

ESF Lord's day service message

2/22/2015

Give Us Today Our Daily Bread

Matthew 6: 11

Give us today our daily bread.

Most people don't have a clue as to how to slow down the chaos of life. Every day is as rushed as a roller coaster on steroids. This morning I want to help you change that in your life.

In today's word of prayer, Jesus is teaching us the secret of living in peace and contentment in this hurry up world. We have to pray **to** God for our daily basic needs and live with his gracious provisions every day.

1. Give

The word "Give" in this prayer expresses dependency. When we pray this prayer, *give* us our daily bread, we acknowledge that everything comes from God and we must be dependent on God for everything. It is a prayer of dependency. It's about us saying "Father, apart from you, I wouldn't even be here! You are my Provider. You are my Supporter, and I am here to declare my dependence upon You."

When we do not depend on God for our needs, we depend on ourselves. When we depend on ourselves, we develop pride or anxiety. We become proud when we think we can do everything by ourselves. We become anxious when we have no power to solve our problems or when we face a hopeless crisis in our lives.

In the book of Daniel, we can see a good example in the life of king Nebuchadnezzar. He was proud when he did not know that God is the Lord and provider of everything.

"All this happened to King Nebuchadnezzar. Twelve months later, as the king was walking on the roof of the royal palace of Babylon, he said, "Is not this the great Babylon I have built as the royal residence, by my

mighty power and for the glory of my majesty?” (Dan. 4:28-30) In his pride, he became insane. In the suffering from insanity he became humble and recognized that God is the Lord of his life and everything he had.

At the end of that time, I, Nebuchadnezzar, raised my eyes toward heaven, and my sanity was restored. Then I praised the Most High; I honored and glorified him who lives forever. ...All the peoples of the earth are regarded as nothing. He does as he pleases with the powers of heaven and the peoples of the earth....” (Dan. 4:34-35)

Nebuchadnezzar learned the hard way that God is the master and provider of everything in man’s life. The very air that you breathe, the sun that warms the earth, the water on the earth, and the food that is upon the earth are all provided for by God!

David prayed to the Lord in the last days of his life, *“Everything comes from you, and we have given you only what comes from your hand” (1 Chronicles 29: 14).*

Paul said in Romans 11:35-36, *“Who has ever given to God, that God should repay him? From him and through him and to him are all things..”*

Deuteronomy 8:17-18 says *“You may say to yourself, “My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me.” But remember the LORD your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth, and so confirms his covenant, which he swore to your forefathers, as it is today.”*

When bread is on our table, many other hands have worked to provide it. But all those hands cannot produce a single loaf of bread without God's help. The sunlight, the rain, the soil, and the life in the seed of grain- those things come from God.

When we pray this prayer, we express our thanks to God for our daily bread, for the small and basic things we have now. We must never forget that everything we have and everything we need comes from God.

2. Us, Our

When we pray this prayer, we think about not only ourselves but also others. Jesus doesn't say "Give ME MY daily bread." We're supposed to say "Give US OUR daily bread!" This prayer reminds us that we are not just isolated individuals praying merely for private concerns. We're a family! We're a community! Ephesians 6:18 says "*be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.*" Phil 2:4 says "*Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.*"

Prayer certainly contains the element of asking for your own needs but it also must consist of praying for the needs of others. Your prayer must come from a generous heart not only with concerns about "your" welfare but about "our" welfare. When we pray this prayer, we think about basic needs of other people around us. When we pray this prayer we pray not only for ourselves but also for other people's needs. Through this prayer we will be able to overcome our selfishness and widen our minds.

We can pray, "Father, I thank you for putting food on my table. I thank you for meeting my needs according to your riches and glory in Christ Jesus. But my heart goes out to others in the congregation whose needs are even deeper! I think about the brother, who's looking for a new job. Please take care of him. Please take care of his family. Please make sure that they have enough food and enough money to pay their bills."

When we pray this prayer, God gives us the joy of sharing. Heaven is the place where there is unselfish sharing with other people. There is a saying: "*Let there be spaces in your togetherness and let the winds of heaven dance between you.*"

Hell is a place where a person constantly remains in a selfish state, and does not care about others. Many sicknesses come from a selfish mind. A selfish mind produces loneliness, depression, fear. These things cause emotional and physical sickness. But when we constantly pray for others, when we pray "give *us*", we cannot be selfish, we cannot be alone. We are always with people who share not only their needs but also their joys together with us.

Do you know of anyone in this church who has a need for some bread, someone who has a physical, emotional, relational or spiritual need...? Do you pray for those needs?

3. Today, Daily

Why we should pray only for our *daily* bread. Why should we not pray for bread for a whole week, a whole month or for several years?

When we pray this prayer, we confess that our concerns are only for today. Our prayer should be for enough grace, enough strength, enough courage, enough of everything we need to get by today. Then tomorrow our prayer starts all over again for that day's needs.

We are living in three time frames: past-present-future. Often we cannot face today well because we constantly try to fix something in the past or in the future which **is** beyond our control. But when we pray this prayer, we put things of the past and future in God's hands. We should not ignore things of the past. But we cannot turn the course of history which has already happened.

We are to live from day to day. This does not mean that we do not make plans for the future, but we must keep in mind that our plans for tomorrow may or may not come to pass depending upon the will of the

Lord for our lives. Although we can prepare for the future, still we cannot control what will happen in the future. Those things are in God's hands. When we pray this prayer, we are asking for God's help to enable us to face the situation here and now.

Dallas Theological Seminary is one of the best evangelical seminaries in the country. But at one point in time, it almost went bankrupt. All the creditors were ready to foreclose at twelve noon on a particular day. That morning, the founders of the school met in the president's office to pray that God would provide. In that prayer meeting was Harry Ironside. When it was his turn to pray, he said in his refreshingly candid way, "Lord, the Bible says that you own the cattle on a thousand hills. Please sell some of them and send us the money."

A few minutes later, a cattle rancher strolled into the business office. "Howdy!" he said to the secretary. "I just sold two carloads of cattle over in Fort Worth. I feel that God wants me to give this money to the seminary. I don't know if you need it or not, but here's the check," and he handed it over.

The secretary knew that it was a critical hour. So she went into the office and gave the check to the president of the seminary. When he looked at the amount, it was for the exact amount of money they needed to pay the debt. Then he recognized the name on the check as that of the cattleman. Turning to Dr. Ironside, he said, "Harry, God sold the cattle! Praise the Lord!!"

We need to rely on God one day at a time! When we pray this prayer, we confess that we need God's provision day by day. If you have enough for weeks and months and years, you may not feel like praying. You may become lazy. You may be proud of yourself. You may not wish to draw

near to God every day. When we learn to pray for our needs on a daily basis, we can expect to meet with God anew and afresh every day.

Praying for our *daily* bread keeps us dependent upon God day by day. God wants us to depend on him on a daily basis. When God provided manna in the wilderness for the Israelites, they were commanded to gather only enough food for each day (Exodus 16:16). If they gathered more than they needed it would spoil over night (Exodus 16:20). God wanted them to realize that they must trust Him to provide for their needs every day. The Lord gave them “daily bread” for 40 years, until the day they entered the Promised Land.

In the spiritual realm it is just as true that yesterday’s strength is absolutely useless to fight today’s battles. Sometimes we rely on our experiences with God in the past. Of course they were good, but we need a fresh touch of God in our lives every day. God never gives us a reservoir of grace in our lives, but expects to turn to Him every day for the grace sufficient to meet the challenges of that day. He is not going to give you the grace to do something tremendous tomorrow. He is going to give you grace to be extraordinary in the ordinary circumstances of today.

We need daily refreshment provided from God. What do you want to eat? Month old bread or fresh bread just baked today? Daily refreshed bread is a blessing. When we pray with faith that God will provide our bread daily, we will have a new and fresh day everyday.

4. Bread

When we pray for our daily "bread", we are asking God to meet our needs, to provide us with the necessities of life. It's a prayer for the necessities of life rather than the luxuries of life. This is a prayer for the basic things in life. This is a prayer for our needs, not a prayer for our

greed.

Proverbs 30:8-9*give me neither poverty nor riches, but give me only my daily bread. Otherwise, I may have too much and disown you and say, 'Who is the Lord?' Or I may become poor and steal, and so dishonor the name of my God.*

"Bread" in this case means all the basic needs for our daily life such as physical needs-shelter, food, clothing; mental and emotional needs-love, comfort, peace, joy, contentment. Martin Luther said that in Matthew 6:11, daily bread doesn't just refer to food. It is a symbol for all the things we need for the preservation of our lives: Food, health, housing, employment, good government, and a happy marriage.

"Bread" also means our spiritual needs-spiritual satisfaction through personal fellowship with God. Man does not live by physical bread alone but by every word that comes from the mouth of God (Matthew 4:4).

So even if we have our physical daily bread, we still have to pray this prayer to receive spiritual bread. Yes, through such a prayer we are able to be connected to God, the provider of everything. Through that prayer we confess our faith that without God's blessing, everything we have now can be gone in a second. Though the bread is in our hand, the blessing is in God's hand. If God does not bless our riches, they will do us more harm than good.

Through that prayer we also can be content with what we have right now even if we don't have many things and even if we do not know what we will have tomorrow. So pray this prayer to remain constantly in God's blessing whether you are in need or have plenty.

Right now, the biggest need in your life might be the strength to make it through the day. You're tired, you're run down, you're fighting a cold, and the daily bread you need is the power of God from on high!

Or maybe the biggest need in your life right now is for guidance. "Lord, I'm stressed out! I need direction. Should I ask the boss to put me on a different shift? Should I step out on faith and apply for a job at a different company? Or should I just stay where I am until something comes along?"

Maybe the Daily Bread you need is right in the Bible. Maybe you need a word from the Lord to sustain you through the day.

The ultimate "bread" is Jesus Christ. Jesus said, "*I am the bread that came down from heaven*" (John 6:51). The human heart has a deep desire and appetite to worship. The human spirit needs to know if there is life beyond the grave. Our most basic need and one of God's greatest gifts is the gift of Jesus Christ. It is Jesus who fills the spiritual hole in the human heart. The only bread that will satisfy completely and forever is the provision of the Lord Jesus himself.