

**SERMON: MATTHEW 6:9-13 and LUKE 11:2-4****BREAD FOR EACH DAY**

*Our Father Who art in heaven. Hallowed be Thy Name. Thy Kingdom come. Thy Will be done on earth as it is in heaven. **Give us this day our daily bread.** And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation. But deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.* (COMMON WORDING OF THE LORD'S PRAYER.)

How do your prayers usually begin? “Dear Lord, help me to get over this cold. Help me to figure out which way to decide. Help me to get my work done. Give us good weather. Keep our children and grandchildren safe and well. Etc.” It’s very common to ask for such things. There’s nothing wrong beginning your prayers in such a way. BUT in the Lord’s Prayer, at what point do we ask for physical things of the day? Not 1<sup>st</sup>, not 2<sup>nd</sup>, not 3<sup>rd</sup>, but 4<sup>th</sup>! Spiritual things come first. Honoring and holding the Father’s name / reputation in high regard, by what we say, what we teach from the Bible, and what we do. Requesting that we and others hold to Christ for forgiveness and salvation and are part of the Holy Christian Church, His Kingdom, already now in life and forever in heaven. Requesting that His good and gracious will be done, not ours, asking that our Father do whatever it takes to keep us in Christ and lead us safely through this life to eternal life in heaven. Requests for such greatest and most important spiritual needs come first! **Then** comes a simple request for our physical needs.

“Give us this day our daily bread.” Realize that daily “bread” is talking about meeting our *physical* needs. I know it’s easy to think of Jesus as the Bread of Life. He Himself said “*I am the Bread of Life . . . He who eats this bread will live forever*” (John 6:48, 58). There He was talking about Himself as our spiritual nourishment and salvation. However, in this 4<sup>th</sup> Petition, Jesus is talking about “bread” that meets our physical needs. Just as later in the same chapter Matthew, Jesus addresses our frequent and frantic concerns over daily needs: “*What shall we eat? What shall we drink? What shall we wear?*” *Your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you*” (Matthew 6:31-33).

Our physical needs are all met by the Father. We do not provide for ourselves. It is true, that we work. God wants us to work. The Bible says, *If a man will not work, neither shall he eat* (II Thessalonians 3:10). *How long will you slumber, O sluggard? When will you rise from your sleep? A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep—so shall your poverty come on you like a prowler, and your need like an armed man* (Proverbs 6:9-11). Laziness is not pleasing to God. We work, as God wills—even Adam worked in the Garden before the fall into sin. But in the end our provisions for each day come from God. He gives us the ability to work. He gives us green things for food and animals for food. It is He who makes them grow.

In the common table prayer which we use many times, we say, “Let these gifts to us be blessed.” Gifts! “Give us our bread, please, Father.” It’s all from Him and we honor Him for it. I remember some years ago when a quarter bought more than a quarter does now—I was entering a convenience store, and a youngster whom I judged to be a middle school student said, “Say, mister, would you lend me a quarter?” I looked at him and said, “Don’t you mean give me a quarter? I don’t expect we’ll see each other again.” He was a little reluctant, but finally did agree. I gave him a quarter. It goes against our pride to have to ask someone to *give* something. It’s easier to say “Lend” though there is no intention of paying it back. Do you get the picture in the Lord’s prayer? You come before God and say, “Give, please.” It’s like a slave standing before a slave owner. No deals, no position ever to pay anything back. “Please give,” It’s quite humbling, isn’t it? God is truly your Father. You are truly but a child. You are His child because of Jesus. *He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?* (Romans 8:32). In Jesus you have been forgiven all your sins, in Jesus you have been adopted into the Father’s family. Though you deserve nothing, He gives you everything. In all simple trust, love, and respect we ask Him day after day after day, “Father, give me today my physical needs.” No room for pride here.

When someone kindly gives you something, what is your response? Is it grab and go, because you “have it coming” or you are “entitled” to it? Then it’s not a gift. Then it’s an obligation, a payment, not a gift. When someone truly gives you something to which you have no claim, when they give it because they want to and they care about you, the response is Thank You! The 4<sup>th</sup> Petition is a fitting reminder and point at which to say, “Father, Thank You, each and every day for the way you provide for me!” You cannot thank God too much. But beware lest your Thank You is just empty words, a thoughtlessly and mechanically spoken. Thank Him from the heart.

Daily bread includes more than food. It includes everything that we need for this body and life. Martin Luther includes quite a list in his Small Catechism: Food, drink, clothing, shoes, house, home, fields, flocks, money, goods, a godly spouse, godly children, godly and faithful servants/workers, good government, good weather, peace, health, education, honor, loyal friends, good neighbors, and the like! Everything for this life comes from Him. *Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning (James 1:17).*

“But why ask for these things? God knows what I need.” Certainly He does: “*Your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him*” (Matthew 6:8). The 4<sup>th</sup> Petition is a reminder for us, who it is that gives, and from whom it is that we receive, all things. It’s all too easy to think somehow it’s due to us.

What does God expect us to do with our daily bread? He expects us to use it wisely and faithfully. To waste what God gives us is not pleasing to Him. It isn’t just “easy come easy go”—to blow it at the bar or at the casino. When Grandma gave you a new shirt, how would she have felt if you dropped it on the floor and trampled on it? How much food do you throw away? Do you remember the Feeding of the 5000? What did Jesus say when all had eaten and were satisfied? *When they were filled, He said to His disciples, “Gather up the fragments that remain, so that nothing is lost.” Therefore they gathered them up, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves which were left over by those who had eaten (John 6:12-13).* Let nothing be wasted.

God expects us faithfully to use the daily bread which He gives us to care for ourselves and our families. *If anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever (I Timothy 5:8).*

God also expects us to use our daily bread to care for others. *But whoever has this world’s goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him? My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth (I John 3:17-18).* I admit there are scammers out there. I admit none of you can take care of everybody. But don’t be afraid to help someone in need, whether disaster victims across the country and world, or neighbors. You can help with resources, time, and labor. And not everybody has to be worthy by your standards either. *God makes His sun shine on the evil and on the good. God sends His rain on the just and the unjust (Matthew 5:45).* Not one of us deserves it. If someone takes advantage of you, God knows.

God also looks for you to bring offerings of love to His House. All that you have comes from Him. Why is it easily considered acceptable to slight Him? To the Old Testament people for whom giving a tithe, a tenth, was commanded the Lord said, “*Will a man rob God? Yet you have robbed Me! But you say, ‘In what way have we robbed You?’ In tithes and offerings. You are cursed with a curse, for you have robbed Me, even this whole nation. Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be food in My house, and try Me now in this,*” says the Lord of hosts, “*if I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you such blessing that there will not be room enough to receive it (Malachi 3:8-10).* God does not need anything from you. He is not going to be impressed with you. He wants your heart in Christ. “Thank you, Father, for washing me clean in Jesus’ blood and for adopting me into Your family. Thank you for all the daily bread You shower upon me!” With your heart and your hands bring Him offerings of love for all that He has first given to you.

Your Father gives daily bread each day. Do not be filled with worry, do not be frantic, do not fear that you have to solve everything about daily bread for tomorrow and the future. He cares for you and for your family. “I have been young and now I am old, yet I have never seen the righteous forsaken, or his seed begging bread” (Psalm 37:25). He cares for your ranch, farm, place of employment, and your income. He cares for your house and home. He cares for world events, national events, politics, and the economy. Do not become anxious. *Cast all you care upon Him, for He cares for you (I Peter 5:7).* In humble childlike faith and thanks, pray “Father,—Give us our daily bread again today. He cares for all in the right way, at the right time—even when we don’t understand His will.

How does Martin Luther’s Small Catechism sum up the 4<sup>th</sup> Petition? “Give us this day our daily bread. *What does this mean?* God gives daily bread indeed without our asking, even to all the wicked. But we pray in this petition that He would lead us to realize this and to receive our daily bread with thanksgiving. *What then is meant by daily bread?* Everything that we need for our bodily welfare, such as, food, drink, clothing, shoes, house, home, fields, flocks, money, goods, a godly spouse, godly children, godly and faithful servants/workers, good government, good weather, peace, health, education, honor, loyal friends, good neighbors, and the like!” There’s much more. Thank you, Father!

Amen! So be it!

Pastor Kanzenbach---