

Wednesday, July 15, 2020

And deliver us from evil

- Pastor Hank French

And deliver us from evil (Matthew 6:13).

The Lord will rescue me from every evil attack and save me for his heavenly kingdom. To him be the glory forever and ever. Amen (2 Timothy 4:18).

When Jesus taught this prayer, his followers would have had no trouble accepting the idea of evil personified in the Devil and his legions of demons. The Greek word which translates into English as evil can also be translated as “the evil one.” In the minds of Jesus’ followers, prayer to be delivered from the “evil one” would have made perfect sense.

The writer of Ephesians expressed a commonly held belief when he declared: “For our struggle is not against enemies of blood and flesh, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places” (Ephesians 6:12).

In our day and age, we may be less inclined to personify evil, but there are very few who would deny the existence of evil. The evidence is too overwhelming. We may not see the “powers of this present darkness” as demonic beings, but we know that there are indeed powers that rage against the rule of God, powers that seem to take “possession” of people and place them in conflict with the will of God. It happens even to those of us who pray for the will of God to be done!

Racism, sexism, ageism, classism, nationalism, homophobia, xenophobia—every form of discrimination, bigotry, prejudice, hatred—are among the suprapersonal powers of evil that turn God’s good creation into a human wasteland of unnecessary suffering. The powers that rage against the rule and will of God build dividing walls that separate individuals, groups, communities, nations.

Those who pray to be delivered from evil, pray for the grace to say “No!” to walls that divide, knowing that Christ is about the breaking down of any and all dividing walls (Ephesians 2:14). As Paul declared: “There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus” (Galatians 3:28).

When we pray to be delivered from evil, we pray for the grace to “not be overcome by evil” and the grace to “overcome evil with good” (Romans 12:21). In other words, for the grace to follow Jesus in the way of God.

Prayer: Righteous God, deliver us from evil this day and every day that our lives may witness to your goodness. Amen.