

# **Matthew 6:13 a, b -PRAYER FOR SPIRITUAL PROTECTION AND DELIVERANCE**

Joshua 7:1-6, 10-26; I Peter 5:6-11 and Heidelberg Catechism Question and Answer 127 from Lord's Day 52  
Sermon for the New Horizon U. R. C. of Scarborough--August 21, 2011

Brothers and Sisters in Christ. In this sermon we will consider that we request in prayer that God will protect us and deliver us from our spiritual enemies, until by God's grace we finally win the complete victory. We will have three main points: I. This Request Shows the Danger of Temptation. II. This Is a Request That God Will Not Allow Us to be Overcome by Temptation. III. This Is a Request That God Will Deliver Us From the Evil One.

## **Introduction:**

1. When King Solomon was a young man, God appeared to him in a dream by night.
2. God told Solomon to ask what God should give him.
3. Solomon asked God to give him an understanding mind to be able to govern God's people, so that he might discern ([be able to tell the difference] between good and evil.
4. God (Yahweh) was pleased with Solomon's request and blessed him with great wisdom.
5. Nobody who knew young King Solomon then would have thought it likely that when he was in his fifties, he would turn from serving Yahweh and instead worship before heathen idols.
6. Temptation which is constantly yielded to can bring about a person's spiritual ruin.
7. Our text says, "**And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.**"
8. **Heidelberg Catechism Question 127** asks. "**What does the sixth request [of the Lord's Prayer] mean? A. *And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil* means, **By ourselves we are too weak to hold our own even for a moment. And our sworn enemies 不共戴天之敌 --the devil, the world, and our own flesh-[our sinful nature]-never stop attacking us. And so, Lord, uphold us and make us strong with the strength of Your Holy Spirit, so that we may not go down to defeat in this spiritual struggle, but may firmly resist our enemies until we finally win the complete victory.**"**

## **I. This Request Shows the Danger of Temptation**

**A.** Boys and girls, what does it mean to tempt?

1. To **tempt** means to try to get a person to sin against God.
2. To tempt is the attack of the devil by which he tries to get us to commit sin against the triune God. To sin is to do something which God commands us not to do. Also, to sin is not to do what God commands us to do.
3. Jesus was teaching His disciples, and us, to pray that God will **not** lead us into temptation.
4. Whether we realize it or not, the devil is our deadly spiritual enemy.
5. Not only is the devil our enemy, but **our own sinful nature** ("our own flesh," as the catechism states it") keeps on attacking us also.
6. The apostle Paul wrote, "**For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells**" (**Romans 7:18a**).
7. In addition, the **world** attacks us. The world means human society which is hostile .有敌意 to God. The world is depraved [[morally bad], in opposition to God, and in spiritual ruin.
8. The Bible says, "**Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.**" (**I John 2:15**).

**B.** Thus, the devil tempts us directly himself, and he also uses the sinful world and our sinful nature in tempting us to sin against God.

1. Biblically, the world is under the power of the devil--within the limits set by God.
2. The devil is at the head of many wicked angels, and he and all his fellow wicked angels hate God. They not only hate God, but they hate all those who believe in the Lord Jesus.
3. The devil and his evil forces hate God's people, the true church.
4. That is why they constantly wage war against us.
5. The devil tries to keep us from repenting of our sins and believing in the Lord Jesus in the first place.
6. And then, once we do believe in the Lord Jesus, the devil tries to get us to stop believing in Jesus altogether. He tries to destroy our faith in the Lord Jesus.

**C.** Our text is a prayer, a request, that God will uphold and strengthen us because of the constant danger of temptation.

1. The devil is cunning ["skillful in deception" Webster's New World Dictionary] and sneaky. He tends to attack us by way of temptation when we least expect it.
2. Sometimes when people sin, they give the excuse: "The devil made me do it."
3. This excuse is not accurate. The devil (Satan) places temptation before us, but we have the choice of whether or not we will yield to (give in to) the temptation and thereby sin.

4. God's Word says, "Let no one say when he is tempted, 'I am tempted by God'; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone. But each person is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires, and enticed 被欲望所吸引."

5. Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin, and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death." (James 1:13-15).

6. "Entice" means "to attract by offering hope of reward or pleasure" (Webster's New World Dictionary).

7. Boys and girls, the process of temptation and being defeated by temptation comes about because of our desires.

8. Every day the devil tempts us--by means of the media [tv, newspapers, radio], by means of fellow employees, friends, family, classmates in school, neighbors, etc.

9. The danger of temptation is that we keep on giving in to sin to the point that our hearts become hardened against God and against His Word, the Bible.

10. Therefore, through the enablement of the Holy Spirit, each of us needs to be on daily guard against temptation.

## II. This Is a Request That God Will Not Allow Us to be Overcome by Temptation

A. We need to understand that God does not tempt anyone, as James wrote above.

1. Also, God is never the author or source of sin. Indeed, sin offends God.

2. God allows sin, but He does not promote sin.

3. We keep on needing the power of the Holy Spirit, Who enables us to detect, to be aware of, and to resist temptation.

4. This sixth request of the Lord's Prayer is an acknowledgment [recognition of the fact] of God's sovereignty, so that we cannot be overcome by temptation unless God Himself permits it.

5. Also, in this prayer we entreat [beg] our heavenly Father that we not be overcome by, defeated by, temptation.

**B. Why does God allow the believer in Christ to be exposed to temptation?**

1. God does so in order to try us, in order to see what is in our hearts. God knows clearly what is in our hearts, but in testing us God shows us what is in our hearts.

a. For example, Job was tested by his severe suffering. All ten of his children had been killed, and he suffered from painful boils all over his body.

b. Job was tempted to rebel and to turn away from God. However, the genuineness of his faith in and love for God was proved.

c. By temptation God tests our love for Him, our courage, our submissiveness to Him, our patience, our trust in Him, and our obedience.

2. Sometimes God allows us, who believe in the Lord Jesus for eternal life, to be tempted so that we may be kept from pride.

a. God resists pride, and in order that He may humble us, He allows us to be tempted and to fall into sin.

b. The Bible says, "Yes, all of you be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for 'God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble'" (1 Peter 5:5b, c). To be "clothed with" humility means that humility is like a piece of clothing which we tie onto our body. Humility becomes so much a part of our life that it is like clothing.

c. Oh, how strongly we must be on our guard against the sin of pride!

3. When we yield to temptation and sin against God, sometimes this can have a purifying, disciplining effect in our lives.

a. Have we noticed that sometimes we fall into sin in our area(s) of spiritual strength?

b. For example, Moses was the humblest person on earth, and yet he fell into sin in a moment of anger, self-importance, and pride. He struck the rock twice with his rod and denounced [publicly, strongly condemned] the Israelites as rebels. (Numbers 20:10, 11)

4. Sometimes our triune, covenant-keeping God allows us to fall into sin in order that He may teach us a deep lesson regarding our weakness and tendency to sin.

a. For example, maybe a Christian has a bad problem of being a gossip, and so God allows the Christian to stumble in his tendency to talk idly about others.

b. Maybe God allows the gossiping Christian to experience great embarrassment or humiliation because of what he/she said, so that he/she may learn to hate in his/her own life the sin of gossiping.

C. This prayer is an expression of hatred of sin in our own lives and a sincere desire to fight against sin.

1. How much do we hate sin in our own lives?

2. Only God can give us a hatred of sin in our own lives and a true desire to keep on fighting against sin.

3. Only God can give us hearts which are repentant when we sin against Him.

4. In addition, this request is a strong sense of our own weakness and helplessness. As the catechism answer says, "By ourselves we are too weak to hold our own [resist temptation] even for a moment."

D. Jesus also was tempted by the devil; He often was tempted by His spiritual enemy, but Jesus always was victorious over the devil.

1. Luke 4:13 says, "Now when the devil had ended every temptation, he departed from Him until an opportune 适宜的 [right for the purpose--Webster's New World Dictionary] time."

2. The devil did not give up. He kept on trying to get Jesus to sin against God. He knew that if He could succeed in getting

Jesus to sin even just once, then Jesus could not suffer and die on the cross in payment for the sins of all of God's elect.

3. Why not? Because only someone who was true God and at the same time truly human and truly righteous [sinless] could bear the weight of God's wrath against our sin, deliver us from our sins, and earn righteousness for us.

4. The devil knew that if he could cause Jesus to sin, then God's plan to save sinners from eternal death would be ruined.

5. Jesus never once sinned. How did Jesus successfully resist the devil? He did so by knowing, understanding, believing, using, and obeying God's written Word.

### **III. This Is a Request That God Will Deliver Us from the Evil One**

A. Boys and girls, "the evil one" is the devil, the tempter, Satan, the hater of our souls.

1. In this prayer we humbly admit that our victory over the evil one comes only from and through God.

2. We are engaged in spiritual warfare throughout our rapidly-passing earthly life.

3. As was stated earlier, our spiritual enemies are the devil and his fellow wicked angels, our sinful flesh, and the God-hating world.

4. Until our dying breath we have to fight against these enemies. They want to weaken our faith and to discourage us as Christians.

5. They try to cause us to think that God does not love us as Christians and that He is not concerned about us.

6. They try to cause us to think that God does not hear and answer prayer, and that He is not in control of what happens in this world.

B. But the Holy Spirit is able to strengthen us spiritually, which means strengthen us in our trust in and obedience to God.

1. He is able to place within us the continuing desire firmly to resist all our spiritual enemies who fight against us.

2. In the garden of Gethsemane, Jesus told Peter, James, and John, "**Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak**" (Matthew 26:41).

3. We believe in and belong to the crucified, risen Savior and Lord. He is able to keep us from sin and from being defeated by our enemies.

4. Furthermore, our all-wise God has provided us with spiritual protection, with spiritual armor, which is mentioned in **Ephesians 6:10, 11, 14-18: "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles [tricks] of the devil. Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod [put on] 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 [put out] 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 [continuing, patient effort] and supplication for all the saints--."**

5. We are to take up and to use this spiritual protection so that we may resist the devil and withstand 抵挡 him.

6. The Bible also says, "**Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you**" (James 4:7).

7. The devil runs away from us for a while when we resist him through the power of the Holy Spirit.

C. Scripture also says, "**No temptation has overtaken you except such is common to man; but God is faithful, Who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it**" (I Corinthians 10:13).

1. We need to pray that God will show us the way of escape from the temptation, so that we will not sin.

2. God is faithful to show us the way of escape from temptation, if we prayerfully seek that escape route.

3. Moreover, we ought not needlessly to expose ourselves to temptation.

D. Sometimes we as believers in the Lord Jesus Christ grow tired of fighting our spiritual enemies day after day, don't we?

1. Yes, we lose spiritual battles as sinful saints. We confess that we sin every day against our all-knowing, holy, triune God.

2. It is true that we lose some spiritual battles, but through God's grace to us in Christ, we are winning the spiritual war.

3. When we die in the Lord, or if Jesus returns while we are still living, our spiritual battles will be finished.

4. In the new Jerusalem there will be no spiritual attackers. We shall be forever safe.

5. The glorified church shall be perfect, without any sin whatsoever.

6. In future glory we will never sin against God again! God in His grace will give to us complete and eternal victory over sin.

7. We shall see God as He is and be in His glorious presence. This is part of our living and blessed hope in Jesus Christ!

8. But we must repent of our sins and believe in the crucified, risen, and ascended Lord Jesus in order to have eternal life and to possess this wonderful hope.

9. Do you believe in Jesus as Savior and Lord? If not, why not repent of your sins and believe in the Lord Jesus yet this very day?

10. Yes, for all true Christians--God shall deliver us forever from the evil one.

Amen.