lord said, “Yeah, I can do this. Here’s what I’m going to do, I’m going to put some dew on the ground every morning, and it’s going to turn into this thin, flaky bread. And everyday I’ll do this for you while you’re in the wilderness, as long as you’re there, call it ‘manna.’” In Exodus 16:14 here’s how that story goes,

“When the dew was gone, thin flakes like frost on the ground appeared on the desert floor. When the Israelites saw it, they said to each other, ‘What is it?’ For they did not know what it was. Moses said to them, ‘It is the bread the LORD has given you to eat. This is what the LORD has commanded: “Everyone is to gather as much as they need. Take an omer [that’s like a basketful, it’s just a unit of measurement. Take an omer] for each person you have in your tent.” The Israelites did as they were told; some gathered much, some little. And when they measured it by the omer, the one who gathered much did not have too much, and the one who gathered little did not have too little. Everyone had gathered just as much as they needed. Then Moses said to them, ‘No one is to keep any of it until morning.’”

That’s my one rule. So you use today’s bread for today, and tomorrow God will provide some more. So don’t go home and shove it underneath your bed and keep it hidden away so that you can make sure you’re taken care of and don’t have to trust the Lord tomorrow. Come back tomorrow. Today’s bread for today, tomorrow’s bread for tomorrow.

“However, [verse 20] some of them paid no attention to Moses; they kept part of it until morning, but it was full of maggots and began to smell.”

Now, I’ve got a question for you. Why would God orchestrate it in this way? Why would he make it so that they had a *daily* bread? Why not do *monthly* bread? That seems like a far more convenient way. I mean, God could have gone and watched the football or whatever, instead of constantly having to bring bread everyday. He could have said, “Listen, I’m going to do it 30 layers deep. You take it, you go home, you put it in the corner, and then each day you eat what you need.” Why does he do it daily? And of course, the answer is, because he wants there never to be a day that goes by that they think they don’t need him. “I want you to always know that your basic needs are my business,” says the Lord. “I want you to think that you’ve gotten tomorrow taken care of and that you yourself can take of your life, because you can’t. You’re not made for it.” You might turn your heart away from God, in fact, if you have too much, if you hoard things. There’s this really fascinating prayer in the book of Proverbs. Solomon, this very wise king, he prays a prayer that you and I never pray. Listen to what his prayer is, in Proverbs 30:7, he says,

“Two things I ask of you, LORD; do not refuse me before I die: [Here’s my first prayer] Keep falsehood and lies far from me; [some of us might have prayed that prayer before, don’t want to be a liar. And second,] give me neither poverty nor riches.”

“Oh God, don’t make me rich.” You’ve been praying that one this week, have ya? “Give me not poverty,” that’s common, “or riches, but only my daily bread.” I mean, why would you pray that way, Solomon, are you nuts?



“Otherwise, [verse 9] I may have too much and disown you and say, ‘Who is the LORD?’”

See, that’s what money does, doesn’t it? I mean, if you have too much money, you have too many—you end up saying to yourself, “I have all of my needs taken care of.” Jesus told a story about a rich fool, who gets extra grain in all of his barns, and he builds bigger barns, and he’s got everything he needs, and he says, “I have all that I require, and now I can just eat, drink, be merry, and tomorrow, whether I die or what, it doesn’t matter.” You’re a rich fool. You’re a fool. So of course you need the Lord. And money, and hoarding it, can actually turn your heart away from him.

And I was thinking about this a lot, actually, usually I get sick immediately after Christmas, every year. But this year, it waited a couple weeks. So in that week after Christmas, I had some time to reflect. And I’m kind of a navel-gazer, okay? I’m analytical, and introspective, and probably has a part to play in my struggles with depression from time to time. Anyway, I was thinking after Christmas, in some of the quiet moments, there’s the question that was just plaguing my mind, I kept wondering, why is it that I feel happier when I have money? Why do I feel more secure when I have money? That might not be, you’ll be like, “Obviously you have money, you can buy the stuff that you want.” Yeah, but why is it that I feel genuinely more secure? There was a time in my life when I didn’t have any money. I used to work, when I was a pastor in New Zealand, we didn’t have any money. My mom used to say to me, “You know, Jeff, you and Jeannie, you don’t have a pot to pee in.” Her words, not mine. [Laughter] Right? Yeah! We don’t, we didn’t have...but my life there, my lifestyle was very different, or not any different than it is now. What was different then, is that I worried all the time. If you came to me and you said, “Jeff, is your heart pinned to money?” I would say, “No!” But as I was thinking about it, I was like, yeah, kind of, because I feel way more secure when I have more money. Why do I feel more secure? After I thought about this and I was mulling it over in quiet moments for like, three or four days, it occurred to me, something that you probably have, has occurred to you before. The reason I like money is because it gives me power and control over my future. That if something happens tomorrow, if I have money and something happens tomorrow, like, you know, the car breaks down, or the dog gets sick, or whatever. I’ve got that covered. I’ll be buying insurance. I’ve got that covered. And it occurred to me in the midst of all of this thinking, though, that that sense of security, that confidence, is actually the stuff I’m supposed to have in the Lord. When I look at money and say, “I have this money so I’m happy,” no, actually, I should be looking and saying, “I have the Lord, and therefore I have confidence in tomorrow, because he’s going to give me my daily bread. I have enough for today, and tomorrow I will ask for more.” You and I were made to live today’s problems with today’s strength. No more. When you and I try to live tomorrow’s challenges with today’s strengths, we get in a lot of trouble.

You know, there’s a daily reminder that you and I have, you might not have thought about it. We don’t ask for daily bread as much these days, but the Lord reminds us everyday that we need him, in a way you might not have thought about before. You go to sleep everyday, I’m assuming. Some of you are doing that right now. [Laughter] Think about it. You are so vulnerable when you’re sleeping, right? I mean, when I was a kid, we used to, friends would fall asleep and we’d be at camp, or they’d be sleeping over at my house, and it was time to have a little fun with them, right? Put the shaving cream on the hands and tingle the nose, <laughs> right? I had a friend, actually, that when we worked at



camp, we hooked the hose up outside of the cabin, and we pulled the hose around the side, and about 2:00 in the morning, he was asleep and none of us were, and so we hosed him off, right? And he freaked out. And then we said, “Oh, funny.” And then we gave him a sleeping bag that was dry, and said, “Go back to sleep,” and then he fell back to sleep again, and then we came in about two hours later and hosed him off again, right? You’re so vulnerable when you’re asleep. We can do anything to you at all. We can put you on a raft and put you out in the middle of a lake. Actually happened, in fact, to a friend of mine. Right? Was put out on a raft and woke up in the middle of the lake. Everyday you have this period of what, seven, eight, nine, (some of you way too long, right) hours when you are completely oblivious to the world around you, that you have to trust God to care for you. It’s God’s constant reminder to you that you need him.

The Lord himself, Jesus, in Matthew 6 tries to remind us of this. “Listen, you don’t need to worry about your life, I’m going to give you your daily bread. But it’s only going to be enough for today. Don’t try to worry about tomorrow today. Matthew 6:25, he says,

“Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, [you respond, “I don’t worry, I’m just concerned. Same thing. Don’t worry about your life,] what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes? Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they?”

Do you watch the birds, and they just like, drop out of the sky? “Well, I guess the Lord let that one down.” No, they keep flying. They have everything they need. Matthew 6:27,

“Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life?” [Well I’ve tried.] And why do you worry about clothes? See how the flowers of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. [*<Strained voice> Working really hard!*] Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. [I mean, the best dressed guy ever didn’t look like those beautiful flowers that we see every spring.] If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith? So do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For the pagans [Those who don’t believe in God, those who don’t have any resource in him, they’re the ones who should worry about them. But you who are his children shouldn’t worry about them, your heavenly Father, your daddy will take care of you. The pagans] run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore [listen,] do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

You have enough strength for today, and tomorrow we will ask for more. John Piper in his wonderful little book *A Godward Life* reflects on this. He says,



“God’s mercies are new every morning, because each day has enough mercy in it for only that day. This is why we tend to despair when we think that we may have to bear tomorrow’s load on today’s resources. God wants us to know that we won’t. The man in the wilderness was given one day at a time. There was no storing up, and that’s the way we must depend on God’s mercy. You don’t receive today the strength to bear tomorrow’s burdens, you’re given mercies today for today’s trouble. Tomorrow the mercies will be new.”

Come on, that’s what you say to your kids when they’re going to bed at night, right? And they’re freaked out, <in a high voice> “Oh no! She doesn’t like me and I have to go face her at school tomorrow and we might have to run in P.E. Oh no, I don’t know if I can go and I don’t feel well. The world is ending, you know?” Then you take their face in your hands and you say, “Come on, tomorrow is tomorrow. God will provide you the strength that you need tomorrow. Right now, your job is to go to sleep.” [Laughter] Give us this day our daily bread.

[Forgive Us Our Debts]

And forgive us our debts, as we have forgiven our debtors. This second part here is, you know if you’re a Christian at all, actually, honestly if you live in the western world, you should know a little bit about the history of the Christian church. About 500 years ago there was a renewal movement in the Christian church called “the Protestant Reformation.” And of course, the most famous leader of that reformation was Martin Luther. Luther, the way that it worked back in those days, if you wanted to have a conversation about a subject, you would take a piece of paper and you would nail it to the door of the church in your town. Okay, so that was Facebook before Facebook. Okay? So you’d nail it to the- “I want to talk about these things,” is what you’re saying. So he had 95 things he wanted to talk about. His 95 theses, arguments. He was a priest at the time, and so he said, “I’ve got some problems with the way that we’re doing things in the church. And so I want to nail these onto this door so we can chat about them.” The first of those 95 theses is this: “When our Lord and master, Jesus Christ,” so if you were to read that paper, the very top of it, “When our Lord and master, Jesus Christ said ‘repent’ he called for the entire life of believers to be one of repentance.” “Listen,” says Luther, “it wasn’t a one time thing, you don’t just come to Jesus and say, ‘Look I’m going to turn away,’” that’s what repentance means, “‘turn away from my former manner of life and turn to Jesus,’ that’s the kind of thing that marks a Christian throughout their whole life. There are going to be days when we come back to him repeatedly, over and over and over again. All of life should be repentance,” he said. It’s one of the marks of the Protestant faith.

Well, there are those who took that very seriously throughout church history, a couple hundred years later there was a guy named George Whitefield. Have you ever heard this phrase, “Get off your soapbox”? Well, that word “soapbox” comes from Whitefield. Whitefield used to take a soapbox, and he used to put it in the middle of a field, and he’d stand up on in and he would preach. And in those days, like 20 or 30,000 people would come and listen. It was like, more people than watch the Canucks, would come and listen to him preach on a soapbox. It was way better than the Canucks. [Laughter] And Whitefield was a really godly, godly man. Lots of people came through faith in Christ in their tears, and in these days some of these stories are remarkable. But one of the things that was



remarkable about Whitefield himself was that in the evenings, he would go to wherever it was that he was staying, and he would go through this list of questions that he would ask himself. Because he believed that all of life was repentance, he recognized that even today, even though I've preached like 4, 5 times, to all of these people, there have been things that I've done today, and things I've left undone that need to be reviewed so I can keep short accounts with God. I want to bring these things to him and say, "Forgive me my debts." And so these are the questions that he would ask. He used to pray this prayer, he used to say, "God give me deep humility, a burning love, a well-guided zeal, and a single eye and then let men and devils do their worst." That was his repeated prayer. Those four things. Deep humility, a burning love, well-guided zeal and a single eye. These are the things that he prayed about all the time, and he said, he asked questions around them. So here are the questions he'd ask. He'd sit there, you know, you can picture him as he's sitting there by the fire, maybe, in the evening, or in quiet on his bed, sitting on the edge of his bed as he's looking at the wall. And he'd go through these questions in his mind, speaking to God, and he's say, "Have I looked down on anyone today? Have I been too stung by criticism? Have I spoken or thought unkindly of anyone? Have I been impatient and irritable? Have I avoided people or tasks I know I should face? Have I been anxious and worried? Am I doing what I'm doing for God's glory and the good of others or for the approval of others and the hunger for acclaim? What's going on in my heart, why is it that I'm doing these things? Am I looking at anyone with envy? Am I giving in to even the first motions of lust or gluttony?" And he would just record all of these things, and be introspective, and say to the Lord, "Forgive me." Healthy relationships are those where you keep short accounts. So we come daily to the Lord.

You know there was a- I've spoken on the Lord's Prayer before in other settings, and I shared this kind of idea before, that we need to come daily, asking for forgiveness, with the people that I was- I got a really critical email afterwards, where the person was saying, "Listen I listened to a pastor who said that when you come to faith in Jesus, you ask Jesus for forgiveness at that moment, and so if you keep asking Jesus for forgiveness after that moment, it shows that you don't actually believe that he forgave you. So Christians should *not* be asking for forgiveness daily. Can you give you any biblical-" this is the email, "Can you give me any biblical rational? Show me a place in the Bible where we're called to pray for forgiveness daily." Um, yes. The Lord's Prayer. Give us this day our daily bread, I'm assuming that that prayer should be prayed, um, daily. And so if that prayer is to be prayed daily, I'm assuming the next part, forgive us our debts, should be prayed daily. That the Lord actually wants us to keep coming back to him and keeping short accounts.

This idea that we said it once at the beginning and never again reminds me very much of a story my friend who is a marital counselor told me. He said that there was a couple who came into his office, and they were sitting across from him, very opposite sides of the couch. And the wife was talking on and on about all the trouble in their marriage, and the man sat stoically, quietly. And she finally said, "You know the real issue is that he just, he never tells me that he loves me." And he broke in at this moment and said, "Well, I told you I loved you when we got married. And if I changed my mind I'll let you know." [Laughter] To which my friend said, "And there's the problem." [Laughter] Listen, you know healthy relationships are those where you communicate and you keep short accounts. Where things don't build up and build up and build up. The Lord wants a healthy relationship with you. So he asks you to daily come and ask for forgiveness of sin.



You notice, though that that phrase, forgive us our debts, is not the end of the phrase that's in the Lord's Prayer though, right? Forgive us our debts *as we have forgiven our debtors*. It doesn't say, "Forgive us our debts and we will forgive our debtors," no. It's an assumption that you have forgiven your debtors. And that the pattern of your life as a believer in the Lord Jesus is that you pass on the forgiveness that you've received from God. That that's the norm. In fact, Jesus adds a warning at the end of the Lord's Prayer. Right after it, in Matthew's gospel, what you get is these words, Matthew 6:14,

"For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins."

In other words, one of the chief signs that you are a true believer in the Lord Jesus is your willingness to pass the forgiveness you've received onto others. If you want to look at your life, and you want to say, "Am I a genuine Christian?" Right, you hold grudges? It says an awful lot about you. "Oh, but surely that's the only place in the Bible that Jesus says those kinds of things. And Jeff, you're absolutely over reading that." No no no, actually later in Matthew's gospel, he tells a story to make his point.

Jesus says, okay there's a king, and one of his servants owes him like, five hundred million dollars. I mean, it's just an astronomical sum. There's no way he could possibly repay it. And so the king calls the man in, and says, "You owe me. You need to pay it up, or I'm going to put you in the debtors prison, right, so you can pay it off." And of course the man's like, "Oh no, I can't possibly pay it, I've incurred so much debt, my businesses have all failed, and I gambled a little bit of it, and I bought that Lamborghini. It's terrible, I just don't- please, please, please, I've tried and tried and I can't get out of debt. Please forgive me, please forgive me." And so the king in his grace says, "Yeah. I'll incur the debt on your behalf. And I will wipe the books clean." Now you can imagine the feelings that would come over you if you had your five hundred million dollar debt absolved. Walking out the doors of the palace, "Hello everybody!" This guy's walking down the street, and he looks over to the side, and he sees the guy who just bought his scooter on Craigslist for fifty dollars, but didn't pay him in the moment and promised that he would pay him, but he hasn't since, and so he runs over to him and grabs him and says, "Where's my money? You have the scooter, right? Well, give me my fifty dollars!" And the guy says, "I don't have the fifty dollars! I thought I could pay you but I can't, oh please, forgive my debt." "No!" And he sends him off to the debtor's prison. Of course, people see this happening, right? People are on the street, and they've seen it, and they, some courtiers, or some people who've been in the court and saw the man who was forgiven so much, not passing it on. And then goes back to the king himself, and says, "You would not believe what just happened. That guy that you forgave that much, sent a dude into prison for fifty bucks." So the king calls him in. Matthew 18:32,

"Then the master called the servant in. 'You wicked servant,' he said, 'I canceled all that debt of yours because you begged me to. Shouldn't you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?' In anger his master handed him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he



should pay back all he owed. [Listen now,] This is how [says Jesus, this is how] my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother or sister from your heart.”

One chief sign that I've truly received forgiveness is my willingness to pass that forgiveness on to others. You and I know this. You know what it's like to be a parent, who gives something kind to their kids and they don't pass it on, that kindness? You go to McDonalds and you buy the large fry, and one of the kids in the back gets to hold it, and of course you didn't buy the large fry for that kid. Who does that? I bought it for you so you could share. But what does the kid in the backseat holding the large fries, and their brother or sister, “Can I have some fries?” “No! They're my fries!” [Laughter] And you're livid, and you pull over to the side of the road, and you say, “I did not buy you large fries just for you! I give you that kind of grace- we never buy fries, they're gonna kill you, and I give them to you anyway so that you can enjoy it, and then you hoard them, how dare you? Give them the fries!” Right? And that's what you say. We know what it's like for the Lord, and how he feels when he gives grace and forgiveness to those in innumerable amounts, and they're unwilling to pass it on. Listen, maybe I'm talking to you right now, seriously, maybe you're a grudge holder. Here's what you need to hear. That grudge is saying an awful lot about your faith. It's saying an awful lot about how you understand, and how much you understand the forgiveness you've received. You do realize it was a five hundred million dollar debt that you received from Jesus, yeah? Like, he forgave that, right? What somebody owes you doesn't compare.

[Lead Us Not Into Temptation]

Forgive us our debts as we also have forgiven our debtors. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. Here's the last part of it. That word for temptation is the same word for “test.” It's the Greek word “peirasmós.” Although the original version of the New Testament is in Greek, and we translate from Greek, the word “peirasmós” in Greek, to English, and when we do that, that word can be translated into “temptation” or “test.” Usually the translators choose what they want based upon the context. So which is it here? Should this be translated “lead us not into temptation” or “lead us not into a test”?

Well, let's ask a couple of questions about that. Number 1, does God tempt us? Does God lead into temptation? Well, some passages of Scripture actually seem to indicate no, James 1:13:

“When tempted, no one should say, ‘God is tempting me.’ [It's the same word.] For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; [God doesn't tempt anyone.] but each person is tempted when they are dragged away by their own evil desire and enticed.”

So, your sinful flesh is tempting you. God is not tempting you, you are tempting you. In other places in the Scriptures, we have others tempters. So, Jesus is tempted by Satan, Adam and Eve are tempted by Satan. So if we use the word “tempt” which means that the goal of the temptation is the abandonment of God, right? If we use that word “tempt,” we can say that we are tempted by our sinful flesh and by Satan, and that the goal is rejecting God, right? Satan and our flesh tempt us, but does



God tempt us. No? Second question then, does God *test* us? Oh man, there's a lot of Scripture that seems to indicate "yes," Deuteronomy 8:2,

"Remember [this is what Moses is speaking to the people of Israel, he says, "Remember"] how the LORD your God led you all the way in the wilderness these forty years, to humble and [what's the word] test you in order to know what was in your heart, whether or not you would keep his commands. He humbled you, causing you to hunger and then feeding you with manna, which neither you nor your ancestors had known, to teach you that man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD."

This whole manna scene, in other words, was a test from God, to see whether you trust him. That's why he orchestrated it.

"Your clothes did not wear out and your feet did not swell during these forty years. Know then in your heart that as a man disciplines his son, so the LORD your God disciplines you."

See, as a father, when you're disciplining your kids, you're doing it for their good. You give them tests for their benefit, for their growth. Your teachers, when they give you tests are not sitting behind a closed door saying, "Oh, I'm so happy that I'm tempting them to wickedness. I can't wait to write the red 'F' on their paper." Now some of you students feel that's exactly what your teachers are doing, but they're not. When I used to teach I used to give students tests to consolidate their knowledge. It was actually meant to promote them. To help them, for their growth.

So listen, we can say this, then. What is the temptation from Satan is a test from God. What is the temptation from Satan is a test from God. God wants us to grow, but Satan wants us to wither. You follow that. So you say, "Okay, give me a practical idea." Okay okay okay, let's pretend that you just lost your job, and you're driving home and you're going to have to tell your spouse. It was out of nowhere. And all the way home, this Christian, you're thinking to yourself, "God, I've- what are you doing? I pray, 'Give us this day our daily bread' and then like, the source of the daily bread, you've just like, it's gone. What are you doing?" So you get home, you explain it to your spouse, and you're sitting there on the couch together, and you're trying to figure out, okay, so you're trying to put this into categories. Your knowledge of God and the way that he works with you, okay, so here are a couple of things that you could say about it. Number one, you could say that in this moment, Satan is tempting us. Yes, because he's basically saying, "Oh, you know that God that you have trusted for your daily bread? How's that going for you now? Is it working out? He's a liar. He's a liar," says Satan. "You should never trust him. Turn away from him. Go your own way." And yet, as you sit there on the couch, with your spouse, the other point of view is, what the Lord is saying in this moment, "Can you trust me? Like, you don't know the future, you don't know tomorrow, you have strength for today that I've given you. And yes, this is a left hand turn, but can you trust me? I'm the same God who says that I will work all things together for the good of those who love me and who are called according to my good purpose, and you are one of those, and so I have you in my hand, and so I will work out my perfect will for you. And yes, this is a test, but can you trust me?" Same situation, a temptation from Satan, a test from God.



So here's the thing, okay, so take all of that and bring it back to this passage, and here's what the prayer is, then. When we pray "Lead us not into temptation/testing, but to deliver us from the evil one," we're praying two things. The first thing we're praying is, "We don't want any of these testing, tempting situations." Isn't that awesome? The Lord's Prayer is saying that we should pray not to have cancer. Oh God, help me keep my job. Listen, I know that there are some Christians who think it's noble to stand up before the future and say, "I trust the Lord so much that no matter what happens, I will be great. Bring it on, the testing!" That's not Christian. Christians, when they pray this, are praying, "Lord, I don't want it." That's what Jesus prayed, "Take this cup from me." Paul says, "I don't want to have a thorn in the flesh." So we pray for the avoidance of these things. Lead us not into testing or temptation. But sometimes the Lord answers that prayer by saying, "No." And then our second prayer is, "Oh Lord, help me be faithful when I face it. Help me when I'm looking at those two options, to not choose Satan's option, to say, 'Actually, I'm going to trust you, Lord. This is a test from you and you seek my good.'" Lead us not into temptation, but to deliver us from the evil one. Matthew 6:9-13:

"This, then, is how you should pray: 'Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.'"

It's a good prayer, isn't it? It's probably useless unless you actually pray like that, though, yeah? Let me pray for us now.

Father, I'm thankful for your grace, I'm thankful for this passage, Lord, what a rich prayer, Father, I could think about it for a long, long time. God, I pray that the effect of this, though, wouldn't be just us talking about prayer, Father, in the abstract, but it would lead us to pray. You are our good daddy who loves us, and who seeks our good, Father. And I pray, Father, that this would provide some framework for us as we pray in the days ahead. As we commit ourselves to you. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.