

Matthew 6:13  
But Deliver Us from the Evil One  
Sunday August 30<sup>th</sup>, 2015

I want to tell you the story of a young Christian artist named Laura Story.



Laura Story's story begins for us in her college years. As a freshman she became a part of a band called Silers Bald. As they were about to sign a long term contract she was encouraged to go out on her own and soon met with success writing such modern contemporary Christian songs as "Indescribable." She soon had 3 albums out on her own.

In the meantime she married her childhood sweetheart at the age of 28. It seemed like bliss and success would follow her and her husband all the days of their lives.



But within two years of their marriage her husband Martin was diagnosed with a brain tumor. It was benign, but aggressively growing and its treatment nearly took his life.

Laura commented on that time saying, *"We did the premarital counseling and they told us how to balance our checkbook and to say you're sorry even when you don't mean it. But no one tells you how to respond when one of you is diagnosed with a life-threatening illness."*

*"I thought it would all get back to normal," she continues. "Here's the road... we're gonna take a detour. About a year into it, my sister said to me, 'You know, I think the detour is actually the road.'" (It's been 10 years now.)*

*In her disarmingly honest way, she adds, "It's been a hard road. We're learning that when someone is living with chronic illness or disabilities, it's getting adjusted to a completely new normal."*

*"He's gone through an enormous amount of healing, but at the same time there are some things that haven't fully healed like vision and memory. We're learning what life looks like with disabilities."*

In the midst of all this Laura has held onto her faith. She has continued to write Christian music. She did not abandon her church and in fact came to a deeper appreciation of the importance of fellowship and the community of faith. She held on and acted in the face of troubles and doubts.

Today we conclude our Lord's Prayer series with the 6<sup>th</sup> phrase, **"But deliver us from the evil one."**

In the last 5 weeks we have explored 4 types of prayer that are present in the Lord's Prayer: meditation/contemplative prayer, intercessory prayer, prayers of petition, and spiritual warfare prayer. The 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> phrases of the Lord's Prayer fall into the spiritual warfare category, which are: **"Lead us not into hard testing, but deliver us from the evil one."**

We pray these phrases fervently when we have also prayed **"thy Kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."** We pray the last phrase fervently as we live out the Kingdom of God here on earth. Because when we confront the forces of evil in words or through righteous lifestyle; we open a battle with the evil one who desperately wants us to fail; so that God's Kingdom will not come and God's will, won't be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Now belief, faith and prayer all come together when we act to bring the Kingdom of God here on earth. When our beliefs inspire us to faith, it inevitable moves us into action. And in reverse when we act on our beliefs and see God moving in and through us, our faith grows.

John 3:16 says, “For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son that whosoever believes in him will not perish but have everlasting life.” In that verse the word “believe” is used. Now in the English use of that word you can have lots of beliefs that do not spur you into action. These beliefs remain just that beliefs, they don’t become faith. Faith is belief that spurs us to action.

In the New Testament when the word “believe” is used there is always some active component to it. A belief in the New Testament spurs to action. A belief in the New Testament is more like what we call faith. It is active and living.

The difference between belief and faith is like this, and this is an illustration I always used with confirmation classes.



If you were standing out on Highway 77 with your back to traffic and I told you a truck was coming and you believed me, but didn’t move, you would only have belief and lose your life. But if I said a truck was coming and you got out of the way you would have faith and life because you acted on your belief.

Our 1 Peter scripture addresses this. Verse 16 says, “However, if you suffer as a Christian, do not be ashamed, but praise God that you bear that name.”

Verse 19 concludes the thought, “So then, those who suffer according to God’s will should commit themselves to the faithful Creator and continue to do good.”

Our salvation in the times of trial and suffering happens when we continue to practice faith in thought, in action and in prayer. This is what Laura Story did. And we will be blessed by her faith and action in terms of music today.

Now our phrase today, the 7<sup>th</sup> petition in the Lord's Prayer, **"But deliver us from the evil one"** caused me 9 months of thought over one single word. That word was the word **"But"**. I struggled for 9 months searching commentaries and Bibles trying to figure out why Jesus did not put in the simple word "and". Because I thought isn't this last petition like its predecessor **"Lead us not into hard testing?"**

No,... remember I said in earlier sermons all the phrases of the Lord's Prayer are interconnected and explain each other? That is part of the answer. Again to pray "Thy kingdom come thy will be done..." is to open a battle with the evil one especially when we act on our beliefs. The evil one always opposes the good and we suffer for it, for our faith.

Also the better part of the answer is that in this world all of us face trials. Trials come either as we practice our faith, or simply because of the nature of this world. We all face sickness and death of self and loved ones. The Bible says **"We are born to trouble as sparks fly up from a fire."**

If we use the word **"and"**; this petition simply becomes a prayer for protection only. If we use the word **"but"**, this petition then becomes **a prayer to remain faithful to God through the times of trial**. This petition that starts with the word **"but"** is for the times when we have prayed **"Lead us not into the fiery trial, or hard testing", and God said "No!"**

It is for the times when we pray **"I believe, help my unbelief."** It is for when the diagnosis is bad, when our loved one is slowly dying, we've lost our job, or business. It is a prayer to hang onto our faith in the worst of times, the fiery trials.

Think about Job who lost everything: his children, his property, his wealth, his health and even the support of his wife who finally told him, **"Why do you keep holding onto your integrity? Curse God and die."** Job held on though. This last petition in the Lord's Prayer is a petition to hold onto our integrity, our faith and live.

Jesus Christ of course is our best example. When he hung on the cross he cried out the words of Psalm 22, “My God, my God why have you forsaken me...” He cried out in seeming despair but he held on. No it wasn't the nails that held him to that cross.

What held him to that cross was his love for us and faith in His Father.



Jesus held onto the nails..... They did not hold him....

When God said “No” to Jesus’ plea, “Let me not drink of this cup.” Lead me not into temptation. Jesus prayed on, “But not my will be done but yours”. “But deliver us from the evil one.” “Let me not fail you now God” was Jesus faithful prayer.

God answered that second prayer and through Christ’s faithfulness He ascended into heaven and we are drawn in his train.

We too overcome/remain faithful in times of trial through prayer. At age 93 my dad fell and broke his wrist. I remember watching him and my mom pray Psalm 23 together as he waited for them to set his broken wrist. The outtake from what I witnessed was; that come what may they were the Lord’s.

In the most recent Stephen Ministry meeting a sheet was passed out called “How to Pray through Depression” from Guideposts. It has much wisdom in it and I have had copies made for you to take with you to encourage you, and so you can find the website and gain even more knowledge. But the bottom line is that the wisdom in that article is applicable to times of fiery trial, temptation and testing.

The author of this one page article writes about, how in a time in his life of trial and depression, he prayed and prayed and prayed until he came to a peace that comes from God.



He wrote, *“I laid face down praying the words of Psalm 121:12, “My help comes from the Lord, the maker of heaven and earth.” Until as he wrote, “I believed the words I’d been praying. At some point—I couldn’t have pinpointed just when—my spirit began to agree with God’s Spirit.*

*Not a thing had changed (as far as I knew) in my external circumstances I was still me, my problems unresolved, things looked as bad as they had before. But those words, that truth, had sunk into a deeper level in me.”*

Times of trial/testing/temptation will come in the form of health challenges, death of loved ones, job loss, income loss you name it. We are born to trouble. The point of the prayer petition “But deliver us from the evil one” is that it is a plea to hang onto our beliefs, our faith and practice through these times.

Laura Story spoke at one point, while her husband was in the hospital, about how the experience reinforced in her the importance of community/fellowship. That is the “us” in deliver us from the evil one.

Our comfort, our encouragement of each other helps us remain faithful in the depths of our trials. Our faith lets us carry one another like the four men who tore up a neighbor’s roof and dropped their friend at Jesus’ feet.



It was their faith, our faith together as we encourage one another to never ever ever give up!! It is why we stay in fellowship and why the evil one so tries to set us against each other in this age of anger that we live in.

I am so encouraged here at Vista that one of this church's deeply held values and practices is fellowship and community. I have seen this love in action.

An elderly woman who was very depressed told me how after she tried to call all the loved ones she knew, but couldn't reach them because they were at work, sat down with a woman who was her occasional caregiver and this caregiver listened to her until she felt better. This caregiver is a Christian and her presence ministered in a time of need.

Don't let your circumstances or the circumstances within a Christian fellowship or church ever ever drive you away. Be delivered from the evil one by the same stubborn tenacity we see in Jesus. Love one another! John Wesley spoke truth when he said, **"None of us go to heaven by ourselves."**

Jesus held on through the trials, the betrayals, the pain and abandonment and never gave up his faith; and his love for his frail wavering disciples. This blessed him and us through the Resurrection. Hold onto community/fellowship when things aren't just the way you want them. Pass the test, the fiery trial and always love one another as Jesus has loved you. And know that good will come as you do good.

Laura Story puts these thoughts to music in her song and album "Blessings". She says, *"I find that what really connects with people is not just reminding them of God's promises, but how those promises fit into everyday life... like losing a job or being diagnosed with an illness."*

*How do we praise God—because He's worthy of it—when we don't feel like it? "Blessings" is just a bunch of songs about worshipping when life is hard.*

I close with the song "Blessings" inspired by her husband's illness,... God's grace,... and the fellowship of believers.

**PLAY "BLESSINGS"**

