

## **But deliver us from evil**

### **Introduction:**

When some people hear about evil and sin, they are overwhelmed. Instead of focusing on God, who is greater than evil and can deliver from evil, they fear the evil. They fear they cannot measure up to God's standards and must succumb to evil. Let us not forget that one person with God is always stronger than any force of evil. God is there to help us, deliver us and give us victory over sin and over evil. If you are overwhelmed, tell him about it, share it with him, he understands. He can and wants to help you. We are dealing with a defeated foe. Satan has been defeated. Evil is like darkness. When the light of God comes, darkness must vanish.

The Greek expression for evil used here in Matthew 6:13 is **τοῦ πονηροῦ**. It is in the genitive case. It can mean evil or evil one. In Matthew 13:49 and Matthew 22:10 this word is used to refer to wicked people. In Ephesians 6:16 and Thess. 3:3, the term "evil one" refers to the enemy of our souls. In 2 John 11, the word is an adjective describing evil deeds.

### **1. Sin is evil. (God delivers from sin.)**

It has been said that the greatest evil is sin. Therefore we need to be delivered from sin. Indeed, that is why Jesus came into this world. In Matthew 1:21 we read that **"you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins."**

Sin and evil are connected. In Genesis 50:17 we read: **"please forgive the trespass of your brothers and their sin; for they did evil to you."** 1 Kings 15:26 also verifies that that sinning is doing evil in the sight of the Lord.

Proverbs 14:34 tells us that **"Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people."** Martin Luther translated this verse to read, **"Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is the destruction of the people."**

One reason it is imperative to be delivered from sin and evil is shown by the words of Jesus, who said,

**Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth—those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation (John 5:28-29).**

And how we can be delivered from the evil of sin is clearly shown in 1 John 1:9.

**If we confess our sins, he (God) is righteous and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.**

As children of God we have already been delivered from the power of darkness, since we read in Colossians that

**He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love (Colossians 1:13).**

Non-Christians can pray for deliverance from sin and find forgiveness. As Christians, we can also pray, "deliver us from evil," in order to be kept safe from its implications. Notice that in the Lord's prayer, right before "**deliver us from evil**" come the words, "**Lead us not into temptation.**" It is in severe temptations that the danger of falling into sin is heightened. Thus once we are saved, one way to be delivered from evil is to be delivered from temptations that threaten to overwhelm us. Indeed, Peter says "**the Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations**" (2 Peter 2:9).

## 2. The power of sin. (God delivers from the power of sin.)

Transgressing the law of God is sin. Transgressing is an action verb. Actions against God are sins. However, sin is more than just an act. Sin is a power. Sin is also bondage. This is made clear in Romans 7.

**If, then, I do what I will not to do, I agree with the law that it is good. But now, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me ... But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members (Romans 7:16, 17, 23, 24).**

We need to be delivered from the power of sin and from its bondage.

Under the power of sin we hear the cry, recorded in Romans 7:24: "**O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?**" And the answer is given in the next verse: "**I thank God—through Jesus Christ our Lord!**" (Romans 7:25).

Often people feel helpless. They feel the standard of righteous living is too high. They cannot live up to it. However, they forget that it is not their own strength they need to rely on. Paul says that he is able to do all things through Christ that strengthens him. Therefore, let us focus on Christ's power and not on our weaknesses.

Praise God that victory is possible. Do not rely on your own strength. Our God is able (Jude 24). It is the blood of the Lord Jesus that has the power to redeem. John swrites, "**the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin**" (1 John 1:7b).

## 3. The Devil and the Powers of Darkness. (He delivers from the evil one and the power of darkness.)

Deliver us from the evil one implies being delivered from the enemy of our souls. We are warned to "**Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour**" (1 Peter 5:8). God can deliver us

from this evil one. God can give us the victory. We have the armour of God to fight off the wiles of the evil one.

**Put on the whole armour of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places (Ephesians 6:11-12).**

When my son-in-law worked in India, he was required to travel through an uncivilized part of the country lying in the Northwestern part of India. There were poisonous snakes, lions, and many dangers lurking on a four hour footpath that led to a remote village. Instead of fearing the evil, he went with a guide who knew the area well, and arrived without a problem. He would never have gone this way alone. It is too dangerous, but with a guide he could feel secure. Likewise, God is our guide since he can deliver from the wiles of the devil and protect us so that we can stand, even in the day of trouble.

The provisions God has put in place for us to be delivered from the evil one are evident in the verses immediately following the Bible passage just quoted.

**Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance (Ephesians 6:14-18a)**

Jesus refers to the Power of Darkness in Luke 22.

**Then Jesus said to the chief priests, captains of the temple, and the elders who had come to Him, "Have you come out, as against a robber, with swords and clubs? When I was with you daily in the temple, you did not try to seize Me. But this is your hour, and the power of darkness." (Luke 22:52-53)**

On the cross Jesus conquered death and the powers of darkness. The devil has been defeated. The accuser has been cast down. We are fighting with a defeated foe. Let us not forget that. In Revelation 12:10-11 we read,

**Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, "Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death.**

Christ is on our side. Christ has all power. He said, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth" (Matthew 28:18).

Not only does Jesus have all power, but he gave power to his disciples. We read that **“He called His twelve disciples together and gave them power and authority over all demons, and to cure diseases” (Luke 9:1).**

We have seen that sin is the greatest of evils. We have also seen that we are confronted with the powers of darkness when we desire to live a life pleasing to God. So we can pray: Deliver us from evil as Jesus taught in the Lord’s prayer. God can deliver us and is willing to deliver us. Paul is emphatic when he says: **“For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace” (Romans 6:14).**

And Jesus himself says, **“Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed” (John 8:36).**

If we are born again and have become children of God. We have been delivered from the power of darkness. Colossians 1:13 was already quoted earlier **“[God] has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love”**

#### 4. The Bible also mentions Evil in other forms.

Besides the evil already discussed, the Bible also makes reference to evil in other forms. For example, greediness is a form of evil.

##### *a) Greed*

**For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows (1 Timothy 6:10).**

It is worth noting that it is not the money that is evil, but the love of money which is the root of all kinds of evil. The problem is the coveting or the desiring of what you do not have or what you should not have. Your desire is so great that you scheme ways to achieve it that are not right. Think of Judas Iscariot, who for the love of money denied the Lord. This issue is addressed by the tenth commandment.

**You shall not covet your neighbor’s house; you shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that is your neighbor’s (Exodus 20:17).**

1 Timothy 6:8-9 states, **“And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content. But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition.”**

Lead us not into temptation can also be applied to the desire to be rich. If we are delivered from the desire to be rich and are content with what we need, then we are delivered from this type of evil.

##### *b) James describes the tongue as evil*

Note the following verses from the book of James:

**But no man can tame the tongue. It is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison (James 3:8).**

**Even so the tongue is a little member and boasts great things. See how great a forest a little fire kindles! And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity (James 3:5-6).**

We need to be free from or delivered from an unruly tongue. Before passing on a story we may do well to first inquire a) Is it true; b) is it edifying; c) is it for the good? I once got a phone call asking me if I had heard what a preacher in a neighboring town had done? I asked the caller if she knew it to be true? She wasn't sure. Then I asked her if she had spoken to this preacher about this matter? No. Well, shouldn't she first talk to him about it? Then I asked her if it would be beneficial for me to know about this? If not, then perhaps she shouldn't even tell me. She quickly ended that telephone conversation.

**If anyone among you thinks he is religious, and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this one's religion is useless (James 1:26).**

A friend of mine told me that I was even more to be faulted than the lady who phoned me. He said that she was about to share something negative with one person, but I was sharing something negative about her with everyone. God looks at our motive. Some people talk negatively about others in order to boost their own egos and self-worth. By talking about the shortcomings of others, people may feel that they are better. However the Bible warns us that **"Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted" (Matthew 23:12).**

It is with the tongue that much untruth and half-truth is spread. All untruth, even the so-called white lies, are from the evil one. Jesus himself said:

**But I say to you, do not swear at all: But let your "Yes" be "Yes," and your "No," "No." For whatever is more than these is from the evil one (Matthew 5:34 & 37).**

And the Greek term Jesus uses in the verse just quoted is **τοῦ πονηροῦ**, which is the exact term also used in the Lord's prayer, "deliver us from evil" or "from the evil one".

The Bible does not distinguish between big lies and little lies or white lies. It treats all lies with utmost seriousness as can be seen in the following Bible verse:

**But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death (Revelation 21:8).**

Lord, deliver us from the horrible fate called the second death and deliver us from speaking lies.

5. Persecution, pain, death, and illness can be termed as evil.

We can also ask God to deliver us from these evils. Saul persecuted the church. When God told Ananias to go to meet Saul he answered, **“Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much harm he has done to Your saints in Jerusalem (Acts 9:13).**

In the German, Martin Luther translated this verse as, **“Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much evil he has done to Your saints in Jerusalem” (Acts 9:13).**

Paul was often delivered from death. **“But when Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks and laid them on the fire, a viper came out because of the heat, and fastened on his hand. But he shook off the creature into the fire and suffered no harm (Acts 28: 3 & 5).**

Again, Martin Luther translates this as, **“he shook off the creature into the fire and suffered no evil.**

We can say Paul was delivered from evil, although the Greek word used here is **κακός**, which can be translated as evil, bad, harm or wrong. In Lord's prayer however the word used is **πονηρός**, which implies wickedness or evil. Thus, being delivered from harm need not be the type of evil that was meant in the Lord's prayer.

Persecution, however, can be said to be wickedness. Often God also delivered Paul from the wicked, who sought his life. He writes:

**For we do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, of our trouble which came to us in Asia: that we were burdened beyond measure, above strength, so that we despaired even of life. Yes, we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves but in God who raises the dead, who delivered us from so great a death, and does deliver us; in whom we trust that He will still deliver us (2 Corinthians 1:8-10).**

6. Sinful habits are evil. (God delivers from sinful habits.)

Smoking is an evil habit. God can deliver from this addiction. I remember a good friend of mine who lived in Mexico and tried in vain to stop smoking. However, when he gave his life to Christ, and became a Christian, he never once more had the craving to smoke. God had delivered him from this evil.

Likewise, drinking can be called an evil. Here is what Proverbs has to say about it:

**Who has woe? Who has sorrow? Who has contentions? Who has complaints? Who has wounds without cause? Who has redness of eyes? Those who linger long at the wine, those who go in search of mixed wine. Do not look on the wine when it is red, when it sparkles in the cup, when it swirls around smoothly; at the last it bites like a serpent, and stings like a viper. Your eyes will see strange things, and your heart will utter perverse things. Yes, you**

**will be like one who lies down in the midst of the sea, or like one who lies at the top of the mast, saying: “They have struck me, but I was not hurt. They have beaten me, but I did not feel it. When shall I awake, that I may seek another drink?” (Proverbs 23: 29-35)**

Every sin is in itself evil. God can deliver us from all evil. He can deliver us from the evil one, who wishes us to be in bondage. We praise God that in Jesus Christ there is victory over evil. Indeed Paul writes to the Galatians that Jesus “**gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father**” (Galatians 1:4). Praise his holy name. Now when we pray: deliver us from evil, let us pray with the confidence that Paul expressed to Timothy when he said: **And the Lord will deliver me from every evil work (ἔργου πονηροῦ) and preserve me for His heavenly kingdom. To Him be glory forever and ever. Amen! (2 Timothy 4:18).**

### **Questions**

1. Who is the evil one?
2. What is one of the greatest evils?
3. What is sin?
4. Sins can refer to actions, what else can sin refer to?
5. What is the remedy for sin?
6. What is the relationship between money and evil?
7. How does James describe the tongue? Why?
8. What does the Bible say about telling lies?
9. What is the difference between κακός and πονηρός?
10. Give examples of the kind of bondage God can deliver from?