**Deliver Us From Evil**

***Matthew 6: 9****After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. 10 Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. 11 Give us this day our daily bread. 12 And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. 13 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.*

There is a word in this text that we tend to shy away from. We shy away from it because ***as it is used here*** it messes with our idea of reality, it challenges what is the accepted belief about human reality. That word is found in verse 13…***evil***

Our problem is not in believing that evil acts take place. That is self evident and undeniable. We are not challenged to believe that evil acts take place. There is too much evidence to the contrary in our world.

There are too many news stories violence on the globe..

We hear about rape too often…

We understand the need for locked doors and alarms all too well…

We know evil acts happen. Where we struggle is in believing in evil as an entity that works on us and in us. The fundamental, prevailing belief in the industrialized world is that evil is a product and result of our actions. It is believed that evil only exists as the results of the acts of men. In other words, the only time evil exists is when humanity causes it to be so…

There is an evil that men do… But Jesus did not tell us to pray that we would not commit evil. We are commanded to not commit evil, think evil thoughts, etc… But in the Lords prayer He did not tell us to pray so that evil would not result from our actions. The instruction was very specific….we are to pray….*”deliver us from evil”.* There is an evil that is the **product** of what we do and there is an evil that is a **predator** that preys on us. There is an evil that comes from what we do and there is an evil that comes seeking us.

Deliver us…implies it is predatory.

Deliver us…implies it will ensnare and entrap us.

Deliver us…lets us know that given the right opportunity evil will seize us, entrap us, bind us, enslave us, and destroy us.

Hence the admonition, don’t just think of evil as something that is the result of our wicked actions. There is an entity called evil. There is a reality of evil around us that works on us and in us.

***Psalm 34:21*** – Evil shall slay them…

***Proverbs 13:21*** – Evil pursues sinners…Stalks the seemingly willing…

***Romans 7:21*** – Paul said, evil is present with me… Evil, a presence, is with me..

***John 17:15 –*** Keep them from the evil….not from doing evil…from the evil.

***Ephesians 5:16 –*** The days are evil. The Evil fills the very days you live in.

In John 17 and Ephesians 5 the word Evil is used in the nominative case. Meaning it is identified as an entity. There are evil acts and there is Evil, capitol E, at loose in the world.

That is why a fundamental element of our prayers, when we pray, whenever we pray, has to be *deliver us from evil.* We are loathe to call it for what it is, and it is not politically correct, and I am sure to some it seems somewhat unenlightened to say there is Evil, but it is high time we develop the moral guts to point at certain things and say, *That is not just an evil act committed because someone was misguided or ignorant. THAT IS EVIL AT WORK.* And not only do we need to identify it, we need to pray to be delivered from it.

Atheism is enjoying a bit of a revival right now. Leading intellectuals are espousing it as a mainline philosophy. One of the side effects is this, if you do not believe there is a God, a being that is all supernatural and all good, then you have no need to believe in a devil, a being that is supernatural and all bad. If you are an atheist there is no ultimate good outside of man and there is no ultimate bad outside of man. We are all reduced to animals and our behavior is the product of environment and genetics.

There is a God that can cause the wicked to be righteous.

There is an Evil that can cause men to be wicked.

When six teen aged girls lure another girl into their home and brutally beat her for the purpose of posting it online, that is an evil act, but that is also evil working in and through those kids. I know they are misunderstood, and their environment was probably bad, and all the usual psycho-babble. It is evil preying on them, working through them, using them, and they not only need to be punished for their crimes, they need to be delivered from evil.

When young people shoot up schools, that is not a societal problem, that is not a political problem, that is a devil problem. That is evil at work in them.

When an entire new genre of movies emerges, not suspense, not even horror. But movies that are just set ups to depict one scene of torture after another, and people sit there and are entertained by it there is evil at work in the heart of a culture.

When there are tourist agencies that specialize in organizing trips to certain parts of Asia where their clients can indulge their deviancy with little children, that is evil actions by men and evil preying on and destroying innocence.

We want to extend nothing more than grace and compassion to any woman who has ever had an abortion. We believe that Jesus loves you, He grieves with you, and wants to forgive and heal you. But make no mistake about it. When we turn the murder of infants into an industry, when we are taking lives for no other reason than convenience, that is evil. That is Evil working just as real as if a hungry Bengal tiger were dropped into the nursery at the local hospital.

There is a generation of people somehow full of rage, alienated, violent and cruel…

Romans 1 says that they are *“implacable and unmerciful and without natural affection.”* What do those words mean? Watch the video of one girl crying, refusing to fight back, and being beaten and you will know. Watch the video footage of maniacal religious zealots beheading a journalist and you will know what that means. Do a google search on human trafficking and read about the children of certain Asian countries I just mentioned and what is done to them. These are not just evil acts, this is the result of evil in the world, working in the world, preying, stalking, entrapping, destroying and someone needs to realize there is an enemy out there and name the enemy. AND TO PRAY AGAINST THE ENEMY!!! DELIVER US FROM EVIL.

Racism is not just an evil result of men’s actions, it is the result of evil working in the world and in men’s hearts.

The exploitation of women to serve men’s lust…

The starvation of millions while food rots in warehouses…

Don’t get me wrong, I am not excusing bad behavior. This is not a sophisticated version of *“the devil made me do it”.*

***Romans 14:12 –*** *Everyone…give account…for himself.*

You will answer for you. But I also want you to understand there is something working in the world. And part of our job is to pray against it. And fight against it. Christianity has been so reduced down until all it is just about us getting healed, and blessed, and made happy, and made wealthy, and Jesus taking care of us and keeping all bad from us. I was recently asked to preach at a church called the Happy Blessing Joyful Church. I don’t think I am they guy to preach there. I believe in joy and blessing and happiness. But you better get your head out of the sand and understand there is a FIGHT happening and we are part of it. We are so hung up on being Sheep that we forget there is another part of our identity in Christ, we are also Soldiers. There is a reason He told us to pray….*deliver us from Evil.*

We are so busy treating the symptoms we have overlooked the disease. They will set up all kinds of treatment for the kids that beat the girl. Maybe even bring some of their anti-social behavior down to a manageable level. But seething under it all is the rot of evil. We will try all kinds of diplomacy and try to understand the religious zealots and try to placate them with concessions. Can I say it since it appears no one else will. When you want to beat someone for entertainment evil is at work. When religion makes people want to murder and kill evil is at work. It is the face of Evil and we are to pray to be delivered from it.

We need to pray for our kids to be delivered from the predacious hunger Evil has for innocence and purity.

We need to pray for our brothers to be delivered from the soul consuming lust that Evil has spread like a wild fire through our culture.

We need to pray for sisters to be delivered from the Evil that turns young girls into bulimics and causes women to doubt their worth and value.

We need to pray for young people to be delivered from the callousness and indifference toward suffering that Evil would sow in their heart.

We need to pray for married couples that they be delivered from the evil that rips homes apart.

I don’t come to you with a sermon today, I come with a message God placed in my spirit. It is time for every church to either become a force praying against and overcoming Evil or they need to shut their doors and quit calling themselves a church of the living God.

Maybe you don’t see it in your sheltered world you have constructed. Maybe you have the ability to shield yourself from the harsher realities of life. Don’t think that gives you a pass.

*“Shall we be carried away on flowery beds of ease; while other fight to win the prize and sail through bloody seas?”*

Mordecai told Esther, don’t think you can sit in the palace secluded while your people are destroyed and it not touch you. Don’t you understand the whole reason you are in the palace to begin with is for our salvation?

I know some of you think I am maybe making too big a deal of this. Lets just come, have nice church. Preach a cool little sermon and head to the house. Do you understand there is an all out war going on? Let me point out two things for you.

In  ***John 17***  when Jesus prayed for His disciples He only prayed requested two specific things for them. He did not pray for their provision, their healing, that they have a greater anointing, that they reap a great harvest, that they prosper. He prayed that they be one, and that they be kept from the Evil.

Still think I am making too much of this?

In Genesis, between Genesis 1 and Genesis 6 humanity actually only spans 3 generations. In ***Genesis 1*** earth and human existence were a perfect paradise. In less than three generations this is what God said…

***Genesis 6:15*** *Their hearts are on evil continually.*

And in all the world there was only one righteous man, Noah.

Left unchecked evil is a malignancy that spreads with a voraciousness like the world has never seen.