

Save Us in the Time of Trial

August 24, 2025 – 5<sup>th</sup> in a series on the Lord's Prayer

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All Saints ABQ

*Grace and peace is ours in God who is our father and our mother,  
and in our Savior Jesus Christ. Amen*



Save us from the time of trial.

Lead us not into temptation.

Deliver us from evil.

This week I pulled out Luther's small catechism,  
to see what Luther has to say about this last petition of the Lord's Prayer.  
I know many of you memorized this during Confirmation class –  
who remembers what it says?

Luther asks his classic catechism question - *What does this mean?*

And he explains,

*God tempts no one. We pray in this petition that God would guard and keep us so that the devil, the world, and our sinful nature may not deceive us or mislead us into false belief, despair, and other great shame and vice. Although we are attacked by these things, we pray that we may finally overcome them and win the victory.*

*We pray in this petition that our Father in heaven would rescue us from every evil of body and soul, possessions and reputation, and finally, when our last hour comes, give us a blessed end, and graciously take us from this valley of sorrow to Himself in heaven.*

Luther knew something about facing trials and being tempted to despair.

As a young monk,

he was obsessed with the idea that he could never be good enough for God.  
He confessed again and again, the smallest thoughts and imagined slights,  
until his confessor told him to go away  
and not come back until he'd committed a real sin.

Finally, Luther found in the letters of Paul the assurance he needed,  
that it is because of the grace of God in Jesus that we are saved,  
not by anything we do or don't do.

Yet even after this revelation – after he'd taken on the whole church of Rome  
to argue that we are saved by grace alone –

he continued to wrestle with despair.  
He believed he was being tempted by the devil to doubt God,  
and doubled down in remembering and affirming that he was baptized,  
and therefore claimed and saved by Jesus.



Luther loved the psalms,  
and the way that they express and encourage trust in God.  
His famous hymn, A Mighty Fortress is Our God, is based on Psalm 46.  
Today we read similar assurances in psalm 71:

*In you, O Lord, I take refuge;  
in your righteousness deliver me and rescue me  
Incline your ear to me and save me  
Be to me a rock of refuge, a strong fortress to save me  
For you, O God, are my hope.*

At Bible study on Thursday we got started talking about guns and violence in our city – about guns in the hands of teenagers who are afraid and hopeless enough to use them.

I was thinking – I need to say something, to turn the conversation,  
to offer consolation.

But for a moment I was just stuck –  
nothing to say,  
no response except deep sadness and a sense of helplessness.

A few minutes later we turned to Psalm 71,  
to pray the psalm together as we always do to finish our bible study.  
I read the words, You are my rock, O God.  
For you, O Lord, are my hope.  
And my vision cleared. My equilibrium returned.

Evil is real. Suffering is real.  
And God's love is real, and more powerful.  
I was reminded that my hope and trust are in God,  
and my job – all of our job, as followers of Jesus –  
is to share God's love in hopeless, hurting places.

The last petition of the Lord's prayer recognizes  
that we are vulnerable as we live in this world.  
We know that following Jesus is not insurance against all the ills of this life.  
Bad things happen to people of faith.  
But the petition also reminds us that God is the one who saves.  
It is God who walks with us into the storms of life,  
accompanies us and brings us through.



Years ago when I worked at SMAA Episcopal church,  
I worked with a lovely and wise deacon named Jan.  
Jan was open about being a recovering alcoholic.  
When I worked with her, she was diagnosed with blood cancer,  
and fought the disease for the rest of her life.  
She told me once, "I don't pray, save us *from* the time of trial,  
because no one escapes trial and suffering in this world.  
"I pray, Save us *in* the time of trial, because I trust that,  
whatever I am suffering, God walks with me, holds me and guides me."  
When I pray the Lord's prayer now, those are the words I use most often.  
Save us in the time of trial, as only you can, O God.  
Walk with us in darkest valleys,  
and hold us always in your love.

Looking back at the first week of this series on the Lord's Prayer,  
we are reminded of two things.  
We remember that Jesus invited us, at the opening of this prayer,  
to come to God as a loving parent,  
who cares for us in all things.  
And we remember that this is a prayer Jesus taught his disciples to pray.  
Save us from the time of trial. Deliver us from evil  
By ending his prayer with these words,  
Jesus recognizes that suffering is a part of life –  
both suffering caused by evil and the brokenness of this world,  
and the suffering caused by faithfully following Jesus in the face of  
greed, selfishness and bigotry.  
Jesus recognizes our vulnerability,  
and he tells us to come to God with all that we suffer -  
to pray for God's protection and guidance in times of trial  
and deliverance from evil.

At the end of his life, we see Jesus himself approach God in this way –  
praying that God might take the cup of suffering from him,  
but also placing himself and his life  
in the hands of the Father he loves and trusts.  
The Lord's Prayer, which he gave to all of us who follow him,  
does the same,  
inviting us also to trust in God to be our rock, our refuge, and our hope.

Before communion today, we will pray a version of the Lord's Prayer from the New Zealand Prayer Book, from the Anglican church in New Zealand and Polynesia.

The prayers in the book use both traditional Anglican language,  
and liturgical texts that reflect the culture of the local indigenous Maori and Pacific Islanders.

This version extends the last petitions of the prayer.  
As I close with this prayer, listen especially for these last petitions

*Eternal Spirit,  
Earth-maker, Pain bearer, Life-giver,  
Source of all that is and that shall be,  
Father and Mother of us all,  
Loving God, in whom is heaven:  
The hallowing of your name echo through the universe;  
The way of your justice be followed by the peoples of the world;  
Your heavenly will be done by all created beings;  
Your commonwealth of peace and freedom  
sustain our hope and come on earth.  
With the bread we need for today, feed us.  
In the hurts we absorb from one another, forgive us.  
In times of temptation and test, strengthen us.  
From trial too great to endure, spare us.  
From the grip of all that is evil, free us.  
For you reign in the glory of the power that is love,  
now and forever. Amen.*

