

THE CHRISTIAN'S PRAYER LIFE – 4

February 22, 2012

“After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as *it is* in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen” (Mt. 6:9-13).

“And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.” We learn from the Lord’s model prayer the seriousness of temptation in an academic way. This is the case so we may be prepared when we encounter temptation in a more personal way. The Lord is not indicating that God, in some way, will entice or tempt man to sin. James said, “Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man” (Js. 1:13).

The word “tempt” is used in two different ways in the Bible. We are to understand that when Satan “tempts” us he is trying to draw us away into sin and out of fellowship with God (Mt. 4:1-11), but the word “tempt” also means to be tried or tested. God does allow us to be placed in situations that will try or test our faith, but those situations only make us stronger if we remain steadfast. James acknowledged the difference between the two when he wrote, “My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing *this*, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have *her* perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing” (Js. 1:1-4). He would continue to write, “Blessed *is* the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him” (Js. 2:12).

We are to petition the Father in prayer that we will not to be led into the temptations of sin, which the world offers to each of us. However, when we follow after Christ, we will not be led in the direction of sin but in the direction of heaven. Paul admonished Timothy, “Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart” (2 Tim. 2:22). Notice, though, that it was not good enough to simply distance himself from sin. Paul told Timothy to pursue after righteousness! God will not allow Satan to tempt us beyond what we are able to resist. Paul told the Corinthian brethren, “There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God *is* faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear *it*” (1 Cor. 10:13). However, in order for us to be able to withstand, James said we were to “Resist the devil, and he will flee from you” (Js. 4:7).

“For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.” The Lord ends His model prayer by honoring the Father again and giving praise where it is due. We must keep in mind at all times that, as Christians, we are members of His kingdom, we exist only by His power, and we should always give glory to Him in all things.

Like Christ, we should always show honor and respect to the Father when we offer our prayers to Him. However, we need to understand that showing respect does not mean we have to use the same language the King James translators used, meaning the old English words that we have come to know and love. It is not more respectful to refer to the Father as “Thee,” “Thou,” or “Thine” as opposed to “Him,” “You,” or “Yours.” We come to understand this when we read the account of Christ being tempted in the wilderness. Matthew records the last statement of Christ to Satan saying, “Get **thee**

hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and **him** only shalt thou serve” (Mt. 4:10; emphasis mine). I don’t think any of us would insinuate that the Lord of heaven and earth was showing respect to Satan by referring to him as “thee” while referring to God as “him.” While it is proper to use the language we read in the King James, it is just as appropriate to use our modern language, as well.

There are two changes necessary for us today as we use this prayer as an example. We can no longer pray for the kingdom to come, because it has already come. John acknowledged the existence of the kingdom when he said, “I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ” (Rev. 1:9). We are also to pray through our Lord, Who is our Mediator, to the Father of heaven (Jn. 16:24; 1 Tim. 2:5).

I hope this study on the Lord’s Model Prayer has been beneficial to all of us as we strive to always improve our prayer life as we commune with God. We need to always petition the Father to bless our efforts as we labor in His vineyard and as we endeavor to live faithfully to Him and for Him.