

DELIVER US FROM EVIL

Thursday, March 5

Reading: 2 Timothy 4

2 Timothy 4:18 *The Lord will rescue me from every evil attack and will bring me safely to His heavenly kingdom. To Him be glory for ever and ever. Amen.*

I have heard some Christians say that “The safest place to be is in the center of God’s will.” Try telling that to Jesus. For Him, God’s will was the cross! Try telling that to Paul. His life was in constant danger and persecution (Read 1 Corinthians 11:23-28). Living for the Lord can be anything but safe. Thankfully God is a God who delivers.

The word “deliver” in Greek is *rhúomai*. It means to rescue – to snatch from danger. As Paul is sitting chained to a Roman soldier in Rome, he remembers God’s deliverance from sin at the moment of salvation. He wrote:

Colossians 1:13-14 For He has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son He loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

We no longer belong to the “dominion of darkness.” Salvation has broken sins hold on our lives. We now belong to God’s kingdom! Though we still struggle with sin while in this sin-cursed world, we can have victory because God has delivered us.

Some years later, Paul would write another letter from a dungeon waiting for his execution. He once again speaks of the deliverance/rescue of God as he remembers his trial before Nero Caesar.

2 Timothy 4:17-18 But the Lord stood at my side and gave me strength, so that through me the message might be fully proclaimed and all the Gentiles might hear it. And I was delivered from the lion’s mouth. 18 The Lord will rescue me from every evil attack and will bring me safely to His heavenly kingdom. To Him be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Paul had no delusions that he would escape with his life! He had already said that “the time of my departure is near. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith” (2 Timothy 4:6-7). So what does he mean that God will rescue him from every evil attack? “The lion’s mouth” may refer to Nero Caesar himself. As Paul shared the gospel with the Roman court, Nero could not have been happy. He had recently been killing Christians by the hundreds for their faith. But Paul was not concerned about his own life. His goal was to proclaim the gospel. He knew that all Nero could do to him was send him to God’s “heavenly kingdom” and this was cause for praise! Though facing death, the apostle knew the great final deliverance of God would be entering his eternal reward (4:8) where he would finally be free from sin, Satan, and his own sinful flesh.

Jesus (John 16:33), Paul (2 Timothy 3:12), and Peter (1 Peter 4:12-19) all warned us that the Christian life will have trouble. It is not an easy life of sunshine and butterflies. Instead of saying, “the SAFEST place”, I prefer to say, “The BEST place to be is in the center of God’s will” despite the challenges it brings. For we know that the ultimate deliverance and rescue comes when we stand in Jesus’ presence and worship Him for all eternity. How do you need God’s deliverance today? How does the thought of safety with Jesus in eternity help you face your struggles today and trust Him with whatever you are facing?