

Intercessions 1 October 2017

In our intercessions for the church and for the world this morning, can I suggest we think about the words in the Lord's Prayer: ***Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil*** Or 'the evil one', or the accuser, or Satan, or the Satan – Jesus could have been thinking of all of these when he gave his followers this concise prayer

As we pray for the world, we do not have to look far to be filled with concern: It is not just the wars and rumours of wars that Jesus said would unsettle us, but the rise of anger and hatred within and between communities

So we pray for wisdom for all those throughout the world who have power to make life changing decisions, and for those who are expected to show visionary moral leadership in troubled times

We give thanks for the explicit Christian faith of our Queen and Prime Minister, and pray that they may be protected from evil: from fear and danger, from demoralising threats, from the temptation to put their own future ahead of the common good and the wellbeing of each of the nations that form our United Kingdom.

We pray for respect in all our public discourses, whether between politicians or between students, whether between Heads of State or between sports fans, whether between family members or within worshipping communities:

Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil

When Jesus was tempted, he saw off his accuser by reminding him of the teachings and promises in the written scriptures that Jesus had studied, and memorised, and thought about since childhood.

This week the staff team are meeting to talk about ways in which we can encourage each other in our knowledge and use of the recorded words of Jesus, and the background to his teaching we have in the old Jewish Scriptures, and the written down experiences of the early persecuted and martyred followers of Jesus in the first century.

May we pray for wisdom for Alan and Bill, the Readers, Wardens and PCC members as we all ask for leading and guiding: how can we encourage each other in our busy lives? How can we be more effective followers of Jesus where he has called us to be? how can we encourage each other to bring God's royal care, pleasure and protection into every sphere of our life and every aspect of the communities in which we have a part?

There are many pressures on those we pay to serve us and help us in the work of our church: we pray for our Archbishops and Bishops, for administrators and musicians, for youth workers and surveyors:

We pray for them: *Lead them not into temptation, but deliver them from evil, from the evil one, from the accuser*

Each of us will have a different picture or understanding of this phrase in the Lord's Prayer: which one do you relate to best? Evil as a force to be feared, separating us from God? the evil one, the accuser, Satan, an adversary to be feared?

As we pray for each other and ourselves, when I say *Lead us not into temptation* I invite you to respond: *but deliver us from evil...* or *the evil one...* or *the accuser*, whichever you think is most appropriate for you

As we pray for ourselves as individuals: has there been something that the Holy Spirit has said to us today, or this week? Perhaps in what Melanie has said, or in a remark from somebody else, or in a nagging conviction that will not go away or be silent:

As we think about what we should pray for: *Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one*

We pray for the sick: [on the sheet] or for someone for whom you have a special concern this morning: what precisely are we going to ask in prayer for them? We confess that we are often lazy in intercession, perhaps afraid of what the Holy Spirit might ask us to do

Lord teach us to pray: *Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one*

We pray for those who have died: we pray for the dying

We pray for families who grieve, for missed opportunities to put things right, for loneliness ahead, for all of us we pray *Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one*

We pray for ourselves as part of a family, or a workplace, or a community: we ask for hope, and peace, and shalom, and a joyful sense of God's presence this week in all we do:

When we feel overwhelmed: *Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one*

O God, who art the author of peace and lover of concord, in knowledge of whom standeth our eternal life, whose service is perfect freedom; Defend us thy humble servants in all assaults of our enemies; that we, surely trusting in thy defence, may not fear the power of any adversaries; through the might of Jesus Christ our Lord: Amen

Merciful Father, accept these prayers for the sake of Jesus Christ