



DATE: Sept. 13, 2020 (15th Sun. after Pentecost)
SCRIPTURE: Matthew 6:9-13
TITLE: Lead us not...

This is the final week of our four-part series about The Lord's Prayer. It seems like we have a lot to cover in just one week: "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil for thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory forever. Amen."

If you have ever been to a Catholic Mass, you may have been surprised when the saying of the Our Father seemed to end abruptly. If you have been reading the Scripture each week to go along with these sermons, you may know that there is a large part of our prayer that is not in the Bible.

The closing of the prayer is also known as the doxology: "for thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory forever." It is not a part of the prayer that Jesus taught. It was added very early by the followers of Christ as a way to conclude the prayer. This was done so early that it was a part of the Didache (a book of liturgy written in 90 A.D.). It was even included in a few early manuscripts of the Gospels of Matthew and Luke.

Most scholars today though recognize that the earliest versions of the Gospel did not include the doxology. So it's not really wrong to use it. It also should be known that it is an addition of the very ancient church, not authentic teaching of Jesus.

Some news sources reported a few years ago that the Pope changed the Our Father. This was somewhat misleading as the change was not decreed to all Catholic churches. The Pope merely accepted a request of one group of churches to make this long-discussed change. The change was made from "Lead us not into temptation," to "Do not let us fall into temptation."

I would argue that this change does not change the meaning of the prayer, but instead shifts the focus on how God operates in the world. How do you envision God working in the world? Do you picture

God the Father who guides a young one taking her first steps, helping her to navigate, correcting her balance when needed, and clearing away the obstacles in the way? Or do you picture God the Father who tosses his child into the deep end and says "Swim!"

This may be too harsh, but I've always felt it strange to ask God to "lead me not into temptation," because I've never had any trouble finding temptation on my own. No one—especially not God—needs to lead me to temptation. I would however, appreciate

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I'm not proposing a change to our liturgy, but I appreciate the thoughtful reflection on what this prayer could mean.

When looking at the

Lord's Prayer in totality, we

see that God is presenting us with two modes of operation. Going back to that first phrase, we know that there is the Will of God, and there is how the world operates. There is the path of temptation and evil, and there is the path of God's will of forgiveness and enough.

The prayer is asking for God's will to be the way the world works. This means everyone has enough to eat, we live in a community of forgiveness and grace, and the choices we make are for the good of all, not for the sake of evil systems that dehumanize, exploit, and oppression.

Praying the prayer that Jesus taught us is a plea to God to re-order the world. It is a call to prioritizing God's will over our own self-interest. It is a call to forgiveness, the sharing of bread, and compassionate resistance in the face of evil systems of men. It is not simply an appendix to the pastor's prayer. It is the heart of the Gospel.