

“Give Us This Day Our Daily Bread”

October 8, 2017

**Our Savior’s Way
Worshiping Sundays 8:00, 9:30, & 11:00 AM
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I’ve been preparing for this sermon for the past week and every time I talk about it to my wife she says “I love this part of the prayer.” She’s not alone. Because I love it too. I think most of us, when asked which is our favorite petition of the Lord’s Prayer, would point to this one. “Give us this day our daily bread.”

There is a great deal of comfort in this petition. In fact, this petition includes most of the things that people pray for everyday. We say it and expect good things to come. We know we’ll see food when we get home, and remember our home and the blessing it is for us. We’ll think about everything we’re blessed with. Not only that, we’ll think ahead to the blessings we hope God will give us: that new car we want, or the house we’ve been looking for, the raise at our job that lets us have more money, or even the new child who is coming to our family soon. All of those things are great blessings from God and are certainly included in the petition where we ask God for our daily bread. But all of those things are not the central focus of this petition.

We’ve been walking through the Lord’s Prayer these past few weeks like on a journey because that’s exactly how the Lord’s Prayer works. The stuff I mentioned before comes to us as a blessing as a result of the first three petitions of the Lord’s Prayer. I don’t mean that when we pray them, these things will all come to us. But that in order for us to understand the petition “give us this day our daily bread” we must first travel through the earlier petitions. Those petitions focus on who

God is, what He does, and what He wants for our world, all of which should shape our understanding of daily bread.

When we pray, “give us this day our daily bread”, it is the first time we ask God for something specifically for us. In daily bread, we understand that to mean everything we need to live today. Martin Luther describes it further when he says, “Daily bread includes everything that has to do with the support and needs of the body, such as food, drink, clothing, shoes, house, home, land, animals, money, goods, a devout husband or wife, devout children, devout workers, devout and faithful rulers, good government, good weather, peace, health, self-control, good reputation, good friends, faithful neighbors, and the like.”

But did you know that this portion of scripture is one of the most contested and challenging parts to translate into English? I’m going to get a bit technical here, but it all hinges on the word which we translate as “daily.”

In the original Greek, the word here is ἐπιούσιον (epiousion). It is a compound word in Greek and an unclear one at that; the definition isn’t clear cut. The most often used definition is “today” or “daily” as it is traditionally translated, and the other means “to come” or a “future” meaning. This means that the bread isn’t only the stuff we need for each day. Our daily bread includes the things that will sustain us until that glorious day when Christ comes again.

I think you’ll agree that this list is pretty complete...except for one thing that Luther kind of glosses over in his description. I pose the question to you, what is the daily bread that we need most? Is it food, is it clothing, is it shelter, or is it something that doesn’t explicitly appear on Luther’s list?

From today’s reading, the portion that connects back to our petition of the Lord’s Prayer appears in verse 42 from the Matthew reading, “The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; the Lord has done this, and it is marvelous in our eyes.”

The stone this verse is referring to is Christ. In another one of his writings on the Lord's Prayer Luther says, "The bread, the Word, and the food are none other than Jesus Christ our Lord himself." Our most needed daily bread is Jesus Christ.

I point this out because we too often we appear to reject Christ's part in providing our daily bread. I don't think this is at the kind of rejection that separates us from the promise of heaven, but when someone rejects Christ in any way, their perspective changes. We begin to think that we are the ones who provide for all our needs. Christ doesn't play a part in it. He doesn't work my job, he doesn't pay for my bills; at times it seems as though He barely helps me when I pray.

This is where our journey through the Lord's Prayer gets stuck because we're often not ready for this leg of the trip. We aren't at the point where we realize that God is who He says He is and does indeed provide all things. Martin Luther is right in that the bread and the Word are the same, they are Christ. Christ who provides all things.

Christ doesn't get tired or worn down by the dredge which is sometimes a part of our lives. He is constant, faithful, and always providing for our daily needs. To pray for daily bread turns the trust to Christ. In this petition we place all trust in Him and ask not for Him to give us daily bread, but to thank and praise Him for having given us our daily bread.

There is a greater understanding of daily bread than we typically use. We think about it as something that we get each day. It's a request of ours. But there is a deeper understanding for us that is opened when we realize that this petition is also a prayer of thanks. Thanks for what Christ has already given us.

When we look at this petition in this way, it makes us more grateful for what we have. We focus on Christ and who He is and what He wants for our lives, and that produces a change in us. It makes us more aware of the need- the needs in us and of those around us. The

need that all people need Christ, and when we have it, we see the needs of others. The need for comfort with those who are facing tragedy, like those in Las Vegas last week. The need to walk beside those who are suffering through cancer, or divorce, or uncertainty. And the need within ourselves to be saved from the depths that sin brings us to. Daily bread is for every day, not only for those times when things are tough or bad, but for every instance where we have need of a savior. Which is all the time!

This daily bread is the one that benefits us everyday. Yesterday, today, and tomorrow. Christ is the bread of life for all people. He offers forgiveness. He offers hope. He offers everyone a family that lasts forever. He does it all without judgement, without criticism, without limit. He loves you no matter what has happened. He is the bread of life not only to those who look “normal”, but to those who struggle and feel broken. His bread is the one that can fill you with good things and sustain you when you feel weak. It’s one that reminds you that in His eyes, you are precious. You are valuable. You are loved by the one who made the world. There is no action you can do that is so bad that He won’t love you anymore.

He desires to prove this to you every day by providing for your needs. So, I encourage you, ask for your daily bread, not expecting it to be everything you want. But trust that it’s everything you need as you seek God and draw closer to Him. Because “the Lord has done this, and it is marvelous before our eyes.”

In Jesus’ name, Amen.