

230. But Deliver Us from Evil.

The Lord shall deliver me from every evil work and will preserve me unto His heavenly kingdom. 2 Tim. 4, 18.

We pray in the Seventh Petition, as the sum of all, that our Father in heaven would deliver us from every evil of body and soul, property and honor. In his Large Catechism Luther writes: "In the Greek text this petition reads thus: Deliver or preserve us from the Evil One, or the Malicious One; and it looks as if He were speaking of the devil, as though He would comprehend everything in one, so that the entire substance of all our prayer is directed against our chief enemy. For it is he who hinders among us everything that we pray for: the name or honor of God, God's kingdom and will, our daily bread, a cheerful, good conscience, etc. All the evil in the world comes from the Evil One. Satan came and carried discord into Paradise. He seduced Eve to sin, and woe began. The Evil One brought all evil with him."

The Greek word here rendered "deliver" means to break chains, loose bands, take away. We feel the fetters of evil and cannot get away from them. "With might of ours can naught be done, soon were our loss effected." We pray to God: "But deliver us from evil." We confess our faith in God's help. We ask that God either spare us many evils or at least give us strength to bear our cross and turn it to our benefit. And daily, in thousands of cases, He entirely spares us many evils. Often, when misery is trying to consume us, He delivers us; when we are exposed to bodily and spiritual perils, He snatches us away from the roaring lion. Often, after suffering dire sickness for many years, when we had almost despaired of our becoming well again, He notwithstanding helped us and gave us back health and strength, so that we could sing: "Who redeemeth thy life from destruction."

We pray that God would "finally, when our last hour has come, grant us a blessed end and graciously take us from this vale of tears to Himself in heaven." The "last hour" is the hour which seems to be the blackest of all evils; but through it we Christians enter into the Kingdom of Glory.

Prayer.

Merciful God, faithful Father, the Giver of every good and perfect gift, who in Thy wise and gracious providence dost lay crosses upon Thy children, chastening those whom Thou lovest that their faith may be strengthened in the fiery trial: we praise Thy righteous judgments and Thy goodness and beseech Thee to have mercy upon all that are in affliction and distress. Deliver us from the Evil One, enable us to resist him and to obtain the victory. Defend us from all evil that may affect us in our body, property, or honor. Finally deliver us from all trials and receive us into heavenly bliss. Amen.

If the way be drear,
If the foe be near,
Let no faithless fears o'ertake us;
Let not faith and hope forsake us;
For through many a woe
To our home we go.

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