

Rev. Paul A. Hottinger

**Explanation of the *Lord's Prayer***    First Week of Lent    Tuesday, February 20, 2018    8:15 AM  
Is 55:10-11;    **Mt 6:7-15**    (When we forgive totally from the depths of our hearts, then we are forgiven. If we are forgiven, then we will not enter into the trial.)

There is a very valid point that **the entire gospel is contained in the *Lord's Prayer***, but I cannot explain that right now; it would take too long. It takes about an hour and a half, but it is all contained. But right first and foremost we must point out something that Christians often do not understand, and that is: that **the will of God is obviously not done on earth**. If the will of God were done on earth, this prayer would have no sense. **We have to pray for the will of God to be done on earth**. And the only way that the will of God will be done on earth is **for people to do it, people with free will**. This requires therefore **the conversion of people from self-will**, which they come by naturally, **to God's will**, which is a matter of conversion. So **this is a prayer praying for our conversion**, not only our personal conversion, but **the conversion of all people on earth**, otherwise it has no sense.

Secondly, **this is a prayer for forgiveness**, but it's one that is couched in such a way that **we must be willing to forgive if we really desire forgiveness**. So, yes, God's love is unconditional—true; and, yes, forgiveness is love. However **we can't receive what is unconditional unless we are willing to share it**. Those are two salient points that people frequently fail to see.

And then one final point, since the pope brought it up. The pope brought up the fact that “Lead us not into temptation” is not very good theology. It's what the Greek says, but for centuries the Spanish has not said that. The Spanish translation is “*No nos dejes caer en la tentación, Do not let us fall into temptation,*” rather than do not lead us into temptation. So that's an interesting point the pope makes, and it's right theologically that **God does not lead us into temptation. It is correct that God supports us in temptation**.

But there's another point too, which is even more profound and about what we know even less, and that is this word "temptation" might not actually refer to what we normally call temptation. **It may refer to the trial**, the trial, what John of the Cross called **the "dark night."** It may be a prayer that we be delivered from the dark night, not have to go through it. Do we have to go through it? I don't know. But **Jesus said pray that you don't have to go through it**, the trial, whatever that is, the test, the moment in life in which you are put on trial, so to speak. Well how would we avoid that? **How would we avoid pain, you might say, for our actions, paying the consequences of our actions?** How would we ever avoid that? How would we avoid facing the evil we've done in the world? How would we avoid the harm that we have done to other people, facing up to it? How would we avoid that? Well it's already in the prayer. **It's forgiveness. When we forgive totally from the depths of our hearts, then we are forgiven. If we are forgiven, then we will not enter into the trial.**