

Sermon preached by Canon Jim Holbeck at the 6pm Healing Service on Wed 8<sup>th</sup> March 2006

Readings: Mat 6:13, 1 Pet 5:1-11. Topic: "Deliver us from evil"

*Mat 6:13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil [the evil one].*

The words fit in with the previous phrase, "Lead us not into temptation". In other words, we are praying that God would not allow us to get into situations where He knows it would be difficult for us to resist temptation.

We are also praying that in every situation God would deliver us from the power of the evil one, Satan. We look at the references to the "evil one" in the New Testament, and see why we need to pray, "Deliver us from the evil one."

## 1. THE EVIL ONE HAS POWER IN THIS WORLD

The evil one has tremendous power and the peoples of the world are under his power. Jesus spoke of Satan or the Devil or the evil one as *the ruler of this world* controlling the world, eg., in (*John 12:31, John 14:30 ... the ruler of this world is coming. He has no power over me; John 16:11 ... the ruler of this world has been condemned.*

Paul wrote of the evil one as *the ruler of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work among those who are disobedient.* Eph 2:2. He also wrote, *2 Cor 4: 3 And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled only to those who are perishing. 4 In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.*

John wrote in *1 John 5:19, "We know that ... the whole world is under the control of the evil one."*

We may not realise the power Satan has over individuals. In many recent atrocities, the people who committed them had been previously engaged in the occult or in witchcraft or satanic worship. They began with curiosity, but became obsessed with the powers they were looking into and were overcome by those powers. Others began with a quest for greater power, and came under the power of the evil they were investigating.

## 2. THE EVIL ONE SEEKS TO HAVE POWER IN OUR OWN LIVES

**i. The danger of engaging in wrong thinking which leads to wrong speech.** Paul wrote in **Eph 4:25-31,**

*25 Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbour, for we are members one of another. 26 Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, 27 and give no opportunity to the devil. ... 29 Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear. 30 And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. 31 Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamour and slander be put away from you, along with all malice.* We can give the evil one a foothold in our lives by entertaining angry thoughts and becoming guilty of harbouring *bitterness ... wrath... anger... clamour... slander... malice.* 4:31. Those attitudes can impact strongly on our physical and emotional health.

**ii. Satan has the power to afflict humans with illness.** Jesus once spoke of a woman who had been crippled up with a spirit of infirmity for 18 years, "*Ought not this woman whom Satan has bound for 18 years be loosed from this bond?*" (**Luke 13:16**). Satan was behind her particular sickness, and Jesus broke the power that had bound her, and healed her and set her free.

**iii. Our fear can bring us under his control.** The writer to the Hebrews wrote of Jesus, that He came to "*deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong bondage.*" (**Heb 2:14-15.**) The more we fear death the more power we give to the evil one whom Jesus said "*comes only to steal and kill and destroy... 1 Jn 10:10.* Our fear can help bring on the thing we fear. We can have a "negative faith" that strongly expects the worst to happen. The Cancer Council once had a wise saying, "*Cancer is a word, not a sentence.*" (Cancer is a word used to describe a condition. It is not a sentence of death) Jesus became a human to die as a human, and rose from the dead to show that death has lost its power.

We can have the assurance while we live in this world, that nothing, not even death, can separate us from the love of God. Rom 8:38-39 *38 For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, 39 nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

**iv. We need to receive and absorb God's word into our hearts and minds.**

Jesus taught in the parable of the sower that as the seed (the word of God) is preached it falls on different kinds of soil. It meets with different receptions in different people. That which falls on the path (the hard heart) doesn't penetrate. Jesus said *"Listen then to what the parable of the sower means: 19 When anyone hears the message about the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is the seed sown along the path.* If we hear the word but don't act on it Satan can prevent it bringing forth fruit in our lives. Mt 13:18-19. We must be readers and doers of God's word to walk in victory.

**v. He may use human instruments to achieve his evil purposes.**

People are meant to love one another. If they don't they can become instruments of the devil to do evil to other people. We see how the evil one used Cain (*who belonged to the evil one*) to murder his brother Abel.

He also put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot to betray Jesus and at the Passover meal we read that after Jesus had given Judas the morsel of bread, *Satan entered into Judas, and he went out, and "it was night".* **John 13:27-30.** The evil one used Judas to try to get rid of Jesus.

Let's never forget that the evil one has tremendous power and that the peoples of the world are under his power.

It's not just human reasoning that's going to change the world. It has to be the power of God as people hear about Jesus and respond to Him and are transformed into the likeness of Christ. Then they can be motivated by love and not by hate and have victory over harmful negative emotions.

### 3. WE CAN HAVE PROTECTION FROM THE EVIL ONE

On the one hand we admit that Satan has power over the peoples of this world. But on the other hand his power is limited. You and I as the Lord's people can know the Lord's protection. Jesus specifically prayed in one of His final prayers to His Father before His death, *"My prayer is not that You take them (His disciples) out of the world but that You protect them from the evil one."* **Jn 17:15.** How would that happen? By knowing and obeying the truth of the word of God. Jn 17:16-17. *They do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world. Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth.*

- Paul encouraged the Thessalonians believers *But the Lord is faithful, and he will strengthen and protect you from the evil one."* **2 Thess 3:3.**
- John wrote the same truth in **1 Jn 5:18**, *"(Jesus) the one who was born of God keeps him safe, and the evil one cannot harm him."*
- All of us even as Christians are under attack from the powers of darkness, but God gives us the weapons to resist him. Paul wrote of the spiritual armour we can put on to resist evil. **Eph 6:16**, *"In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one."*
- Satan will continue to try to control our lives, but our shield of faith can quench the fiery darts he sends our way especially through accusations.

### 4. WE CAN HAVE VICTORY THROUGH JESUS' VICTORY

It's great to know that we can be protected by the Lord. But it's even a greater joy to realise that we can actually have some victories when we come under attack.

- John was able to write to new Christians, *"I write to you, young men, because you have overcome the evil one."* How had they overcome him? He gives the answer, .. *I write to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God lives in you, and you have overcome the evil one."* They had discovered the power of His word in their everyday lives. 1 Jn 2:13-14.

One of the illustrations I've heard about the limited power of the evil one, was used in association with **1 Pet 5:8**, *"Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion seeking some one to devour."* It sees Satan as being chained to a pole in the ground, and able to move within a limited range. He may make lots of fearful noise to frighten us, but if we don't wander into the limited area in which he can attack us, we will be free. If we deliberately or even unconsciously enter into forbidden territory, he will have a go at us. He is bound, but he has still limited power. Those forbidden areas are the areas of the occult, witchcraft, immorality, elements of the New Age and prolonged deliberate harbouring of negative emotions such as anger and unforgiveness.

We can walk in victory but it's not through our own wisdom or strength. It's through the wisdom God gives us as we learn to recognise evil and how to overcome it by His word. How can victory be ours against evil?

### **Victory IS available through what Christ has done for us on the cross**

Paul expressed that in **Col 2:14**, where he wrote that on the cross Jesus *"... disarmed the principalities and powers and made a public example of them, triumphing over them in Him."* Or in the majestic words of JB Phillips *"Having drawn the sting of all the powers ranged against Him, He exposed them, shattered, empty and defeated, in His glorious triumphant act."* Jesus has defeated all the powers of darkness and as Helmut Thielicke wrote, *"All our struggles are only rear-guard battles and mop-up actions, all of which are under the sign of that victory which the Lord achieved for us all."* Jesus won the victory. We do the small mopping up operations as we share His victory.

### **Victory and more healing become available to us as we:-**

**a).** We accept Jesus Christ into our lives as our Saviour from sin.

**b).** We give our lives completely to God so that Christ becomes the Lord and Master of every part.

**c).** We renounce any evil we have been involved in either deliberately or unconsciously. Renouncing means rejecting or giving up which is evil. We want no lingering effect that the evil one has had on our lives.

It's what you promise to do in a Baptism service when you are asked *"Do you renounce the devil and all his works, the empty display and false values of the world and the sinful desires of the flesh so that you will not follow or be led by them."* You declare *"I renounce them all"*.

**d).** We ask God to fill us with His Holy Spirit as God commanded us through St Paul in Eph 5: 18 *And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit.* We can be guided and empowered by God's Holy Spirit to live for Him.

**e).** As we continue to pray with confidence and in humility Mat 6:13 *And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.*