



NightLight

A NEWSLETTER OF McLEAN MINISTRIES

"take heed....as to a light that shines in a dark place." II Peter 1:19

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Dear Friends,



Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

Matthew 6:13



Almost daily now, I am made aware of the plight of people in grave circumstances. I'm not just speaking of the suffering church in foreign fields, such as Nigeria, Iran, or North Korea, deeply concerning as they are. But more and more, I encounter the stories of those who are facing evil at the hands of their own fellow citizens. And I am not referring to criminals on the street only. The following is only one example of many we might cite. On November 16th of this year, a Colorado home school mother was teaching her children when at 9:30 a.m. her door was burst open by an FBI SWAT team. They thundered in, terrifying her and her children. It turns out she had made herself a political enemy of those in charge. In the land of the free and the home of the brave, this mother and her children were bullied because she spoke out against crooked politicians! Evil is terrible enough when it is pure evil. But

when evil puts on a face of the good (in this case – policemen, who are to maintain the good), it is straight from the pit of hell to confuse and deceive as many as possible.

Jesus was teaching his disciples who lived in a time of lawless evil how they should pray. He includes in that model prayer, that we call *The Lord's Prayer*, this line we all know: **Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.** We tend to know it best in the King James version because of the liturgical forms and songs down through the ages. Yet it is best understood to mean **Do not allow us to be led into circumstances of great trial, but deliver us - both now and ultimately - from the evil that causes such trial.** Why does He instruct us to pray that particular prayer? It is because the flow of the fallen world system tends toward injustice and evil. **We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies in the power of the evil one. (I John 5:19)** Jesus defeated all evil at the Cross, but its final annihilation will not come until the consummation of this age. And the move towards that final consummation is described by Jesus as birth pangs (see **Matthew 24:8**). What do we know about birth pangs? They grow closer together and become more intense as the birth

approaches. If we just passively float along on the dregs of the system, we are likely to be pulled by the current of evil into times of great trial. This would then bring us to the point of battle to fight for our lives, and not drown in the deluge of evil, but to overcome it. These words are meant to be an expression of reality that changes things both in the spiritual realm and in the natural. When you pray, include in your prayers an invitation for the sovereign love and wisdom of God to be so present in your life, that He will intervene in what seems to be the natural flow of things, especially evil things. And He will either keep us from them, or He will turn these evils in such a way as to cause them to eventually produce a scenario for ultimate good. But we must **TRUST THAT PROCESS**. For in such processes, our faith is turned into something greater than gold. This is the meaning of the story of Joseph. It is the wisdom behind Paul's words, **God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God (Romans 8:28)**. Notice that it does NOT say 'all things are good.' It says all things are working together FOR good.

Such prayer does several very important things. It teaches us that God is not just going to do it all for us, but that we need to actively partner with Him in standing against evil by willfully praying. It teaches us that God is not the author or cause of evil, but He is its conqueror. It teaches us to see the entire system as fallen, broken, and evil, and it is the norm for a godless world. It is only the intervening grace of God that brings and maintains goodness. There is no resident goodness in things of this world system. (Notice that I did not say the Creation is not good - it is! It is the culture - the world system - that is evil. Creation itself will be redeemed along with us.) We in the West, and especially in America, have lived off the capital of a once honored grace. Now we are trying to write checks on a bankrupt account. We can only recover our bankruptcy by genuine purposeful prayer.

What about events that seem final? Deaths? Unrighteous decrees? Seeming victories by the wicked? How we respond in such battles will help us discover what we really believe. Many of us do not truly believe; we only believe that we believe. Trials we do face, trials we are allowed to be swept into seemingly at random, are events allowed and overseen by God to help us learn how much we believe, and how much we only believe we believe. Or as Peter puts it (a man who learned this the hard way), **the trying of our faith, being more precious than gold which perishes, even though tested by fire, will prove our faith to be real, resulting in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. (1 Peter 1:7)** God is never the author of evil. There are rebel spiritual systems that have infiltrated the world politically, economically, and even meteorologically that have a life-destroying aim and power of their own. When allowed to operate unchallenged, they will grind both creation and human beings under them. If I or my loved ones were among those suffering, would I trust God in the face of what seems a hopeless scenario? Do I really, really believe Jesus destroyed death and will put all things right?

God will not allow us to be tempted beyond what we are able to bear (see **1 Corinthians 10:13**). I am learning. I am being trained. I am keeping before me that God is good, and NEVER my problem. He will bring all evil to judgment. He will perfect all that pertains to me (see **Psalms 138**). I will pray for God's love and wisdom to rule over whatever trials may come my way. This prayer is aiding me to become the person I am predestined to be. *So let us trust the process, because we trust the One who oversees the process.* This is a war zone. The final battle is not yet done. As the great old hymn says so well, ***This is my Father's world. Oh let me ne'er forget, that though the wrong seems oft so strong, God is the ruler yet. This is my Father's world. The battle is not done. Jesus who died shall be satisfied, and Earth and Heaven be one.***

Movie Review



Do You Believe?

(2015 Pure Flix)



More than just a typical movie, this film addresses the very question we have focused on in this letter: *Do you believe? Or do you only believe that you believe?* The story involves a small inner city LA congregation led by a pastor who is awakened to his own lack of reality. Better than most Christian films, **DO YOU BELIEVE?** portrays true faith in action – *living faith* – not the dead empty fluff that’s out there. This film is not about folks who only talk the talk, but about those who walk out what they believe. The lives of a dozen very different people come together in such a way that glorifies Jesus Christ. The power of His Cross confronts, convicts, heals, and reconciles them. The power of the Father’s love intertwines these lives together for healing, even the ultimate healing for some. God is a Redeemer, overcoming evil with good. The interweaving love and grace that flows through each scenario does an excellent job of pointing to a far greater reality at work. You get the sense at the end of the film that these stories are in no way finished, only to be continued. There is no unrealistic wrap-up with a fairytale ending. Not everyone is nicely saved. You want to know how the various stories of these people carry on. And this makes you consider your own story. Does what I believe show in how I live? How can I change to better live out my faith? How do I flesh out what I believe? Faith, after all, is meant to be a verb, not a noun.



Closing Thoughts...



A new year: 2022. What will it hold? Will we experience joy? Grief? Hardships? Peace? Will we grow better instead of bitter? Will we grow closer in relationship with the Blessed Trinity, or stagnate? By the grace and goodness of God, we will live one day at a time. We will receive His love daily, and love others daily. We will be forgiven, forgive, and give every day. Our eyes on the Cross, even though we may stumble and fall, we will get up and keep looking. He is there. He is here. Dying, that we may live; living, that we may die. Living, that we may live forever. All because He loves me, and you. The good news: Love NEVER fails!

Happy New Year, Clay & Mary



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