

Luke 11:1-4 - Great Dangers, Greater Savior

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- [0 : 0 0] You are listening to a message from Southwood Presbyterian Church in Huntsville, Alabama. Our passion is to experience and express grace. Join us.
- Turn with me to Luke 11 again as we continue our study through Luke. And this morning reached the end of the Lord's Prayer itself. One more week on prayer next week.
- I'm so thankful for what God has been doing in my life with this. I grew up in the church, so I talked a lot about praying.
- I knew it was a good thing, and I wanted to be a good person, so I said I prayed a lot. A problem for most of my life was that I didn't.
- I really prayed at the times you were supposed to pray, you know, when everybody prayed, and it looked good. But over the past couple of years, especially as I've been studying this section of Luke's Gospel on prayer, I find God leading me to pray not merely because I'm supposed to, but because I need to.
- [1 : 1 5] I love that. I get to talk to my Heavenly Father, to tell Him what's on my heart, and to rejoice in being a part of His kingdom work. We're going to see this morning the final petition of the Lord's Prayer, and it's another reason that we especially need to pray, and we especially get to pray.
- Let's read again Luke 11 at verse 1. Now, Jesus was praying in a certain place, and when He finished, one of His disciples said to Him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples.
- And He said to them, When you pray, say, Father, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Give us each day our daily bread.
- And forgive us our sins. For we ourselves forgive everyone who is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation. This is God's holy word.
- Let's pray and ask His help as we study it together. Father, we do come to You desperate this morning. Those of us who listen, and the one who speaks as well, we all need to hear from You.
- [2 : 3 7] And so we've come to Your Word, and do so with great hope. Because we know You love to speak to us. And so, Father, by Your Spirit, through Your Word, would You speak clearly to all of our hearts.
- We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen. One of the most famous battles of the War of 1812 is the Battle of New Orleans.
- It's famous because Andrew Jackson was the American general who led his troops to defeat the British forces in this great battle.
- And later then became president, somewhat on the popularity coming out of this battle. It's also famous because when the battle was fought, the war had been over for two weeks.
- The two sides had met together in Belgium and signed a peace treaty two weeks before the Battle of New Orleans. But while the battle was taking place, news of that treaty was still traveling by ship across the Atlantic.

[3 : 44] And so these two armies, unaware of what had developed, walked into danger. Hundreds of men killed in a major battle even after the war was over.

The dynamic of battles after wars are officially over has continued through the years, through the American Civil War. Several battles after Lee surrendered to Grant at Appomattox Courthouse happened in World War I.

And even with communication improving still after World War II, where some Japanese soldiers refused to surrender for decades after the war was over.

Into the 1970s, some still fighting to the death or insisting that the news they'd heard of Japan surrendering was merely propaganda. That it wasn't true, they were still fighting.

Last week we focused on the petition, forgive us our sins. And saw that Jesus has fully and finally paid our debts and conquered sin for us.

[4 : 52] The war is over. And Jesus is the victor. And today he teaches us to pray about the ongoing battle.

The battle in the war that has already been won. He says, pray, lead us not into temptation. Sin's penalty has been paid, but its power and presence in our world are real.

Satan is defeated, but he nonetheless refuses to surrender. It's this spiritual warfare that God's Word tells us we're engaged in, but which we often choose to ignore.

And we hear news of physical battles in North Korea and the Middle East. Those are front page news. They grab our attention. But we often neglect the daily reality of our dangerous, ongoing fight against sin and against evil.

And so what we learn as Jesus teaches us to pray this petition is that prayer is the way we fight this battle. It's a declaration of war of God's kingdom against Satan's, as we have said before.

[6 : 08] It's a crucial part of the armor of God for our spiritual battles. Remember the way Paul says it in Ephesians 6 when he's talking about the armor of God. Take up the whole armor of God that you may be able to withstand in the evil day.

And having done all to stand firm. And he goes on talking about the helmet and the sword and the shield. And finishes praying at all times in the Spirit.

With all prayer and supplication. To that end, keep alert with all perseverance. Making supplication for all the saints. The battle continues. And because our enemies are strong, but our Savior is stronger, prayer is the essential weapon in our ongoing war.

We must pray all the time with all sorts of requests. So what do we mean exactly when we pray, lead us not into temptation?

It can actually sound a little odd when you slow down and start thinking about it carefully. So first let me clarify three things it does not mean. It does not mean these things.

[7 : 22] You heard the not, right? Does not mean this. It does not mean, God, you promised life would never be hard, so make it easy. No, that's not it.

God's Word is clear. We will face trials and difficulties. Secondly, it does not mean being faced with temptation is itself sinful.

We're praying against temptation, but we see in God's Word that temptation comes even to whom? to Jesus Himself, right? Jesus was tempted many times yet without sin.

Temptation itself is not sinful. Thirdly, it does not mean, God, you sometimes tempt me to sin so it's your fault when I do.

No. James tells us God doesn't tempt anyone in the sense of enticing them to sin, promoting evil. Sin is not how God works.

[8 : 27] Sin is our responsibility. Doesn't mean those things. So then what does it mean? What do we mean when we pray, lead us not into temptation?

Best I can tell, what we're asking is essentially this, Father, Father, help us, strengthen us, and deliver us, because our weakness is overwhelming, life is hard, and Satan is real.

Help us, strengthen us, deliver us, because our weakness is overwhelming, life is hard, and Satan is real. I love the way the Heidelberg Catechism says it from nearly 500 years ago.

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one, means, by ourselves, we are too weak to hold our own, even for a moment.

And our sworn enemies, the devil, the world, and our own flesh, 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 warfare, but may firmly resist our enemies until we finally win the complete victory.

[9 : 55] You see how it starts? We are weak. Our enemies are strong. Our God is stronger. So you who's stronger, help us, who are weak.

Those three famous adversaries of God's people, the world, the flesh, and the devil, they're waging an ongoing war against us.

They won't stop attacking us. And this petition is where we enter into the battle with them in prayer. We're fighting against them as we kneel down.

We've said kneeling down is taking out our swords, entering into the battle, praying, lead us not into temptation. In fact, as Jesus explains in Matthew, as it's fuller, deliver us from evil, right?

As we pray this prayer, we are acknowledging those who are at war against us. Those from whom we cry for God to deliver us.

[11 : 05] First, the flesh. It's our own personal weakness. We're acknowledging how weak we are, where we admit on our own we can't stand against our enemies.

We can't find our own way. And so we pray, Father, lead us. Even before we get to where? Just, Father, lead us.

The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak. It's an admission of our weakness anytime we ask to be led, isn't it? Go around asking people to lead you all the time?

Not too often. And when we do, we're saying, I need help. I can't find my own way. I need somebody to lead me. I don't know how to do this. I can't figure this one out.

I can't handle the battle on my own. So, Father, lead me. So we ask when we sing, guide me, O thou great Jehovah, pilgrim through this barren land.

[12 : 08] I am weak, but thou art mighty. Hold me with thy powerful hand. It's saying, Father, here's our relationship again today.

I am weak. You are mighty. And you hold me with your powerful hand every moment, all the time. I want you to picture, as you think of that, a toddler who's learning to walk, weak and wobbly on his legs, and his parent who never lets go of his hand so that he won't fall.

You've done that before. There he is trying to learn to walk, but he falls, but your parent holding his hand so those weak and wobbly legs can hold up.

Have you felt weak and inadequate recently? I know I have. I'll share something in each of these areas we talk about this morning that has caused me to pray this prayer recently.

I've felt weak and inadequate as a pastor. I said, God, lead me. Help me. How do I understand your word?

[13 : 24] How do I help this couple? How do I lead a staff? How do I cast a kingdom-sized vision for your people?

Now, you may not be asking those particular questions, but you may also struggle with feeling inadequate for where God has called you to serve in his kingdom.

I'm not the only one who is not sufficient for the task. God, you have to lead me. There's so much broken around me.

I don't know how to fix it all. I don't have the wisdom, God. I'm tired in the battle. I don't see any hope for what you've called me to being any better.

Father, where do you feel your weakness? You can pray. In fact, we must pray. God, lead us.

[14 : 24] But not into temptation. Father, lead us, but not into temptation. Don't send me into the midst of the battle, God.

It's too much. I'm not sure I could bear it. The world is against us too, isn't it? Because it also is broken and warring against God.

This is the part about life being hard. Just the pains and difficulties of life, the heartbreak, the fears, the disappointment that we all endure.

See, the word translated temptation in our Bibles can also refer to testing, like trials that God does bring to affirm the reality of our faith, to strengthen us to trust Him more.

And it's a little bit strange to think that we would pray against those testings, those trials, those trials, because James tells us we're to consider them pure joy.

[15 : 36] Because testing produces perseverance, and that's a good thing, right? We should want that. We long to have our character built up and perseverance developed.

So it would be strange if that were all that was meant. And so theologians don't agree on whether or not this is in mind here. But I believe it is partly in mind when Jesus teaches us to pray this.

At first, because the psalmist prays like this, about the agonies of life. Deliver me. Deliver my life.

Rescue me. I'm weary with my moaning. I'm surrounded by my foes. My soul is greatly troubled. God, how long? Over and over and over as you read through the psalms.

These are testings in which God will deliver him, and through which God will bless him and strengthen his faith in God's steadfast love. But they are painful.

[16 : 34] And so the psalmist pours out his heart honestly to God and says, take them away. I can't endure them. But I especially believe that Jesus is teaching us to pray this way here because I see Jesus himself praying it.

In the garden, right? What does he say? Father, if it is possible, remove this cup from me. I see the reality of the pain and the agony before me in this world.

The foes arrayed against me, and I cry out not to be led into that. It appears to be too much to bear. Right? I don't know what the seemingly overwhelming attack would be for you, but I've prayed, God, heal my wife.

I don't know what I would do without her. God, protect my girls. I'm not sure my heart could bear up under the crushing weight of losing one of them.

God, no more emotional situations right now. I just don't think I can manage one more plate spinning. My heart's full. And God, in his mercy, often meets us there in those cries, and he spares us the agony we fear, the part of the battle we're sure we would be overrun by would be too much for us.

[18 : 15] But the example of Jesus reminds us that God doesn't always answer this prayer the way we would hope or expect every time, does he? Jesus still drinks that bitter cup.

Sometimes the trial still comes. Sometimes the world seems to be having its way with me. Sometimes the grief is too much to bear. And so we pray, as we already have in this prayer, lead us not into temptation, but thy will be done.

You know best, Father. And you promised to care for me here. See, sometimes God spares us in the agony that we thought we could never handle.

And we get there and find out he's there too. And we cry, deliver us. And we plead that God protects us in those moments from the attacks of the devil in the midst of our pain.

Because that's where the devil loves to show up. Isn't it? He loves to tempt us to sin and to turn away from our relationship with God and begin to think it's not really true.

[19 : 38] God doesn't really love me. He's not really my Father after all. See, we know sin is an ongoing battle. We know that temptation is always a reality.

And so asking God not to lead us into temptation is largely asking God to protect us and deliver us in the midst of it. Praying this reminds us of the danger of sin.

Right? If this is one of those things we have to pray, we must pray, even though sin is forgiven, sin is still dangerous. And we're to hate it because it is against the image and the glory of God.

Our weakness is overwhelming. Life is hard. And now, Satan is real. God doesn't entice us to sin and direct us to that.

But Satan surely does. So we need God's deliverance from Him. Here's what that's looked like for me as a husband first and then as a pastor.

[20 : 56] As a husband, it's late at night. My wife has fallen asleep after an evening where I've seen some of my sin.

I've neglected to listen well, to prioritize my wife and my family. I've said in the midst of that hurtful and defensive words, thinking only of myself.

I've hurt the one person I promised to love above all others. I've been selfish and unthoughtful and I know that she's just gone to sleep disappointed.

Rightly so. So what do I feel? It's discouraging, isn't it? I'm so upset with myself.

How could I do this again? You've done these things before. And Satan comes in right at that moment as the accuser and says to my heart as I lie in bed alone at night, what a failure of a husband you are.

[22 : 08] She's the easy one. You got to pick her. What about all the other ones you're supposed to love? Could God possibly be okay with you?

He really couldn't be okay with you, could He? He certainly couldn't delight in you after all of this, could He? Could He? Could He? Could He? Could He? Been there as a pastor after a difficult season in the life of this church, after a difficult day and seeking to help someone and they're disappointed and I couldn't help and it's been all about me and seeing the weight of my failures and my sin and hurting people I care about in this church and Satan whispers God must be so disappointed in you.

You're such a failure as a pastor. What value could you have to God now? You had one job and you failed. He's certainly done with you.

God couldn't really be okay with you much less delight in you after all this, could He? because here's what Satan loves to do.

He does it in different ways in your life. He loves to pull us away from our Father. He entices us to sin, to turn away from God and to chase after our sin and when we do what He loves to do is to show up to accuse with His lies.

[23 : 51] He wants to draw us away from our Father because we're the toddlers who in Christ are holding on to Daddy's strong hand and Satan wants us to think that we have to stand on our own.

He wants to pull us away where we will certainly fall on our own, where we can't do it perfectly. He wants to pull us away to find our identity to trying to stand as good husbands and good pastors, good mothers, good engineers, good kids, good friends, good Christians and to think that that's when we'll stand when we get that right.

And then when we fail, when we sin, His lies and accusations He brings into our cycle of shame.

your porn problem, your self-image issues, your addiction, your failure, whatever it is, is proof positive God doesn't love you, God couldn't love you.

He says and our shame wants to believe it. That feels right. That sounds right in that moment. He's tempting us not only to sin, which is dangerous enough, right?

[25 : 21] Jesus had to die for the forgiveness we needed last week. Sin is dangerous and deadly and then He tempts us to despair of God's love and drift into the most dangerous place in the whole battle.

The one where you're fighting on your own to protect yourself and your value and your significance. you're fighting to stand on your own. And so I have to wake up the next morning after my sin and my shame and come pray to my Father.

And remember my identity is in Jesus being a good Savior. Not in me being a good husband. God will stand otherwise I'll start defending myself again.

Defending my failures and my sin because I have to find some way to stand and if it's in myself I will make it worse by defending all of the failures I've already had.

Instead of repenting from those sins and trusting in Jesus I stand in Him righteous in Him right?

[26 : 47] It's the only way God's Word offers me to stand it's the only way I have to I'm in Christ forever. And so we cry out Father lead us not into that temptation and when the tempter comes deliver us from Him from the evil that would seek to destroy us.

Remind us Father that we are Your sons and daughters and You will never let us go. See that's what we must remember as we pray right?

I think we've said it every week it's the one to whom we are praying. It's about our relationship with the one to whom we pray. What is that relationship?

What does Jesus tell us to call Him? Father. Even though we still need forgiveness of sins, Father. Even though we still need to be delivered from the attacks of our enemies, Father.

How is that even possible when we don't live like sons all the time? When sometimes we do fail? When sometimes our shame even convinces us to believe Satan's lies, it's possible because Jesus didn't.

[28 : 15] He didn't believe Satan's lies. He didn't believe them in the wilderness temptation, did He? He submitted to His Father's will and followed His Father's word when tempted.

He didn't crumble under the crucible of the garden. As He sweats drops of blood, He prayed, Father, Your will be done.

He passes the test that we fail so often. And in doing so, He willingly goes to the cross that looked unbearable even to Him to defeat evil and the evil one so that He is able to deliver us from them as well.

Jesus is the victor rising from the grave triumphant over our greatest enemies, sin and Satan and death so that He can assure us of our relationship with our Father no matter what.

So that what? Nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ. No hardship, no persecution, no angel or demon, not the devil himself, not even my sin can separate me from my Father.

[29 : 37] Even when I pull away, He will never let me go. And if He is for me, who can be against me? We may have strong enemies and they may keep fighting against us and refusing to surrender.

In fact, our King promises that they will do so until He returns in glory. But our Savior is stronger. And so our ultimate victory is sure.

We may stumble in the battle, weak and wobbly, children that we are. but our strong Father holds our hand and will never let us go.

As we practice praying this petition this morning, take a moment quietly to meditate. As we've been thinking about questions that can lead us into prayer, meditate on your own weakness.

happiness. Meditate on what sorts of difficulties in life would overwhelm you, would be too much to bear.

[30 : 57] And consider the temptations you face, especially the ones that would tempt to isolate you from God, pull you away from your Father in your heart.

Take a moment on your own and then we'll pray together. prayer. Okay. Peace. Peace. Peace. out. Peace. Peace. Peace.

Peace.eniya Thank you.

Thank you.

We read earlier. Let's pray. Father, by ourselves we are too weak to hold our own, even for a moment.

[32 : 35] And our sworn enemies, the devil, the world, and our own flesh 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 warfare, but may firmly resist our enemies until we finally win the complete victory.

Father, you are for us. So who can stand against us? No one stands against you.

You justify us. Jesus, who died and was raised to life, intercedes for us. No one can condemn us.

No one can separate us from your love. We are more than conquerors through the conqueror himself, through Jesus who loved us.

Thank you for never letting us go. May we then stand confident that nothing in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

[34 : 03] We ask it in his name and by his spirit. Amen.