

Good Friday – April 14, 2017
Text: Luke 23:46
Theme: But Deliver us From Evil

Tonight we conclude our series on the Lord's Prayer with Jesus' final words of that prayer, "but deliver us from evil." Remember that "For Thine is the Kingdom, the Power and the Glory forever and ever," was added later by the Church as a response to the pastor praying the words of Jesus. Jesus concluded the prayer with "But deliver us from evil."

What is evil? Evil is whatever is not from God regardless of whether the world values it or not. Evil may be grotesque and evil may be alluring. We become easily confused when evil is not ugly. Stephen Hawking is evil. He teaches us not to follow God. No amount of intelligence can offset evil. Islam is evil. It teaches us that Jesus Christ was not truly God and his death did not make full satisfaction for our sins. No number of really nice, helpful Moslems will change the fact that Islam is pure evil. It is not complicated. Whatever leads us away from the Gospel is evil.

Death is the final evil in that it is the penalty for sin. We sanitize death today like we sanitize everything else but death by crucifixion really made the point of just how evil death is. Compared to crucifixion, execution in this country is so much more pleasant with IV's and medicine that relaxes you. Roman soldiers, on the

other hand, carried out their crucifixion duties with grim efficiency. This method of execution inflicted on its victims a maximum of pain before death. Soldiers actually prided themselves on inflicting huge amounts of pain before the condemned died. That was the point.

Christ suffered all the physical pain that any crucified man would endure. In addition, though, Jesus suffered Hell when even God forsook him. Jesus taught us to pray, "But deliver us from evil." The catechism says that this petition asks "that our Father in heaven would rescue us from every evil of body and soul, possessions and reputation, and finally, when our last hour comes, give us a blessed end, and graciously take us from this valley of sorrow to Himself in heaven" (SC, Seventh Petition). We can pray that because Jesus took our place in Hell. He was forsaken so that we would never be forsaken.

It is odd to see the degree of sentimentality that has become attached to the death of Christ. People try to sanitize his death. We don't like to think of what our sins cost Christ. We prefer to think of the crucifixion less and move on to the resurrection quickly but without the crucifixion and damnation, the resurrection is meaningless. What good is proof of our redemption if we ignore the redemption itself? When we pray "deliver us from evil," we are remembering a brutal, grotesque scene of our Lord and Savior

suffering not only an immensely painful death, but damnation. That's how we were delivered. It was not a pious little sentiment. It was blood and sweat and tears pouring out of his broken body as he sat alone in Hell. Spend some time tonight contemplating that horrifying tableau.

Evil is cold. Evil is nasty. Evil is disgusting. Evil is not to be taken lightly. Evil is everything that draws us away from God and nowhere was evil better described than in the death and damnation of Jesus Christ. Damnation is that to which all evil draws us. Every evil, no matter how small it may seem, has the same goal. That is from what we have been delivered. While we must still pass through death, you and I will never be forsaken. And this is not because God just decided to let our sin go. He is not an over-indulgent grandpa who winks at our sin. He is a perfectly just judge who demands perfection and must punish imperfection. God does not understand your sin. He is repulsed by it. God cannot overlook your sin because he is just and demands death for sin.

What we celebrate tonight is not a happy occasion. It is good, because it benefits us, but not happy. Tonight we are ashamed. How can we sin so greatly, especially when we know the cost? How can we be so flippant when Jesus was feeling the pain and the

agony? We stand before the cross tonight in awe of the love he has for us that he would deliver us from such evil.

Christ has transformed the coldest, hardest reality into the brightest and most blessed one. By his death he destroyed death, and he has "brought life and immortality to light through the gospel" (2 Tim 1:10). He has brought you into this new creation by the power of his Word. Jesus himself taught us to pray the Lord's Prayer, including its culminating petition. Because of him and his work, "Deliver us from evil" is not just a request, but a proclamation of the death and damnation of the one who insures our eternal life in paradise, our final and complete deliverance from all evil.