

But Deliver Us From Evil

Luke 23:44-46

Trinity Lutheran – Kearney, Missouri

April 2, 1010 – Good Friday

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In the name of the Father, and of † the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen. During His lifetime, Jesus prayed the prayer He learned from the lips and laps of Mary and Joseph every night before He went to bed as a Child. That prayer was the “Now I Lay Me Down To Sleep” prayer of the Old Testament. It was the prayer Jesus prayed also at the moment of His death: “Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit.” Notice how our Lord Jesus doesn’t try to avoid death, nor does He run from it. You see, He was born to die, and so He rehearsed for that moment every night before He went to bed, praying: “Into Your hands I commit My spirit.”

What trust our Lord Jesus displays – even as He’s slipping into death – even when it appears that the Evil One, Satan himself, has won! Satan, of course, had taken his best shot at Jesus. He had gotten one of His disciples to betray Him, another to deny Him repeatedly, and the rest to abandon Him in His hour of need. With all that sin – the sin of the world – heaped upon His shoulders, God the Father even appears to have left His beloved Son to suffer the damnation of hell while the sky turned black and the sun and moon covered their eyes at the horror of it all. Satan must have been twitching his tail with glee! But even in His apparent abandonment, Jesus prayed with trust when He cried out: “My God, My God . . .”

After all, His holy, precious blood and His innocent suffering and death, are what blazed the way for your salvation – what rescued you from every evil of body and soul – from sin, death and the devil. And Jesus knows it. That’s why He went all the way to the cross – so that He might complete the “it-is-

finished salvation job.” Willingly, as the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, He lays down His life as a ransom for many, so that all your sin now belongs to Him. He took it, so that it would no longer be yours. You can’t have it, not so long as Jesus has taken it and answered for it in your place. He is the once-for-all Sacrifice that atones for sin. He leaves none it out. All sin and every sinner is covered – yes, even you!

With all His saving work accomplished for sinners, Jesus, one last time, prays with all boldness and confidence: “Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit.” He will not be abandoned in the grave, for death cannot hold Him. In three days the Scriptures will be fulfilled when He is bodily raised from the grave. And then, it’s on to the Father’s right hand in glory. Jesus knows the end game. He knows how it all will end – for Him and for you.

One of these days, like Jesus, you too will have to die. For some of you it will come sooner rather than later. So you must learn from Jesus how to die. You’re rehearsing for it every day when you pray: “deliver us from evil.” For when you pray that way, you’re praying with all boldness and confidence that when your last hour comes you firmly believe that your Heavenly Father will give you a blessed end – that He will graciously take you from this valley of sorrow to Himself in heaven. And that all this will be done for Jesus’ sake – because He died for you!

That’s the end game. It’s certain and sure – and the Evil One can’t do anything about it because Your trust is in Jesus. This world’s prince may still scowl fiercely and as much as he wants, but he can’t harm you. He’s al-

ready been judged. The Good Friday deed has been done. Therefore, this one little petition – “deliver us from evil” – is all it takes to fell him! Your life is held safely and securely in Jesus, who has crushed the Evil One. So, when you pray: “deliver us from evil,” know that this petition is your Nunc Dimittis. Now you, like St. Simeon, can depart in peace. Indeed, you can die in peace, for your eyes have seen the Lord’s salvation. Jesus has come into your world and life to set you free from all that might harm you.

In your Baptism He has “delivered you from the dominion of darkness and transferred you to the kingdom of His beloved Son in whom you have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.” In addition, our Lord’s

body and blood in the Sacrament of the Altar are here given to you as your medicine of immortality – so that what you now have by faith, you will one day also have by sight when He gives you a blessed end, takes you to Himself in heaven, and raises your body on the Last Day. Until then you are like St. Paul who, while facing imminent death, wrote with all boldness and confidence: “The Lord will rescue me from every evil, and save me for His heavenly kingdom.” Until then we pray: “deliver us from evil.” In the Name of Jesus. Amen.

And now that peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep your hearts and minds in that one true faith in Christ Jesus, unto life everlasting. Amen.