

A SERIES OF DEVOTIONS BASED ON PAUL'S LETTER TO THE CHURCH IN ROME

DELIVER ME FROM EVIL

Romans 12:9 "Hate what is evil; cling to what is good."

Jesus taught His disciples and us to pray, ". . . deliver us from evil. . ." (7th Petition of the Lord's Prayer) This prayer is one to pray constantly because "Your enemy the devil prowls around seeking to devour (you.)" (1 Peter 5:8-9) Luther writes in the Large Catechism, in explaining the 7th Petition, "The devil. . . constantly seeks (your) life. He wreaks his vengeance whenever he can afflict (your) body with misfortune and harm. . . so, there is nothing for us to do upon earth but to pray against this archenemy without stopping. For unless God preserved us, we would not be safe from this enemy even for an hour." (Large Catechism, p. 502)

"When Peter writes that the devil is prowling in 1 Peter 5:8, he is not just indulging in scary wordplay; this predator is real. The evil one wants to take (your) life and, if possible, separate (you) from God." (Stephen Pietsch, Large Catechism, p. 565) Luther writes, ". . . the devil searches the boundary fence of (your) life, looking for a place where he can climb over and wreak havoc within."

Satan's deadly darts are defeated by Christ's immeasurable grace yet he continues with every imaginable effort to ". . . seduce, deceive and lead you into misbelief, despair and other great shame and vice." (Small Catechism) St. Paul uses strong language here in verse 9 telling you to "hate what is evil." The Greek word for hate means to "have a strong dislike, to avoid, to hate, to despise" evil. How do you do this? The Psalmist encourages you to seek Yahweh's help, "The Lord will keep you from all evil . . ." (Psalm 121:7) and St. Paul writes in 2 Thessalonians 3:3 "The Lord is faithful. He will establish you and guard you against the evil one." This is why Jesus taught you in the 7th Petition of His prayer to pray "deliver us from evil."

Paul exhorts, "cling to what is good." Pray God to send His Spirit into your heart to give you faith that clings to Jesus through whom you overcome all of Satan's temptations. You can do all things through Him (Jesus) who gives you strength. (Philippians 4:13) As the hymn writer wrote, ". . . simply to Thy cross I cling."

Prayer: Heavenly Father, deliver me from all evil. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Drawn to the cross, which Thou hast blessed
With healing gifts for souls distressed,

To find in Thee my life, my rest,
Christ crucified, I come.

Thou knowest all my griefs and fears,
Thy grace abused, my misspent years;
Yet now to Thee with contrite tears,
Christ crucified, I come.

Wash me and take away each stain;
Let nothing of my sin remain.
For cleansing, though it be through pain,
Christ crucified, I come.

And then for work to do for Thee,
Which shall so sweet a service be
That angels well might envy me,
Christ crucified, I come.

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