Spiritual Protection – A Forgotten Weapon

1. It is odd that when Christians are increasingly aware of the evil around them in the world and society that **prayer for protection** from it so frequently gets dropped off their spiritual agenda.

2. Prayers of protection from evil are invariable the first thing that goes whenever there is a swing to **informality.** There are great strengths in informality, but it carries its weaknesses as well. We are not, most of us, that disciplined, and need structures with a discipline in-built in them to help us along.

3. When the disciples asked Jesus to teach them to pray, he knew that the weaknesses of the human mind and will would be best served by a very short, easy-to-remember prayer that put everything in its place for us, and that could be said in much less than a minute. He gave us, therefore, 'The Lord's Prayer', with its petition – **But deliver us from evil.** He thought it necessary.

4. To have the spiritual freedom not to use the Lord's Prayer is fine, provided, of course, that in essence, we still pray as Jesus thought necessary. That includes specifically asking God to **deliver us from evil.** What happens in practice – because the devil can influence our thoughts – is that when we drop the structure Jesus gave us we invariably drop any prayer for protection.

5. Sincerity is not enough. Whenever we drop a prayer for God's protection we render ourselves and others unnecessarily vulnerable to evil.

6. Because a few folk use formal prayers in a meaning-*less* way is no reason for abolishing their use in a meaning-*ful* way. We give the devil a great victory if we use the gift of spiritual liberty to keep the door for his entry ajar, when we should be bolting it!

7. Everything we do as Christians should enjoy Christ's ultimate Victory over evil. We **re-arm the forces of evil** whenever we ignore Christ's teaching to apply his Victory day by day. Until we are mature enough to use our freedom to pray protection from evil, it might be a first step to pray as Jesus taught us – *literally*!