

CUTTING EDGE CAMELOT, No 41

Sunday 26th July 2020

‘Virtually Church but with some way to go...’

Welcome

Welcome to this Sunday’s Cutting Edge Camelot. I conclude our series on the Lord’s Prayer by looking at its final petition ‘Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.’

This edition also contains notice of our plans for August.

The Lord’s Prayer

Traditional Version

Our Father who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name,
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation;
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
the power and the glory
for ever and ever.
Amen.

Modern Version

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours
now and for ever.
Amen.

Scripture Passage

Matthew 26: 31-44

Then Jesus said to them, “You will all become deserters because of me this night; for it is written, ‘I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.’ But after I am raised up, I will go ahead of you to Galilee.”

Peter said to him, “Though all become deserters because of you, I will never desert you.”

Jesus said to him, “Truly I tell you, this very night, before the cock crows, you will deny me three times.”

Peter said to him, “Even though I must die with you, I will not deny you.”
And so said all the disciples.

Then Jesus went with them to a place called Gethsemane; and he said to his disciples, "Sit here while I go over there and pray."

He took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be grieved and agitated. Then he said to them, "I am deeply grieved, even to death; remain here, and stay awake with me."

And going a little farther, he threw himself on the ground and prayed, "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet not what I want but what you want."

Then he came to the disciples and found them sleeping; and he said to Peter, "So, could you not stay awake with me one hour? Stay awake and pray that you may not come into the time of trial; the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."

Again he went away for the second time and prayed, "My Father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, your will be done."

Again he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy. So leaving them again, he went away and prayed for the third time, saying the same words.

Reflection

Sometimes words become so familiar to us that we forget how strange they actually are. In the Lord's Prayer we pray that God will 'lead us not into temptation.' But why should God lead us into temptation? Surely God is the one who leads us away from temptation rather than bringing it across our path.

At the beginning of this series on the Lord's Prayer I mentioned how the meaning of the original words can help us in our understanding. The Greek word in this sentence is 'peirasmos'. This has two distinct but related meanings. The first is indeed 'temptation' but the second is 'testing'.

They are connected in so far as when we resist a temptation our faith is also being tested and through testing it becomes stronger. The meaning of testing can also develop and expand into a 'time of trial'. It is this translation that is used for modern versions of the Lord's Prayer as we find it in Matthew's gospel (Matthew 6:13) or Luke's gospel (Luke 11:4).

Though temptations, tests and trials may not originate from God they can nevertheless strengthen our faith as we resist them successfully. We think for instance of Jesus wrestling with the temptations of the devil in the wilderness.

So if our faith can develop through testing and temptation should we actively seek these out? The answer to this question is most emphatically 'No'. Temptations, tests and trials will undoubtedly come our way but nevertheless we should not seek them out. The Lord's Prayer is 'Do not lead us into temptation' and Jesus speaks to His disciples in the Garden of Gethsemane in similar terms 'Pray that you may not come into the time of trial'.

For a real-life illustration of the wisdom of this prayer we can turn to Peter and the way He behaves when his faith is to be tested. While Jesus is acutely conscious of the real dangers of His time of trial, praying earnestly that if it is possible this ordeal might pass Him by, Peter by contrast exhibits a false bravado and a lack of self-awareness.

The faith of Peter and the other disciples is indeed to be tested as the time of Jesus' crucifixion approaches. Jesus warns His disciples that they will desert Him in this coming crisis. But Peter takes no notice believing that he

is somehow immune to the temptations which others might succumb to. So he says that even if everyone else deserts Jesus he will not.

Jesus is not impressed. He knows Peter's vulnerabilities much better than Peter himself does. He prophesies that before the cock crows Peter will betray Jesus three times. But even then the shell of Peter's self-sufficiency is not pierced. He only repeats his claim that his faith will not fail at this time.

What is true of Peter can also be true of us. How do we respond at times of crisis? Peter denies the reality of the dangers and temptations that he faces and he fails to be realistic about his own vulnerability. He believes that from within he can find all the resources he needs for his time of trial. Jesus on the other hand well knows the reality of the forces of evil and that He needs God's help to face all the trials that are to come His way.

So the question for us is how far we really know our own vulnerability. Do we know our potential weakness in the face of temptation? And do we have the humility to ask God for the help we need to overcome temptation? This is why the prayer 'Do not lead us into temptation but deliver us from evil' matters. For evil is real and, under pressure, we can all fail if we do not seek God's help.

Of course there is also a wider application in terms of the pandemic which we have been facing and the various responses which it has thrown up. This undoubtedly is a time of trial for all of us and although we need to guard against excessive fear we also need to guard against an excessive amount of self-confidence and bravado. As we look at Jesus we discover that we need both to recognise the real dangers which we face and yet also to ask for God's help and direction to find a safe way through them.

Tristram

Hymn Suggestion

A hymn which recognises our need to call on God in prayer in times of challenge and difficulty is 'Father hear the prayer we offer.'

Points for Prayers

- For our spiritual growth and discipleship as we respond to the good news of Jesus Christ, to recognise our own vulnerability when facing temptation and to ask for God's help
- For Camelot churches in responding to the reopening for private prayer and public worship
- Thanksgiving for care, skill and courage of NHS workers and those in care homes
- Those suffering from coronavirus in hospitals, care homes and at home
- Need for further largescale testing and research into and development of a vaccine as soon as this can be achieved
- For small weddings taking place in the benefice on 5th, 8th and 12th August
- Prayers for those affected economically by the lockdown, for businesses and those who have become unemployed
- Prayers and thanksgiving for contributions to the foodbanks and for those helping to take these to the foodbanks.

A plan for August

A number, though not all, of the Camelot churches will be returning to public worship in August. The first of these services will be the Group Communion at St Michael's North Cadbury at 11.00am on Sunday 2nd August. There will be at least one service in the Group on every Sunday in

August and on some Sundays more than one. A list of what is available will be published in the forthcoming midweek edition of Cutting Edge Camelot.

The current opening times for Private Prayer are as set out below. However, as churches return to public worship these times are likely to change. We will update you on changes in this respect.

Cutting Edge Camelot will continue as before for the whole of August and indeed the plan is to continue it beyond this date as we recognise that there are a number of you who will continue to need to be very careful in respect of what public activities you are able to participate in.

Churches open for private prayer

A number of churches across the Group are now open for private prayer as follows:-

Sunday morning

Compton Pauncefoot open from 9.30am to 10.30am

South Cadbury open from 10.00am to 11.30am

North Cadbury open from 10.30am to 12 noon

Monday afternoon

Galhampton open from 4.00pm to 5.00pm

Wednesday afternoon

North Cadbury, open from 2.30pm to 4.00pm

Friday morning

Galhampton open from 10.00am to 11.00am

Diocesan weekly livestreamed services and reflections

Bishop Peter and Bishop Ruth will be livestreaming a mid-week Eucharist each week and offering recorded reflections each Sunday.

For further details please see the Diocesan website.

An inclusive Communion celebrated on behalf of the benefice

Ron and Pam will be celebrating Communion regularly in their home each Sunday at 10.00am. Please be aware of this because even though no-one can join them they are praying for us all and hope that you will feel included in this act of Communion.

Growing as a worshipper, a servant and a family

*We pray that 'we might live in love,
as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us'*

(Ephesians 5:2)