**DELIVER US FROM THE EVIL ONE**

9 In this manner, therefore, pray: Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name.
10 Your kingdom come. Your will be done On earth as it is in heaven.
11 Give us this day our daily bread.
12 And forgive us our debts, As we forgive our debtors.
13 And do not lead us into temptation, But ***deliver us from*** ***the evil one***.
 For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

Devil is evil with a capital D. I hate Satan. I despise the Accuser. I detest the Tempter. I abhor the Serpent. I disdain the Slanderer. I loathe the Father of lies.

Have I made myself clear? Do I need to elaborate? Are you unsure of my position? Is my allegiance in doubt?

If not, let me make myself understood – my main ambition in life is to be on the devil’s “Most Wanted” list. I want Satan to think when I awake in the morning and my feet hit the floor that he says, “Oh no, Rick’s up!” He knows that before I leave my room I am going to put on my battle armor.

Starting from the top down, I first put on my helmet of salvation. Next my breastplate of righteousness. Then my belt of truth. Followed by my boots of the gospel. My shield of faith in my left hand. My unsheathed sword of the Spirit in my right. But then, before I go out the door, I kneel “*praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit”* (read Eph. 6:10-18 for the full dress rehearsal).

I need, and you need, to be fully aware of the territory we must fight to win. I’ll let the more eloquent C. S. Lewis state it for me: “There is no neutral ground in the universe. Every square inch every split second is claimed by God, and counter-claimed by Satan.” The devil knows he is already a defeated foe, for Christ forever sealed his fate at Calvary’s cross and Joseph’s tomb. “*Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage”* (Heb. 2:14-15).Satan has been disarmed and made a public spectacle when Jesus triumphed over him (Col. 2:15). The lion has been declawed and detoothed. The serpent has been defanged. The emperor (“*the prince of the power of the air*” – Eph. 2:2) has no clothes.

But just as misery loves company, so Satan would love to take you to hell with him. Yes, he is defeated, but he wants you as a consolation prize. Determine with all your might that he will not drag you as his trophy with him*. “Then He will also say to those on the left hand, Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels”* (Matt. 25:41).

The next time the Devil whispers to remind you of your sinful past, you just remind him of his eternal future! While Satan may know your name but calls you by your sin (“Liar” “Luster” “Lascivious”), God knows your sin but calls you by your name (“Christian” “Child” “Chosen”). When Satan tries to deceive you into taking off your spiritual armor and surrendering your weapons, you get on your knees and fight like a man! Prayer is one weapon Satan has no defense against. Oh, he thinks he does. When he sees you with your knees bent and your head down, he believes you are discouraged and ready to quit. He thinks he has won … until he hears you say “Amen!” Then he turns and flees (Jam. 4:8).

Pray. Pray with all your heart. Pray these words: “*Do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one*.” God loves those words. God hears those words. God answers those words. When Jesus was tempted and tried by the Accuser He defended Himself in court and won: *“Away with you, Satan! For it is written, You shall worship the LORD your God, and Him only you shall serve.’” Then the devil left Him, and behold, angels came and ministered to Him”* (Matt. 4:10-11).

Some of you might remember the famous O. J. Simpson murder trial. It was dubbed “The Trial of the Century.” For all intents and purposes O. J. looked to be a walking dead man. He seemed guilty as all get-out. Virtually everybody thought he was toast. But he hired a group of famous lawyers that were labeled “The Dream Team.” Johnny Cochran. F. Lee Bailey. Robert Shapiro. Alan Dershowitz. Robert Kardashian. They did the impossible, they convinced the jury that Simpson was innocent of the murder of his wife Nicole, and her friend Ronald Goldman. The verdict? “Not guilty!” Incredible.

Like Simpson, I have been accused of a capital crime and it seems certain I am guilty as charged. But I have a far greater Dream Team. 1) Jesus Christ. 2) The Holy Spirit. Satan, my Prosecutor, stands before God’s bar and says, “Does Rick serve God for nothing? He will curse you to your face!” (see Job 1:6-12; 2:1-7). But the Holy Spirit stands up in my defense and intercedes (Rom. 8:26-27). At the end of his argument it says, “*All things work together for good to those who love God*…” (Rom. 8:28).

Then “*Jesus Christ the righteous*” stands as my *Advocate* (I John 2:1). My confidence soars because “*He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them”* (Heb. 7:25).

Jesus powerfully gives the closing argument. It goes like this: *“Who shall bring a charge against God’s elect? It is God who justifies. Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us. … Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor* ***angels*** *nor* ***principalities*** *nor* ***powers****, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other* ***created thing****, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord”* (Rom. 8:34-39). The verdict? “*Well done good and faithful servant. Enter into the joy of the Lord*” (Matt. 25:23).

Until tomorrow… get on your knees and fight like a man! Pray without ceasing. Ask your Dream Team to “*deliver us from the evil one*.” He will do just that!

I love you. Rick