

Deliver Us from Evil - a meditation inspired during worship on 7 July 2024
by Chris Sharpe



Sunday morning swung around again and we sat in the cold chapel, an escape of sorts from the icy outdoors.

We cheered each other with warm greetings and silently prayed that the ancient church heating would kick in a bit more effectively.

All were prepared with coats, gloves and a smattering of fake fur. Maybe our feet would thaw out a bit in the next hour.

As the singing rose and prayers were prayed, we were reminded of the significance of the eternal drama of which we are a part.

Symbolism is somehow too feeble a word in other contexts, but in this one, the reality it reflects is almost beyond comprehension. This is life gifted by God through Christ. Living and Breathing.

Historical. Present. Eternal.

Food for thought. Communion.

Food for the soul.

There was more. We found ourselves focusing on protection from the reality of evil. As the stories of encounters with evil unfolded, images tumbled forth of tools, golf bags, screen doors and flies. Those who have lived long enough immediately find their own stories of friends, loved ones, themselves even, welling up. Painful stories. Unfinished stories. Sad, grateful, humbling stories. Triumphant stories.

The screen door comes into view and we know we need it more than ever. It is here that I sit with a full heart, hearing the Lord's prompting to take time with that screen door, the one that keeps out those pesky flies of the evil one.

Perhaps you might like to join me, to be still before the Lord, asking for the image of the screen door (or any image the Lord gives you) to inform, protect and enliven you as His child and His person in the world. You might like to close your eyes and wait a bit after reading these verses:

*Matthew 6:13 "...and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from the evil one."
Ephesians 4:27 "...and do not give the devil a foothold."*

You're invited to bring into focus a symbolic screen door of your own, one that represents the many God-given protections over your life. Take time to look at the door, seeing what it is made of.

Call to mind the things that you know are protecting you and name them, giving thanks for each one. God has promised us His protective presence through Christ.

Then there are things He has provided in our individual circumstances in different seasons of our lives.

Take time noticing these and giving thanks for them. Sometimes a major life event seems to blow a pretty sizeable hole in the mesh of that screen door.

The world is shaky. God may feel distant. Our head, heart and gut may be out of kilter. It is too hard. And it may be happening right now. An event like this may have happened in the past and you may be becoming more aware of the hole that has not repaired adequately or maybe the repair process was hindered by pain-filled reactions or inappropriate choices. Now is a good time to hand those to the Lord, asking Him to show you the way of repair, of mending, of wholeness. Despite our best intentions, sometimes one of those pesky flies gets into our home, our life.

Unlike flies in real life, who have a lifespan of about 2 weeks, the flies of evil are just going to keep buzzing around, marking the windows, spoiling the food, laying eggs in forgotten places, going quiet for a while, then emerging at the most inconvenient times. They are tiny, but they spoil things. Yes, an appropriate metaphor for evil. Here is the challenge of focus, prayer and meditation then: that in the Lord's time, He will reveal any lurking tiny fly and also, in the stillness and openness of spirit before Him, He will reveal what to do about it. He has provided tools.

He has provided a "whole armour" (Ephesians 6).

Now begin to review and re-examine the tools and the armour you have. Take time to focus on new things that may have emerged, or old forgotten ones that need a bit of dusting off. Lay them before the Lord, asking for help in their timely application.

Perhaps you might like to write down prompting words that will remind you of your personal toolkit and armoury.

Sometimes journalling can be beneficial if you're the journalling sort.

This may have been an intensely personal experience. It never remains entirely applicable only to ourselves.

The final invitation is to ask the Lord about your nearest and dearest, your community, your country, our world. Is there something different about the screen door in relation to each of these? Your screen door might be a well-integrated whole. It may be on its way to that. Maybe you see these different aspects of your life on separate, and sometimes neglected, areas of your screen door. Are the flies beginning to congregate outside your door? What parts of your toolkit and armoury are useful, appropriate or even necessary in the here and now?

Keep focus on the Lord who provides them - Jehovah Jireh. We are surrounded by witnesses of the past and present who can testify about this - God provides.

Take time to give thanks for this. Then, you may want to take some more time at a later date to continue your reflection on some significant aspects of this meditation that have caught your attention or feel may be quietly prompting you. God is patient. May He guide you with His Spirit, lift you in His hope, hold you in His love and comfort you with His peace.

Go well.

"Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things." Philippians 4:8

~ The End ~