

GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD

Matthew 6:11

The Lord's Prayer – Week 6

By Andy Manning

I. INTRODUCTION

1. A priest, a minister and a guru sat discussing the best positions for prayer, while a telephone repairman worked nearby
2. "Kneeling is definitely the best way to pray," the priest said.
3. "No," said the minister. "I get the best results standing with my hands outstretched to Heaven."
4. "You're both wrong," the guru said. "The most effective prayer position is lying down on the floor."
5. The repairman could contain himself no longer. "Hey, fellas," he interrupted. "The best prayin' I ever did was when I was hangin' upside down from a telephone pole."
6. Right now we're learning how to pray by studying the Lord's Prayer. And while the Lord's Prayer doesn't say anything about the best posture for prayer, it does say plenty about how to pray effectively. And that's the goal of this sermon series. Not just to help you know more, but to help you pray more, and more effectively.
7. Let's recite the Lord's Prayer together (Mt 6:9-13, KJV): Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.
8. The Lord's Prayer has three parts to it:
 - i. The preface: "Our Father which art in heaven."
 - ii. The petitions: Six in number.
 - iii. The conclusion: "For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen."
9. So far we have looked at the preface and the first three petitions. Today we will look at the fourth petition.
10. **Matthew 6:11** "Give us this day our daily bread."
11. Let me remind you that the first three petitions all concern God's interests: Thy name, Thy kingdom, Thy will. Now we are going to get to the petitions that concern our interests: Our daily bread, our sins, our trials. Once again, this is to teach us that it's not about us. God is more important than us. His interests and concerns are more important than ours. His reputation is more important than ours. His kingdom is more important than ours. His agenda is more important than ours. His will is more important than ours.
12. **William Barclay** observes the following about the second three requests in the Lord's Prayer. "The first of these three petitions is a prayer for our present need. The

second of them is a prayer for our past sin. The third of them is a prayer for our future welfare and goodness. These three short petitions take life, past, present and future, and lay it before God. Food for the present, forgiveness for the past, help for the future -- all of life brought into the presence of God." (*The Lord's Prayer*, p. 21.)

13. Scholars have also observed that these three request address all three persons of the Trinity. **William Barclay** writes, "When we pray the first of them, the prayer for daily bread, we think of God the Father, the creator and sustainer of all life. When we pray the second of them, the prayer for our forgiveness, we think of God the Son, the Savior and Redeemer of all mankind and of us. When we pray the third of them, the prayer for future help to live without sin, we think of God the Holy Spirit, the Guide, the Helper and the Protector of all life." (*The Lord's Prayer*, p. 21.)
14. Today I want us to go deeper with the fourth petition, "Give us this day our daily bread." The way we're going to study this by asking and answering five questions.

II. FIVE QUESTIONS

1. What is meant by the term "bread"?
 - i. **Matthew 6:11** "Give us this day our daily bread."
 - ii. All our needs. Food, clothing, housing, health, etc.
 1. "Bread" in this verse is a figure of speech known as a synecdoche, in which a part is made to represent the whole, or the whole represents the part. When we say Kansas City won the Super Bowl, the whole city represents the team. When we say that Patrick Mahomes won the Super Bowl, one player represents the whole team. In the same way, bread represents all our needs in life.
 2. **R.T. Kendall** defines what Jesus meant by "daily bread." "Daily bread refers not only to food on our tables but to life's essential needs. This petition does not refer to literal bread only. Bread in Hebrew meant all kinds of nutrition. But it is even more than that. Daily bread refers to everything nonspiritual that we must have in order to live and cope. It refers to physical needs, emotional needs, material needs... Therefore, when you pray, 'Give us today our daily bread,' you are asking God to step in and give you not only food but also shelter and clothing; to supply your financial needs; to give emotional strength and clarity of mind; to give you friends and fellowship; to grant transportation as needed; to equip you for your job, career and future; to help you get done what you need to get done this very day; to be at your best to help you in your preparation and to provide providences that further God's plan for your life. Our daily bread, then, covers everything that is essential to our well-being." (*The Sermon on the Mount*, 240.)
 3. Note. This means that it is okay to pray for our physical, temporary needs.

- a. We don't have to pray only for spiritual things, like spiritual growth, and evangelism, and the church, etc. We are invited to pray for our temporary, material needs.
 - b. The early church fathers (Christian theologians and writers from the 1st to 8th centuries who established the intellectual and doctrinal foundations of Christianity) assumed that Jesus meant that this was a prayer for spiritual food-- the Lord's Supper. But the Reformers such as Martin Luther and John Calvin corrected this error and taught that it is a request for our basic necessities. Calvin said it refers to whatever God knows to be essential. Luther said it meant everything necessary for the preservation of life – food, a healthy body, good weather, house, home, children, good government, even peace.
 - c. **William Barclay** writes that it is "a petition that God should give to us the simple, ordinary things which we daily need to keep body and soul together." (*The Lord's Prayer*, 78)
 - d. And if you think about it, how wonderful is it that the God of the universe invites us to bring to Him our ordinary, everyday concerns.
 - e. **William Barclay** writes, "It is in fact one of the most precious things in life that we can take the simple, ordinary things to God, that God is not only the God of the great world-shaking, epoch-making events, but that he is also the God who cares that his humblest child may have daily bread to eat." (*The Lord's Prayer*, 80.)
 - f. Sometimes people are afraid to pray for small things, like help with a math test, or help with a job interview. That maybe God only wants us to pray for really big things. But God invites us to pray about the small things. And when you think about it, everything is small to God.
- iii. But the word "bread" also means something else. It means we are only to pray for necessities.
- 1. I've taught before that Christians should not desire and seek to be rich. Work hard, be responsible, and God may give you riches with which you can honor Him. But don't seek to be rich, because the desire for wealth leads to all sorts of spiritual problems (1 Tim 6:9-10).
 - 2. This petition says the same thing. We are not to pray for wealth, or fame, or luxury, but just for necessities.
 - 3. **A.W. Pink** writes, "... not for dainties or for riches, but for that which is wholesome and needful."

4. **William Barclay** wrote, "The truly Christian man does not pray for luxuries; what he prays for is the simple food which is enough for life... The prayer is for the satisfaction of simple need, not for the service of selfish luxury."
 5. In economic terms, there are three things in life: needs, wants, and desires. Needs are things you can't live without. Wants are comforts and conveniences that make life easier. Desires are luxuries. A need would be car. A want would be a car with air conditioning and cruise control. A desire would be a luxury car that has all the bells and whistles – sunroof, all-wheel drive, 500 horsepower, the finest leather interior, etc. Jesus is saying that we should only pray for our needs, not wants and desires. Not for luxuries and non-essentials.
 6. **A.W. Pink** writes, "If God grants us the superfluities of life, we are to be thankful, and must endeavor to use them to His glory, but we must not ask for them."
2. What is meant by the term "this day"?
- i. **Matthew 6:11** "Give us this day our daily bread."
 - ii. We are not instructed to pray for bread for a month, or for a year, but for today. Why? There are at least three reasons.
 1. God wants us to live one day at a time.
 - a. It's okay to plan for the future, but He wants your focus, your attention, your energy, and your emotion to be on today.
 - b. That's why the Bible repeatedly tells us not to worry. Worry not only steals your joy, but it distracts you from today. When you worry, your focus is on the future instead of today. So, Jesus says to pray for today's needs because He doesn't want you to worry about tomorrow.
 - c. **Matthew 6:34** "Therefore don't worry about tomorrow, because tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own."
 - d. However, this petition does leave room to pray for tomorrow's needs. William Barclay writes that the best translation of the word "daily bread" is "bread for the coming day." So, if you pray in the morning, then you are praying for your needs that day. But if you pray at night before you go to bed, then you can pray for the needs of tomorrow. Still, we're not to pray for bread months or years down the road; only for our needs for the coming day. (Barclay, *The Lord's Prayer*, 78.)
 - e. Thomas Watson says that God wants teach us to live every day as if it were our last.
 2. God wants us to stay close to Him.

- a. Teaching us to pray for our needs one day at a time requires us to pray every day. It requires us to talk to our Heavenly Father regularly. If we could pray for God to meet our needs a month in advance, or a year in advance, we would only need to speak to God once a month, or once a year. But since God wants us to live in a close relationship with Him, to walk with Him, He requires us to pray for our needs one day at a time. It forces us to spend time with God every day if we want our needs met.
 - 3. God wants us to maintain a healthy relationship with God.
 - a. God will not answer our prayers if we harbor unconfessed sin in our lives. Since we have to pray for our daily bread, we are forced to confront and confess our sins each and every day. Praying for our daily bread helps us to keep a clear account with God.
- 3. Why does this request come before spiritual concerns?
 - i. Remember, the first three petitions concern God's interests, and the last three our interests. But notice something else. Of the last three petitions, two of them are spiritual, and one is material. Two of them focus on forgiveness spiritual victory. One of them focuses on physical necessities.
 - ii. The fact that two are spiritual and one is physical should remind us that our spiritual well-being is more important than our physical well-being. Why? Because our bodies will one day die, and we will leave them behind. But our spirits will last for eternity, either in heaven and hell.
 - iii. But the fact that Jesus teaches us to pray for our physical needs before our spiritual needs is also noteworthy. Why did He do that?
 - iv. Because it is hard to focus on spiritual things when we are struggling physically.
 - 1. **Matthew Henry** wrote, "... our natural [well being] is necessary [for] our spiritual well-being in this world."
 - 2. **A.W. Pink** wrote, "... God grants to us the physical things of this life as helps to the discharge of our spiritual duties... we are unapt and unfit to perform our higher duties if deprived of the things needed for the sustenance of our bodily existence."
 - 3. **R.T. Kendall** asks, "But why would God begin with the body and not the soul? The truth is, it is extremely difficult to cope spiritually when we are unwell -- hungry, thirsty, tired, deep in debt, going without sleep and having no money." (The Sermon on the Mount, 240.)
 - v. And actually, we are not starting our prayers with our immediate needs, because the first three requests concern God's interests: His name, His kingdom, and His will. Only then do we get to our interests.

4. What is meant by the term “our”?
 - i. **Matthew 6:11** “Give us this day our daily bread.”
 - ii. In this petition we see both petition and intercession. Petition is praying for our own needs; and intercession is praying for the needs of others.
 - iii. One time a new Christian at our church told me that he was uncomfortable praying for his own needs because it seemed selfish. But the word “our” includes personal needs. We must pray for our personal needs.
 - iv. But we must also to pray for the needs of others. This petition protects us from selfishness. It reminds us that we are not only to pray for the needs of others, but also to work to meet them ourselves as we are able.
 - v. One of the ways to make sure that you don’t just pray for yourself is to organize your prayer time so that each day you can pray for something different. Because it is hard to pray for everything and everyone every day. So here’s what I do. I have quiet time six days a week – Sunday through Friday. I took an index card and wrote down each day of the week. Then next to each day, I wrote down what I’m going to pray for that day. On Sunday, I pray for the church service. Monday – I pray for the prayer requests that you write down on your Connection Cards. Tuesday – I pray for my family. Wednesday – I pray for the health of our church. Thursday – I pray for my lost friends. Friday – I pray for our community, state, and nation.
 - vi. The point of our is that your prayers should involve both petition and intercession.
5. What do we need to make this request? Three things.
 - i. We must trust that God wants to meet our needs.
 1. Does God really want to meet our everyday ordinary needs. He wants to, and He has promised to.
 2. **1 Peter 5:7 (NLT)** “Give all your worries and cares to God, for he cares about you.”
 3. **Philippians 4:19** “And my God will supply all your needs according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.”
 4. **Matthew 6:33 (NLT)** “Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need.”
 5. **Matthew 7:7-11** 7 “Ask, and it will be given to you. Seek, and you will find. Knock, and the door will be opened to you. 8 For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened. 9 Who among you, if his son asks him for bread, will give him a stone? 10 Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? 11 If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good things to those who ask him.”

- a. This verse says two things about prayer:
 - i. God wants us to pray.
 - ii. God promises to answer our prayers.
 - 6. To pray this prayer, you have to trust that God wants to meet your needs.
 - ii. We must trust that God can meet our needs.
 - 1. There are a couple of great stories that illustrate this.
 - 2. Think back to the book of Exodus (Ex 16). God sent Moses to lead the Israelites out of Egypt. To get to the Promised Land, the land flowing with milk and honey, they had to pass through the wilderness, the desert, where there was no food. So God rained bread from heaven. Every morning, there was a layer of dew, or moisture all around the camp. When the dew would evaporate, there were fine flakes on the ground, like frost. They called it manna; it was white, and tasted like wafers made with honey. God provided this manna for the Israelites for the next forty years while they wandered the desert until they went into the promised land. God is able to provide.
 - 3. Let's go to the New Testament.
 - 4. Jesus feeding the 5,000 (Mt 14:13-21). Jesus withdrew to a remote place to be alone for prayer. When the people heard where He was, they followed him out there. So Jesus had compassion on them and healed their sick and ministered to them. When evening came, the disciples urged Jesus to send the people away so they could go to nearest village to buy food. But instead, Jesus told the disciples to feed them. Two problems. The crowd was about 5,000 men, not counting women and children. It could have been 8,000 people. Second, all the disciples had were five loaves and two fish. Jesus took the food, blessed it, and gave it to the disciples to pass out. The Bible says that everyone ate and was satisfied, and they picked up 12 baskets full of leftover. God is able to provide for our needs.
 - iii. Work hard to provide for ourselves.
 - 1. **R.C. Sproul** pointed out that "there is a synergistic relationship between divine providence and our labor." In other words, we are not to ask God for our daily bread and then be lazy and unproductive. God answers our prayer as we do our very best to provide for ourselves. (*The Lord's Prayer*, 67.)
 - 2. **William Barclay** "... if we prayed this petition and then simply sat down with folded hands and waited, we would quite certainly starve. The food is not going to appear all ready-made on our tables; God is not going to spoon feed any man; prayer is never the easy way to get God to do for us what we can well do, and must certainly do for

ourselves... If we would have our food, we must work for it. If God's seed is to grow, man must till the ground and prepare the soil and care for it and tend it. God's giving and man's toiling must go hand in hand; and the more man toils, the more God opens his hand and pours out his gifts upon him."

3. There's an old saying that goes like this, "God helps those who help themselves." It's not in the Bible, but it is true. God doesn't bless laziness. God often provides through our efforts. Prayer doesn't take the place of action; it coincides with action. Without our effort, prayer is meaningless; and without prayer, our effort is meaningless.

III. CONCLUSION

1. Studies show that we speak an average of 34,000 words a day. That's half a book. How many of your words are for God; are spoken to God in prayer?
2. God wants to meet your needs; He promises to meet your needs; He is able to meet your needs. But you have to pray every day for your daily needs.