

# Sermon for A Year with the Catechism The Lord's Prayer: The Sixth Petition

**Date:** February 6, 2022

**Location:** St. John's Lutheran Church, Austin, MN

**Old Testament:** Genesis 39:1-20

**Epistle Reading:** Romans 6:1-11

**Gospel Reading:** John 8:1-18

**Sermon Text:** Matthew 6:9-13a

**Sermon Title:** The Sixth Petition of the Lord's Prayer

**Introit:** Psalm 28:1-2,7; Antiphon: Psalm 28:8-9

## Hymns:

LSB 748 – I'm But a Stranger Here

LSB 766 – Our Father, Who From Heaven Above  
(v1,7,9)

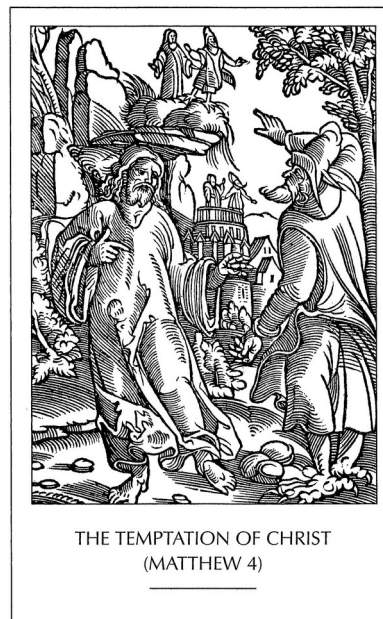
LSB 628 – Your Table I Approach

LSB 629 – What Is This Bread

LSB 744 – Amazing Grace

## Liturgy:

Divine Service I, p. 151



## Songs:

Grace Like Rain - Todd Agnew

Forgive - This Hope

Sanctus (Holy Holy Holy)

Agnus Dei (Koine)

Healing Begins - Tenth Avenue North

The Wonderful Cross

## Liturgy:

Creative Worship



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**Text: Matthew 6:9-13a**

Pray then like this: “Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. **And lead us not into temptation,...**

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Grace to you and peace in Jesus' name. Amen.

Continuing our trek through the Lord's Prayer we are now on the sixth petition, or the sixth request. "Jesus said, 'Pray like this, Our Father in heaven... lead us not into temptation.'<sup>1</sup>"

One of the benefits of doing a sermon series on a part of the Catechism is that after a few weeks you begin to see connections that you might otherwise not grasp. I couldn't help but notice a very close connection between the 6<sup>th</sup> Petition and the 5<sup>th</sup> Petition. The 5<sup>th</sup> Petition deals with the forgiveness of sins and the 6<sup>th</sup> deals with temptation to sin.

What strikes me as odd though is the order. Wouldn't it make more sense for the Petition about temptation to come first and then, if and when we sin we move to the Petition on the forgiveness for our sin.

That, however, is not the way Jesus gives it to us. He puts the Father's forgiveness first. Like we learned last week, God's forgiveness always comes first. Before we get to the topic of temptation, and how weak we are to stand against it, and how often we fall into it, and how foolish and naïve we can be about just how dangerous sin really is, we already know we are forgiven.

When you think about it that really changes the way we treat the words, "lead us not into temptation." We're not asking God to keep us from falling into temptation, so that He doesn't have to go to the trouble of forgiving us again and again and again. He has already paid the price up front, in advance and in full, before the debt comes. What that tells us is this petition, "lead us not into temptation," is the prayer of a grateful soul that wants to glorify God by not falling to temptation again.

We could respond to this grace of God by saying, 'since God is so good and gracious to me, and forgives me all of my sins first, even with out my prayer, why should I be so concerned about the temptations that have my name written all over them? In fact, why should I pray, "*lead me not into temptation*"? Relax about my sin. The more I sin the more of God's good grace I receive. Be comfortable with my sin so God's forgiveness may increase, and His grace may abound?

Why not? Because you know as well as I do that would be an abuse of God's grace. It would be an abuse of His love. It would be an abuse of Christ's Body and Blood which we receive for the forgiveness of our sins. It would be an abuse of your Holy Baptism. Saint Paul actually answers this question specifically. He writes:

1 Matthew 6:13

What should we say then? Should we continue to sin so that God's kindness will increase? That is unthinkable! As far as sin is concerned we have died. So how can we still live under sin's influence?

Don't you know all of us who were Baptized into Christ Jesus were Baptized into His death? When we were Baptized into His death we were placed into the tomb with Him. As Christ was brought back from death to life by the glorious power of the Father so we too should live a new kind of life.<sup>2</sup>

A new kind of life. A life striving always to avoid what we know is inevitable. "Lead us not into temptation" is the prayer of a grateful soul who, in loving thanksgiving for the grace of God, is honored by Lord's suffering and death on the cross. Knowing it was for my sins that He was crucified, died and was buried. He shed His blood to wipe the slate of my sin clean. The only proper and appropriate gratitude I can show is to resist and flee from every temptation, praying God would help me do so.

St. John tells us about the woman who was caught in adultery. The Bible records:

The [*so called*]<sup>3</sup> experts in Moses' Teachings and the Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught committing adultery. They made her stand in front of everyone and asked Jesus, "Teacher, we caught this woman in the act of adultery. In his teachings Moses ordered us to stone women like this to death. What do you say?" They asked this to test Him. They wanted to find a reason to bring charges against Him.

Jesus bent down and used his finger to write on the ground. When they persisted in asking Him questions, He straightened up and said, "The person who is sinless should be the first to throw a stone at her." Then He bent down again and continued writing on the ground.

One by one, beginning with the older men, the experts in Moses' Teachings and Pharisees left. Jesus was left alone

2 Romans 6:1-4

3 I add "*so called*" because they believed they were experts, but clearly Jesus shows they knew nothing of God's Law.

with the woman. Then Jesus straightened up and asked her, “Where did they go? Has anyone condemned you?”

The woman answered, “No one, sir.”

Jesus said, “I don’t condemn you either. Go! From now on don’t sin.”<sup>4</sup>

What do you think this woman did with what Jesus said to her? How did she live the rest of her life? The Bible doesn’t tell us so we can only guess. Maybe she went right back to her old ways. Hopefully she was so thankful for Jesus’ gracious treatment she repented, turned from her sin, and lived a new life; one Jesus had given to her. That would be the appropriate response, the honorable response, the faithful response. Hopefully she prayed something like, “Our Father in heaven... lead us not into temptation.”

Temptation’s goal is to cause us to sin. It is sin that separates us from God. If you can avoid ‘temptation,’ you stand a good chance of not sinning. Right? If only it were that simple. In one of his commentaries on this petition, Luther said:

“We are beset before and behind by temptations and cannot throw them off.”

Luther identifies the sources of temptation as, “the devil, the world and our own sinful nature.” That really does cut off every means of escape. You can’t escape the world, you can’t escape yourself, you can’t escape the devil. He’s coming for you and he will catch up with you.<sup>5</sup>

This means that anything, absolutely anything, can become a temptation to sin. We tend to think temptation to sin is found only in the ‘bad things,’ the ‘evil things,’ the ‘sinful things.’ If only it were that simple.

If something as innocent and pleasing to the eye as a piece of fruit can become the temptation to turn us away from God,<sup>6</sup> then certainly anything else can. This is the thing that makes our journey of faith through this life so dangerous. We may think we have charted out the safe path to follow, we may think ourselves experts in God’s Law and love, we may think we can identify the snares and traps that have been set along the way to catch us. The truth is we cannot escape the temptations that surrounds us. In Jesus’ High Priestly Prayer<sup>7</sup>, He prays to the Father:

4 John 8:3-11

5 1 Peter 5:8

6 Genesis 3:4

7 John 17

I do not ask You to take them out of the world...<sup>8</sup>”

Jesus does not say, “if you follow Me, if you are My disciple, then temptations to sin will not come.”

No, in fact He promises, we will continue to be surrounded on every side by temptations, even as He claims us as His own. To His disciples He says:

Temptations to sin are sure to come,<sup>9</sup>

because this world is fallen and corrupt, and we are fallen and corrupt, and temptations to sin gives birth to temptations to sin.

You don’t have to go looking for temptations to sin, they will come looking for you, and they will find you. Luther liked to tell the story<sup>10</sup> he picked up from his reading of the ancient Church fathers, this one comes from Saint Jerome.

Two hermits were working together and the younger one mentioned to the older one how he would like to be rid of all of his selfish and sinful thoughts and desires. The older hermit replied to the younger saying, “My dear brother, you cannot prevent the birds flying over your head. But you can keep them from building a nest in your hair.”

If only it were that simple. It really does us no good to think, “if only I was a better Christian then I would be free of the temptations that harass me to sin.” In fact, that idea can become a great temptation to sin. “If I *really* believed, then I would not struggle so much with the temptations that surround me.” The risk there is: as sin continues to attack, as it always will, one might jump to the very wrong conclusion, “I must not really believe. Maybe I am not really a child of God and maybe God really doesn’t care about me.”

What about Peter who was tempted to deny knowing Jesus, even while Jesus was on trial for Peter’s sins? What about David, who was tempted when he saw Bathsheba bathing? What about Joseph who was tempted by Potiphar’s wife to commit adultery? What about Adam and Eve, the pinnacle of God’s creative work. Even they were confronted with temptation to sin.

It is not those who have discovered the secret to escape all temptation to whom Jesus says, “...lead us not into temptation.” It is those who know the great danger

8 John 17:15

9 Luke 17:1

10 Luther’s Exposition on the Lord’s Prayer for Simple Laymen

in which they live, and who also know how weak and helpless we are to even identify sin, let alone stand against it.

First and foremost, it is to those who are followers of Jesus Christ, the lambs of His flock, whom Jesus directs to pray that we would be led by the Father. “Lead us...” Let those two words sink in. Only believers, only followers, only the sheep of the Good Shepherd pray they would be led by God.

To pray, “lead us...” is to confess we are blind. We cannot lead ourselves. We need to be taken by the hand and led. The Shepherd needs to go in front of us to “lead us not into temptation.” Isn’t that just what God the Father sent His Son into this world to do? Scripture records:

Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted.<sup>11</sup>

So much for that theory that faithful people aren’t confronted by temptation. God the Father sent God the Son into this world to be led by God the Holy Spirit into the temptation which surrounds us all. With His divine sight Jesus sees every temptation to sin clearly. By His almighty power He falls to none of it. It is good, right and salutary that we should learn to pray this petition, from the only One who has faced every temptation known to man and withstood them all. Scripture teaches us:

We have a Chief Priest who is able to sympathize with our weaknesses. He was tempted in every way that we are, but He didn’t sin. So we can go confidently to the throne of God’s kindness to receive mercy and find kindness, which will help us at the right time.<sup>12</sup>

To pray Our Father would not lead us into temptation is not to pray for the power to find our course safely through the minefield that has been set against us. It is the prayer that Jesus, who has walked the minefield successfully, would lead us through it and we would follow Him.

It is true that we are surrounded by temptations that come from the devil, the world and our own sinful nature. There is no way we can escape any of that, but isn’t this just the list of things Jesus has brought completely under His control, through His death and resurrection? By His cross He has conquered the devil, overcame the world and gave us the Holy Spirit, Who brings us to our Father, as

11 Matthew 4:1

12 Hebrew 4:15-16

people who are grateful for His grace and desire to resist every temptation to sin so we can glorify Him.

In other words Jesus has turned everything around so completely that now every temptation that once threatened to lead us into sin, and separate us from Him, has now become the very thing that drives us to Him, so that we might cling to Him all the more.

The more we are tempted the more we flee to Christ. The more we pray, “Our Father, lead us not into temptation.”

In Jesus’ name.

Amen.

**Proclaim God’s Word,  
Encourage one another in faith,  
Witness to God’s love and  
Serve all people**

