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Series: The Sermon on the Mount
Message: God's Protection

Transcribed Message
June 17, 2018
Matthew 6:13

It was about six months ago that the New York Times had an article entitled "Lost in the Translation: The Pope Ponders an Update to the Lord's Prayer." The article reads like this: "Pope Francis said the common rendering of one line in the prayer, lead us not into temptation, is not a good translation from the ancient text. Do not let us fall into temptation, he suggested, might be better because God does not lead His people into temptation. Satan does. A father doesn't do that, the Pope said. He helps you get up right away. What induces into temptation is Satan." In essence, the article said the Pope said that the prayer from the Gospel of Matthew is asking God when Satan leads us into temptation, you please give me a hand. French Catholics have adopted such a linguistic change this week and the Pope suggested that the Italian Catholics might want to follow suit as well. Now as much as we might admire the pope's desire to have a clearer understanding of this sixth and final petition, the truth of the matter is the way that we have rendered it this morning, the way that we have read it is exactly what we find in the Greek text. We don't find in the Greek text don't let us fall or the rendering that the Pope has suggested, but rather the one that we have before us. Lead us not into temptation is the way the Scriptures are given to us. We come this morning to this sixth and final petition in the Lord's prayer. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

We want to see this morning that we live life every day in a spiritual minefield. We live life every day in a spiritual minefield. I think our prayer along with this one is Father, keep us safe from harm. So that as we think in terms of that prayer that I came across a few weeks ago, remember it fits in again almost to see some of the correspondence of these different requests. But this one certainly fits with the one where we are asking God to protect us from evil men and from evil ideas. I think that fits as we will see.

This is our final review of the Lord's prayer. This segment of the Sermon on the Mount Calvin reminds us that everything that we need to know by way of God's wisdom and truth about Himself and about ourselves is sufficient for all of life. I think you see that in the Lord's prayer. The first half of the prayer is really telling us everything we need to know about God. It's telling us about His name. We have prayed hallowed would be Your name. God, we want Your name to be glorified. We want Your name to be great. We want your name to be known. It is about God's program. We want His will to be done on earth as it most certainly is done in heaven. So we want His kingdom to be expanded. We want the gospel to be spread. We want God's kingdom to be furthered. And then it's about God's plan. We want for His will to be done in our lives as it is done in heaven. We want God's will to be obeyed. So there's basically everything we need to know about God. We learn about His name, about His greatness. We learn about this program. We learn about His plan.

What do we need to know about ourselves? It seems that the Lord's prayer would help us there as well. For we learn first of all that we are to be totally and completely dependent on God. Give us this day our daily bread really speaks to the fact that every necessity of life God is prepared to give to us and to meet those needs as only He can. We noted this matter just last week about forgiveness. What do we need to know about ourselves? We need to know that our sins have been forgiven. As we receive God's forgiveness, then we extend that forgiveness to each other. The whole matter of spiritual health is wrapped up in the capacity to receive God's forgiveness and the grace of God in our life and then extend that to each other.

Then finally, this morning we learn about the dangers, the dangers that are all around us. Lead us not into temptation. Help us to avoid them. Help us to run from them, to flee. So here in effect in the Lord's prayer, just as Calvin said, is everything that we need to know. Everything we need to know about God. Everything we need to know about ourselves can in a sense be summarized and captured. It's very similar to what God did in the giving of the 10 Commandments. The first four focus on God. The next six focus on ourselves. So you see something of that in the 10 Commandments. It is similar to what Jesus said to the rich young ruler in Matthew 22. Do you want to summarize all of life? You need to know God. You need to love Him with all your heart,

with all your soul, with all your mind, with all your strength. You need to love your neighbor as yourself, speaking to our own personal responsibilities to each other. So we have a very succinct picture of what it is that God would have us know about Him and about ourselves.

Now, before we look at this sixth petition this morning, I want to speak to something that a number of you have asked about. As we have said the Lord's prayer for these last weeks together, a number of you have noted that we have not said "for yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever, amen". Most of us probably as we memorized the Lord's prayer or as we said the Lord's prayer very often, that was a part of that. Why is that not the case? If you're using the English Standard Version, the pew Bible that's in front of you, or you're using the NIV Bible, somewhere in that addition there's a footnote and down at the bottom of the page it probably says something like some manuscripts have yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever, amen. If you have the new American Standard Bible, there's probably a bracketed part of that statement. If you have the King James Version it's just simply in there without any notation at all.

Why do we have these differences in these translations? We certainly can't offer anything by way of a dogmatic certainty, but it's possible that this ascription, this doxology was added by a scribe after the Scriptures originally were given, who in following the tradition of the early church may very well have added on to what Jesus said in this last petition. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. It would have been the common practice of the early church to respond back with a doxology. That was very common in Jewish circles. In the Old Testament, you see that in a number of prayers. In the Old Testament, there was a response back to God. What you don't have in the most ancient and what some would argue best manuscripts is you don't have that statement. Luke does not include it in his gospel, which is not definitive because there are some slight differences between the two, but Luke doesn't have it in his gospel. So as translators have worked through dealing with these different manuscripts, they've noted in the ESV and the NIV that this may have been something that was said back as an oral response and tradition of the early church. In any event, it's theologically correct. It is certainly true to ascribe to God that His is the kingdom and

the power and the glory forever, amen. The rest of the New Testament affirms that in any number of places, so it certainly is not wrong even if it was not part of the original giving of God's Word. Those are the kinds of things that textual critics and the dealings with Scripture face from time to time. You can see it's not a truth upon which a major doctrine rest because the rest of the New Testament affirms that for sure.

Let's look at this matter of constant vigilance as we look at the sixth petition. We want to begin by trying to understand what's going on in this final statement by way of temptation. Understanding temptation. Jesus tells us to pray lead us not into temptation. We begin by simply asking the question what does this mean? What does it mean when Jesus says lead us not into temptation? This is an important question to ask. It may seem very simple to begin here, but it's important because most of the time when you and I hear the word temptation we would think of something negative. You would think of something harmful. You would think of something to be avoided. You would think of some sin, some evil. That is certainly as it should be. John tells us in his gospel that there is this matter of the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the pride of life as he describes for us there what seems very much to be the world that we live in. all of that is true, but here's what we need to know. The Greek word for temptation, *peirasmos*, is translated in our English Bibles with three different words. We have one basic Greek root and one basic Greek word that the translators have given us the English translation. They have actually taken that same word and translated into three different English words. The context tells us which of those definitions we are dealing with. So for instance, in some places this word is translated "testing". In some places it's translated "trials". In some places, its translated, as we have it here in Matthew 6 as temptation.

Now let me show you what it looks like. You can turn over to the little book of James and in the very first chapter, you're familiar with these words I'm sure. James says in verse 2: "Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials..." *Peirasmos*. "... when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing." Here James is just talking about the trials and hardships of life. He is talking about the tests that come into our life. There is nothing

negative here. There's nothing to be avoided here. This is just simply an acknowledgment that we're dealing with some of the difficulties of life.

Genesis 22. We read that God tested Abraham. He brought a severe trial into his life. He said Abraham, take your son, your only son that you waited 100 years for. Take him to Mount Moriah and offer him on an alter to Me. And what was that? That was a hard, difficult test for Abraham to encounter. The book of Job would fall into that category. Job walking through life and as we get the curtain peeled back, we see God allows for Satan to bring numerous, hard, difficult trials into that man's life. That would be in keeping with what we're reading here. James tells us what our attitude is supposed to be towards these things. We don't like to hear it. I don't like to hear it. But James says count it all joy when these things come your way. So when these trials, these tests, James says, come in to your life, consider it a privilege. We're going to have to process that as we go along here, but that kind of gives us one way to understand. Stay in the book of James and drop down to verse 13: "Let no one say when he is tempted (*peirasmos* or a form of that word), I am being tempted (same word) by God, for God cannot be tempted (same word) with evil, and He Himself tempts no one. But each one is tempted..." So here we have the same Greek root word that we had back in verses 2, 3, and 4 where the context said these are the trials of life. But now we get to verse 13 we're talking about the very same thing that Jesus is addressing in Matthew chapter 6. Now it is an enticement to wrong. Now it is a solicitation to evil.

What does that raise in your mind by way of a question? Doesn't that cause us when we go back to Matthew's Gospel and we read what Jesus said lead us not into temptation it causes us to say what? What exactly is it that we are asking? What is it that we are praying in this sixth petition? Let's look. I want you to see three things that I think are going on when Jesus says lead us not into temptation.

The very first thing I want you to see I don't think He is telling us to ask God to do what He already said He wouldn't do. So when He says lead us not into temptation, I don't think Jesus means to be saying we're not to ask God what He already said He wouldn't do. What did He say he wouldn't do? James chapter 1 verse 13 says He will not lead us into temptation. I think we do enough asking God for things He's already said that He would do for us. Very often we ask God to please be with us. What is it that

God has promised us on numerous occasions? To be with us. To never leave us. To never forsake us. He said He'll be with you to the end of the age. We couldn't have a more wonderful, straightforward, clear promise from the mouth of our Lord and from the Spirit of God than to say to us one thing you don't ever have to worry about is I will never leave you. And yet repeatedly we find ourselves saying God, please be with us. Please be with us. So I think this is the same thing here. We may acknowledge what God has promised us. That's good. We should say God, thank You that You've told us You'll never leave us. Thank You that You are here right here with us. But to ask Him to give to us what He has promised to do? When I look at this, James says very clearly God would never tempt us. In fact, He says God can't be tempted with evil. Neither does He tempt any man with evil, so I don't think Jesus is saying to us here in light of that truth that now we have to ask God to not do what He said already that He wouldn't do.

Secondly, we're not going to ask God to withhold the potential blessing. What does that mean? We're not going to ask God to withhold a potential blessing. Some people just ignore what I said in that first point and they believe that we're supposed to ask Him not to lead us into temptation. That's the way they understand this. You can pull commentary after commentary off the shelf and it's almost as if that truth is not stated anywhere in the Bible and we're supposed to be asking God, please don't tempt us. God, please don't tempt us to sin when God's already said He would never do that. The other way that most commentators, if they don't take that position seemingly ignoring the teaching of Scripture, they say this is a statement that God would not test us, that God would not bring trials into our life. What's the problem with that? He has told us trials are the very thing that He brings into our life at times to grow us, to strengthen us. I doubt that Jesus is saying to us here pray for God to not bring any trials or tests into your life in light of the fact that God has said that He brings those things into our life for the very purpose of growing up in His grace.

So what is it then that we are asking? What's the nature of this request? I want to suggest to you that we're asking for God's protection in the midst of temptation. We're asking for God's protection in the midst of temptation. Dr. D.A. Carson suggests that what we have here is very likely a figure of speech. It's a figure of speech called a

litotes. It is when you say something negative but you mean something positive. A litotes says don't lead us into temptation. God, what we're saying in that regard is protect us. Keep us. Preserve us. So we state it in a negative way. There are a lot of examples of that. We say you won't be sorry. What do we mean when we say you won't be sorry? We mean you'll be glad. You'll be happy that you did that.

We might say that that's no small matter. I had to think of this idea of that's no small matter. I did not see this live yesterday during the U.S. Open, but you probably, if you have any interest in golf, heard about what Phil Mickelson did as his ball was about ready to roll off of a very slippery green. He literally ran. This has never happened in the history of professional golf, trust me. He ran over and actually hit his ball while it was moving and ready to roll off the green. He hit it back. This is like putt-putt stuff that you would see somewhere. This is the one of the world's greatest golfers. He literally runs over and hits his ball back towards the hole. He takes a 2-stroke penalty and the guys on the TV are in shock. They're like this is no small matter. This is huge, in other words. This is a big deal. A litotes. Jesus is saying God, protect us.

This being Father's Day I'm going to give a Father's Day pointer to the dads. As you take this idea of a litotes, I want you to avoid this circumstance. I don't think this is going to work. So you're sitting down today. The meal has been prepared and your wife says well honey, what do you think? And you say not too bad. Now that's a litotes, but that's not the way you want to apply that at that point, right? You don't want to apply a litotes at that point. You want to say straight out this is delicious. You may try to extricate yourself from that and say that was a litotes and what I really meant was that was really good. But be forewarned. I'm a professional. Don't try this stuff at home.

What are we saying? This is what we're saying. We're saying Father, don't let Satan ambush me. Father, protect me in the midst of the temptations of life. If temptation presents itself, Father, I pray that the desire of my heart would not be there to move towards that temptation. Father, if the temptation and desire is there, I pray that You will remove that temptation. I think that's what Jesus is saying to us here. He is saying lead me away from temptation. In fact, lead me into righteousness.

There is a neat little book I just put back there on the book table. *What would Jesus Pray?* it's a little takeoff of the Lord's prayer. I want to share what I read this

morning on this particular point. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. Lead me onward. Steer me clear from what has ruined me. That's sin, right? I don't want to dare the devil to undo me. I'm not as strong as I think. I'll fall if you don't help me. Give my friends a get away from Satan's hypnotic grip. Give us a fighting chance to be free and to walk with You. That's what we're praying. God is not going to lead us into temptation. He has told us He will not do that. In the midst of the trials of life, which sometimes become a place of temptation, we're calling out to God and we're saying God, protect me. Keep me. Move me away from that danger that might be right before me.

What do we know about temptation? Let's look at that secondly. Temptation is a part of life. Temptation is a part of life. It's not sin to be tempted. If you encounter temptation, and if what we said at the beginning is that we live life in the spiritual minefield, it's there. That's the reality. It's every day, everywhere we turn, everywhere we look. We have this unending amount of opportunities that are before us. It's like when we were in school. The teacher gave a quiz every class. In every class you knew that professor was going to give a quiz. And in another class, you had a professor or teacher who gave a pop quiz. Totally unexpected. Temptation is not a pop quiz. Temptation is around us every day everywhere. That's why we pray this sixth petition. Father, keep me awake and alert and aware. Luther is the one who said you can't keep birds from flying overhead, but you can keep them from building a nest in your hair. Temptation is part of life.

Secondly, temptation follows a consistent pattern. Temptation follows a consistent pattern. We spoke of John's statement in 1 John chapter 2 where John talked about the desires of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life. He talks about the different avenues by which temptation comes to us. It comes through the lust of the flesh. Fleshly, lusty desires. It comes through the eye gate. That is why Job said God, I want to covenant with You not to look upon a woman in an inappropriate way. That was Job's heart. He knew that the lust of the eyes invited into his soul things that he should not be dealing with and giving time to. The pride of life. What is the pride of life? I think it's the mental attitude sins that plague us at times. Sins of the heart and sins of the mind. So very often what Satan does is he takes good legitimate things and he

twists them for his own evil purposes. He takes virtues and he turns them into vices. We live in a world in which we as children of God are to be striving after the virtues of grace and of righteousness, and at the same time the enemy in this consistent pattern is taking those same things very often and twisting them for his own purposes.

God has given to humanity the gift of sexuality within the context of marriage between a man and a woman. What a beautiful gift that God has given to be enjoyed. And yet what do we see in our sexualized world? A virtue, a gift that God has given has become so corrupted that at times we don't even recognize its beauty anymore. Food. Food is a gift from God. It's hard to know anymore whether we live to eat or we eat to live. Food just seems to be an idol in the hearts of so many people. Seriously. This is the thing we look forward to almost more than anything else in any given day. Work. The virtue of work. Satan takes that which is good and he corrupts our heart by driving us away from our family, away from our responsibilities and other areas of life, and we become consumed with something that God gave that we should have, as we saw a few weeks ago in Ephesians, to share with those who have needs, the very needs that God has given us. Rest. Money. Recreation. Just go down the list of gifts that God gives to us in life. Think of how it is that the enemy, by tempting us to twist these things, changes the perspective that God would have us have.

Temptation flourishes on one thing. temptation flourishes on deceptive thinking. that is exactly the work of the enemy. James chapter 1 verse 16. very short and to the point. "do not be deceived, my beloved brethren. Do you know how it is that Satan works in our lives? Do you know how it is that he tempts us in any and all of these areas? Do you know how it is that he is successful? He is successful in only one way. Only when we are deceived in our thinking. Only when we yield to the deception that he brings before us. Jesus tells us that Satan is a liar and a deceiver from the beginning. He tells us to avoid the deceptions of Satan and of this world. Satan seeks to convince us that going in the opposite way that God has designed for us is somehow going to be better for us. That's the deception that he offers. He takes the gifts that God has given and he deceives us into thinking that we can be happier by doing what he did and that is wanting to be god in his own life. So we read in Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28 that description of Lucifer as the highest of God's created beings. That's who Satan is, and

he said I will be like God. I will be like the Most High. That was at the heart of Lucifer that led to his fall.

What did he do in Genesis 3 with Adam and Eve? He came to them and said has God really said this? Are you kidding me? Don't you know that the one tree He said you shouldn't eat from, that's the one tree that will bring more into your life than all of the other things that He has promised. And what happened? Eve was deceived and she handed it to her husband and he went along with her. Satan operates on the basis of deception. He says to us the grass is greener over there than it is where you are. He takes the truth of God and he twists it to his own advantage. So we pray God, give us the ability to see the deceptions of Satan. Give us the ability to see what it is that he is trying to twist in our thinking to get us to follow after him.

This brings us to the second part of this petition. The first part, lead us not into temptation which is a negative statement, a litotes that says God, please protect me. Keep me. Preserve me. And then the second part. But deliver us from evil, or as your translation might note, it could easily be translated keep us from the evil one. So how is it that we overcome temptation? If we understand temptation then, how is it that we overcome temptation? I would again suggest three things.

First, we recognize and know the enemy and his power. We recognize and know the enemy and his power. Listen. If you believe the Bible, if you believe Jesus, then you believe that there is a real person, a real being who is called Satan, who is called the devil. He is the god of this world. He is a destroyer. He's a deceiver. He's a slanderer. He is a liar. But he's an angel of light. He's an angel of light. This one who was the highest of all of God's created beings is described in all of those ways. His chief ambition as we said is to be like God. His chief ambition is to get us to follow him and not follow God. It takes us right back to Yours is the kingdom, Father. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done. In this 6th petition we're just taken back to the previous request. Father, we want Your kingdom in our life to be expanded. We want Your will in our life to be realized. To do that, Father, we're going to have to recognize that there is an enemy of our soul who is powerful and cunning. We need to have a sense of urgency about the fact that we are in a spiritual battle. We need God's protection. So we pray daily, protect us, Father, from this evil one.

Secondly, recognize and know your own weaknesses. Recognize and know your own weaknesses. A bumper sticker on a car said, "Lead me not into temptation. I can find it myself." That's true. That is the tendency of our heart. The first thing we probably need to take out of our vocabulary is I would never do that. We are all fully capable of doing anything that this deceiver brings before us. Paul says in 1 Corinthians 10 – to the one who thinks he stands, take heed, lest he fall. So we operate out of the principle of humility. We acknowledge our own weaknesses, our own failings. The apostle Paul, writing in the book of Romans after he had walked with God, had been used of God in a greater capacity than anyone other than the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul says, "For I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. Now if I do what I do not want, I agree with the law, that it is good. So now it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me." Verse 18. "For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For if I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out." That was Paul. He understood his own weaknesses and I believe he prayed every day for God to keep him close, to protect him in the midst of temptation. When it's there, help me to flee. When the desire is there, I pray that the opportunity isn't there. When the opportunity is there, I pray that the desire is not there. that's the heart that we need to have. Stay as far away as we can.

Thirdly, recognize and know the way of escape. Recognize and know the way of escape. The focus in this second petition is on deliver. Deliver. Lead me not. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us, Father. Deliver us from evil. 1 Corinthians 10:13, our Scripture memory verse: No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man, but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted above that which you are able, but with that temptation will also make a way of escape. That ought to be on the forefront of our mind every day. God is faithful. When the temptation is there to look at something that we shouldn't, to say something that we shouldn't, to go down a path that we know is not a part of God's will and desire, He will make a way of escape. Romans 6:13 says don't present your members as instruments of unrighteousness, but present your members as instruments of righteousness to God.

Ephesians 6:11. Put on the whole armor of God that you can stand against the wiles of the enemy, of the devil. It is a good practice as you familiarize yourself with

Ephesians 6 just to walk through mentally what it looks like to be putting on the armor of God. You have on the helmet of salvation. The breastplate of righteousness. You have truth around you. You have in your hand the shield of faith and the sword of the Spirit. Y Your feet are equipped with this gospel that is anchoring your life and causing you to put your trust and faith in God alone every day. God has given to us all that we need in the face of temptations that come our way. Galatians 5:16. Walk by the Spirit and you will not fulfill the lust of the flesh. So it is there. It is there for us to claim. We live, my friends, in a world that is filled with spiritual mines and we dare not trust ourselves. Father, keep us safe from harm as we pray lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.

So what do we take away? Do you know what Satan wants? Satan is looking for an advantage. He is looking for some means of access into our life. There are different ways I think the Scriptures would say to us that that we actually give him that kind of access. When we allow certain weaknesses if you will to become areas that we are protective of, that we are not honest before God about, that we hide from each other, from our family. Satan is always looking for that. But here as we pray lead us not into temptation, but instead Father, protect us in the midst of temptation and deliver us from evil. We are saying Satan, you will have no advantage in my life because I am living focused on the glory of God. The heartbeat of my life is to live, as Paul said in Corinthians, whether we eat or drink or whatever we do, live all to the glory of God. I am daily getting His Word into my life so that I am being equipped, strengthened and guided. His truth is a lamp to my feet and the light to my path. His truth tells me that if I hide it away in my heart, I will not sin against Him. So we're filling our life with His truth. And we have people. Listen. We have people in our life who can and will speak truth to us.

Let's not miss again as we close this Lord's prayer section that all the way through here it is plural. It is we. It's us. It is never more important than in this last point. We need each other, to be there for each other in the midst of life's temptations and struggles. We all need somebody in our life who can and who will speak truth to us and say to us as James does, my dear brother or sister in Christ, do not be deceived. The

choices that are before you are good or bad. Walk in the spirit. Walk by the flesh. That's the witness that we have in each other's life.

I'm so glad that God is in the business of rescue and recovery. We sang about it already this morning. It all begins with the gospel. It begins with the gospel. It begins with my acknowledging that I am separated from God because of sin. My feet are shed with the preparation of the gospel of peace in Ephesians 6 because the anchor beneath me is the gospel. It is the gospel that has rescued me. It's the good news that has come into my life and has caused me to see what Jesus did on the cross He did for me and He did for you. And then of course, God is in the business of recovery and drawing His children back to Him. Just as we saw last week forgive us our sins, forgive us our trespasses as we forgive each other.

Titus chapter 2 and verse 11. We'll close here. "For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in the present age, waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ." Let's pray. Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of His glory with great joy, to the only God, our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, before all time both now and forever. Father, we thank You for the words from our Lord with regard to this prayer. Lord, we would ask that Your Spirit would cause us in these days that are before us to live in the light of this truth every day, that we acknowledge You as our Father, that we cast our care upon You that everything that we need for life You have promised to provide, that we would lift up and honor Your name, that we want Your kingdom to be expanded. Father, we want Your will to be done in our lives and in this place. We want to trust You for the daily needs. We want to seek Your forgiveness. We want desperately Your protection in the midst of a fallen and evil world. Lord, continue to do that good work in each of our lives. We pray in Jesus's name, amen.