

Our Daily Bread

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[0 : 00] But if we could, this evening, with the Lord's help and the Lord's enabling, if we could turn back to that portion of Scripture that we read in the Gospel of Matthew and chapter 6.

So instead we're looking at the Lord's Prayer and we're looking at the fourth petition this evening. But we'll just read again the Lord's Prayer as it is in Matthew 6 at verse 9.

Jesus says, But particularly the words of verse 11 this evening.

Give us this day our daily bread. Give us this day our daily bread. Our daily bread.

You know, when I became a Christian back in 2006, one of the first things I struggled with was finding a daily reading book. You know, something that would guide and direct me to prayerfully read the Bible as I began each day.

[1 : 25] And as a new convert, I didn't know much about the Bible. And I didn't want anything too heavy. But I just wanted something that would both teach and challenge me as a Christian.

And so my mother, who was a Christian, she gave, and still is a Christian, she gave me a copy of the daily reading book that she used. It's called Our Daily Bread. And as a young Christian, that's exactly what it was.

It was daily bread. It was bread that brought both nourishment and nutrition to my soul. And I'm sure that many of you, you've heard of that resource, or even you've used that resource, Our Daily Bread.

Because Our Daily Bread ministries, they've been around for about 75 years. And they produce these daily devotional books that are now distributed to more than 150 countries in the world.

You know, the amazing thing about Our Daily Bread is that it's free. You can receive it every morning by email, or you can also ask for a quarterly copy of this booklet that comes.

[2 : 33] And you can read it every day. And, you know, I'd encourage you to read it. Especially if you don't have a daily reading book, or if you're seeking the Lord, or if you've just become a Christian.

Or if, like many of us, you struggle to find time to read the Bible in the morning. You know, I still read it. I still read it because it was influential in my call to the ministry.

You know, not long after I was converted, I believe the Lord was calling me into the ministry. And one morning I was reading Our Daily Bread, and the Bible passage for that morning was Acts 5, verses 1 to 19.

And then the Bible passage for the following morning was Acts 5, verses 21 to verse 42. And after reading and praying that second morning, as I closed my Bible, I realised that the Our Daily Bread booklet, it had missed out Acts 5, verse 20.

And so I opened my Bible again to try and read the verse and understand what it said. And, you know, to this day I'll never understand what actually happened. Because when I opened the Bible again, the whole page was blurred apart from verse 20.

[3 : 48] Go and stand in the temple and speak unto them all the words of this life. And, you know, ever since then, that verse has been precious to me because I received it as Daily Bread.

And, you know, I believe that that's what Jesus is teaching us here in this petition of the Lord's Prayer. Because this evening we're considering the fourth petition of the Lord's Prayer. Give us today our daily bread.

And, you know, what I'd like us to see, I'd like us to see two things. I want us to see that the fourth petition in the Lord's Prayer is a petition for the provision of sustenance and the provision of salvation.

So, first of all this evening, the provision of sustenance. The provision of sustenance. As you know, we're studying the Lord's Prayer.

And we're studying the Lord's Prayer not only to focus on prayer, but also to ultimately help us frame our prayers. Because the Lord's Prayer, as you know, it's a pattern for prayer.

[5 : 02] And as we've discovered, the opening words, our Father which art in heaven, they are the preface to the Lord's Prayer. They teach us that we're to come to God as little children.

And we're to pray to God the Father, through God the Son, by the enabling of the Holy Spirit. But then, following the preface to the Lord's Prayer, there are six petitions in the Lord's Prayer.

With the first three petitions focusing upon God's glory. And then the last three petitions focusing upon God's grace. Which means that, as a whole, the Lord's Prayer is all about God's glory and God's grace.

The Lord's Prayer is all about God's glory and God's grace. And the first petition of the Lord's Prayer is, Hallowed be thy name. Which teaches us that we're to regard the name of God as holy. And that when we pray, we're to seek to glorify God's nature and glorify God's name. Then the second petition of the Lord's Prayer is, Thy kingdom come.

[6 : 07] Which teaches us that we're to pray that the kingdom of hell will be abolished. That the kingdom of heaven will advance. And that the kingdom of holiness will appear. Then the third petition of the Lord's Prayer, which we considered last Lord's Day, is, Thy will be done.

And that teaches us to pray that we will submit and surrender our will to God's sovereign will. And now this evening we're considering the fourth petition of the Lord's Prayer.

Give us today our daily bread. But you know, as we consider this petition, the fourth petition, we're now moving into the second half of the Lord's Prayer.

Because as we said, there are six petitions in the Lord's Prayer. The first three petitions focus upon God's glory. The last three petitions focus upon God's grace.

But you know, the fact that the first three petitions of the Lord's Prayer focus upon God's glory, they ought to teach us that when it comes to prayer, we need to pray with the right perspective.

[7 : 15] Because, you know, our prayers are not to be inward looking. They're to be upward looking. Our prayers are not to be taken up with our wants, but God's worship. Our prayers are not to be petitions that seek to gratify our greed, but prayers that seek to glorify our God.

And you know, my friend, Jesus is teaching us with the Lord's Prayer that when it comes to prayer, we need to pray with the right perspective. Because with the first three petitions focusing upon God's glory, they seek to emphasize and they seek to elevate God's name, God's kingdom, and God's will.

That's what Jesus teaches us to pray. Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done.

And then in the second half of the Lord's Prayer, we're to focus upon God's grace towards us.

And we're to pray, give us this day our daily bread. Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. Lead us not into temptation. So we're to pray with the right perspective.

God first. Then us second. We're to pray with the right perspective because we are not the priority in prayer. Just like we're not the priority in praise and we're not the priority in preaching.

[8 : 34] We're not the priority in prayer. Because what the Lord's Prayer is teaching us is that the priority in prayer is God's name and God's kingdom and God's will.

Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done. So my friend, the pattern for prayer is that we're to first of all be taken up with God's glory.

And then we're to be taken up with God's grace towards us. But you know, it's because of the first three petitions which focus upon God's glory.

It's because of that, that we know who God is. And we acknowledge his name, we acknowledge his kingdom, and we acknowledge his will. And by acknowledging who God is, we know that he's more than adequate to meet our needs.

Because he's not only a gracious God. He's not only a glorious God. He's also a gracious God.

Which is why we're able to come with this fourth petition and say, Give us today our daily bread.

[9 : 41] But you know, this petition, the fourth petition, it not only reminds us that we should be more thankful for all of the Lord's gracious gifts and goodness towards us.

And that when we sit down to a meal, the first thing we should do before we dive straight in is thank the Lord for the provision of sustenance. But you know, this petition, it's doing more than that.

Because it's actually inviting us to ask the question, Why do we ask the Lord to bless our food? Why do we ask the Lord to bless our food?

Of course, many of us refer to that short prayer that we say before a meal. We call it the grace. Because we're acknowledging God's gracious provision. Or we call it giving thanks. Or we ask a blessing on the food provided. But you know, why do we ask the Lord to bless our food? And I believe the answer is, it's because it came from a ground that was cursed. [10:47] We bless our food. We ask the Lord to bless our food because it came from a ground that was cursed. And you know, that's where this petition begins. It begins way back in the Garden of Eden.

Because when God created Eden, he blessed the ground. And he blessed everything in the Garden because it was all good for food. But when our first parents, Adam and Eve, when they became greedy, and when they wanted what they couldn't have, they fell into sin.

And the result was that God cursed the ground. God said to Adam, Cursed is the ground because of you. In pain you shall eat it all the days of your life.

Thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you. And you shall eat the plants of the field. The Lord said, My friend, we are to ask the Lord to bless our food because it came from a ground that was cursed.

But you know, what's interesting is that the descendants of Adam, they didn't always eat bread by the sweat of their brow.

[12:10] Because when the Israelites, when the Israelites began their wilderness journey, bread was their staple diet for 40 years. There was no low-carb diets or keto diets back then.

Bread was all that they had. Bread. And the Lord, you'll remember, He miraculously provided bread that would fall from heaven. It would fall from heaven so that when the Israelites woke up in the morning and came out of their tent, their breakfast was there available for them.

And as you know, the Israelites, they called this provision, they called it manna. Because when they first saw it, they didn't know what it was. So they called it manna, which means, what is it?

Manna. What is it? And we're told in Exodus 16 that Moses explained to the Israelites, he said, It is the bread that the Lord has given to you to eat.

And the Israelites, they were to gather the manna each morning and gather enough just for that day. They weren't to store the manna. They weren't to put it in their cupboards for the next day because by the next day, it would become rotten and stink and full of worms.

[13:27] And so we're told in Exodus 16 that morning by morning, the Israelites gathered manna as much as they could eat. It was a daily provision.

It was daily bread. And it was there that the Israelites, they lived in dependence upon the Lord throughout their wilderness journey. Those 40 years, they were living in dependence upon the Lord.

And you know, this is what Jesus is teaching us in this petition. Give us this day, our daily bread. Jesus is teaching us about our need for daily dependence upon the Lord.

He's teaching us, and he's reminding us, about the Lord's gracious provision of sustenance. And you know, this is also a recurring theme in the teaching of Jesus because we can see that even as we go into Matthew chapter 7.

Jesus, he continues his sermon on the mount and he emphasizes the importance of asking, seeking, and knocking. And he says, for everyone who asks, receive, verse 8, everyone who asks, receives, the one who seeks, finds, and to the one who knocks, it will be opened.

[14:43] And then Jesus asks the question, which one of you, which one of you, if his son asks him for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a serpent?

If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good gifts, good things, to those who ask him?

And you know, what Jesus is teaching us, both in the Lord's Prayer and in these verses in Matthew 7, he's teaching us that our Heavenly Father is more than able to meet our daily needs.

Therefore, therefore, we're to bring our daily needs on a daily basis and we're to live our lives in daily dependence upon our Heavenly Father with thankfulness to him.

My friend, we're to bring our daily needs on a daily basis and we're to live our lives in daily dependence upon our Heavenly Father with thankfulness to him.

[15:52] Give us this day our daily bread. But you know, the reality for many of us who are living in the 21st century is that we don't live day to day.

We don't live hand to mouth. Because we have an abundance of possessions. And our daily bread, well, it's already in the supermarket. Or we have a ton of it in our freezer.

Or we have all the ingredients in order to use our marvellous bread maker. But you know, this petition, give us this day our daily bread. Is it really a petition for the 21st century? It was certainly a petition for a previous generation who didn't have an abundance or the abundance that we have today. And as you know, Reverend William MacLeod here in Barbas, the retired minister from Uig, he would always say, when the cupboards were empty, the churches were full.

But now that our cupboards are full, the churches are empty. And my friend, they're more empty than they've ever been. Because since the coronavirus pandemic, the churches in our community are completely empty.

[17 : 08] And you could say they've almost become derelict buildings sitting as statues in our community. But you know, what the coronavirus pandemic has taught us is that we should never take anything for granted.

We should never take our daily bread for granted, whether temporal or spiritual. We should never take anything for granted because nothing is safe and secure.

Not even our daily bread is safe and secure. We've experienced that as a community as well.

There's a food bank that's now been set up in our community.

In order to help those who are struggling to find their daily bread. But you know, this petition, give us today our daily bread. It's a petition that should actually spread out into all the little details of our lives.

Because Jesus is teaching us that there's only one way to live our lives. And that is in daily dependence upon the Lord. We're to live in daily dependence upon the Lord.

[18 : 14] In fact, this petition should affect all our decisions. Because it should make us ask the question, Do I really need it?

Do I really need it? And dare I ask my Heavenly Father for this? My friend, one of the things which the fourth petition of the Lord's Prayer should do is it should deliver us from the monster of materialism.

One of the things the fourth petition should do is deliver us from the monster of materialism. Where we measure our lives by the possessions we have, or the houses we live in, or the cars we drive, or the size of our bank balance.

It should deliver us from the monster of materialism. You know, it was the Scottish theologian, St. Clair Ferguson, he said about the fourth petition in the Lord's Prayer, he said, Jesus is teaching us a principle of prayer that carries with it a principle of life.

Do I need this? And is it so urgent that I would pray to my Heavenly Father and say, Give me this day this.

[19 : 29] Give me this day this. It should deliver us from the monster of materialism. And you know, a complete contrast to this, which really put it in perspective for me, was when I heard a story about the great number of children who were left orphaned after the Korean War in the early 1950s.

Because in order to deal with the crisis of hunger and starvation among children, relief agencies, they were sent into Korea to try and help out. But it's said that one of the biggest problems orphanages had with children, even after they had had three meals that day, the problem many of the orphanages had was that the children were restless and they were anxious at night.

And they had difficulty sleeping. And when the orphanages went, they asked and spoke to the children and asked what was wrong with them, what they discovered was that the anxiety of the children, it was caused because they were worried that they wouldn't have food for the next day. They had had food that day. But they were worried that they wouldn't have food for the next day. And the children, they had become so accustomed to being in the gutters and searching and scraping a meal together in order to survive, that they were always worried about their next meal. And so what the staff in one particular orphanage did, what they did in order to help the children sleep at night, was that every night the children were being put to bed.

[21 : 12] They would go round each bed and each child would receive in their hand a little bit of bread. And the bread was given to them not for the purpose of eating, but so that they could hold on to it.

And that would help them to sleep. And you know, amazingly, those little pieces of bread that were placed in the hand of a child, it was almost like their safety blanket, their security blanket.

And it gave them that safety and security that they knew that they would have sustenance for the following day. And you know, my friend, that's how we should live our lives.

Because, you know, this petition, it's not only a pattern for prayer, but it's a pattern for practice, where we seek to live our lives in daily dependence upon our Heavenly Father and not in daily dependence upon ourselves.

We're to live our lives in daily dependence upon our Heavenly Father. Give us this day our daily bread. And so the fourth petition in the Lord's Prayer is a petition for the provision of sustenance.

[22 : 21] Then secondly, it's a petition for the provision of salvation. So the provision of sustenance and the provision of salvation. The provision of salvation.

And you know, this whole concept of God's daily provision for the needs of His people, it's deeply rooted in the Old Testament. And it's directly related to the experience of the Israelites in the wilderness.

Because as we said earlier, the Lord took care of the Israelites while they were in the wilderness for 40 years. And the Lord provided for their daily provision.

He gave them daily bread by sending them manna from heaven. And although it took 40 years, and they had to learn many lessons along the way, the Israelites, they learned to live their lives in daily dependence upon the Lord.

They learned to live their lives in daily dependence upon the Lord. And as you know, the Lord's provision for His people, it was actually symbolized by the table of showbread in the tabernacle.

[23 : 28] And it was celebrated every year at the Feast of Tabernacles. Because the Feast of Tabernacles it was, and it still is for many Jews, it's a Jewish festival which commemorates the Lord's provision for His people in the past.

But it also celebrates the Lord's provision for His people in the present, in which they acknowledge the Lord. They say that the Lord is Jehovah Jireh. The Lord is my provider.

But you know, when we consider God's daily provision for the needs of His people, and the fact that it's deeply rooted in the Old Testament, and directly related to the experience of the Israelites in the wilderness, do you know, we should see that it was no accident that when Jesus Christ came into the world, that He described Himself as the bread of heaven.

And then Jesus, we see in John chapter 6, He declared that He has come to provide for the ultimate need of His people, their need of salvation.

But you know, when Jesus gave that self-description, self-description, and that self-declaration, it's interesting, because in John chapter 6, just after Jesus had made this miraculous provision by feeding over 5,000 people with five loaves and just two fish, it was after delivering the provision of sustenance, it was then that Jesus declared the provision of salvation, where He said to the multitudes, Truly, truly, I say to you, it was not Moses who gave you bread from heaven, but my Father gives you the true bread from heaven.

[25 : 16] For the bread of God is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world. And you know, we're told that the multitudes, they all responded by saying, Sir, give us this bread.

Give us this bread always. And Jesus said to them, He responded by making that self-declaration, I am the bread of life. Whosoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whosoever believes in me shall never thirst.

My friend, Jesus described Himself as the bread of heaven, and He declared Himself to be the bread of life, because in Him there's everlasting life.

In Him there's eternal life. In Him there's the provision of salvation. But you know, then Jesus, He goes on to say, later in John chapter 6, He says, Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died.

But I am the bread which comes down from heaven, so that you may eat and not die. And if anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. And the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh.

[26 : 28] Therefore, says Jesus, Whosoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood will have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.

Whosoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood will have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. And with that, my friend, Jesus affirmed and assured us that He has provided for our ultimate need, which is the provision of salvation.

Jesus is the bread of heaven, and faith in Him, by faith in Him, He sustains our strength, He provides sustenance for our soul, and He gives to us our needed nutrients and nourishment. He's the bread of life. He's the one who gives us life, and He says to us in the Gospel, Whosoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood will have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. And of course, when Jesus said that, you know, He was preparing the way for instituting the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, by which we feed upon Christ by faith.

[27 : 45] Because as you know, and as Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 11, which is our scriptural warrant for the Lord's Supper, Paul says, the Lord Jesus, on the night when He was betrayed, He took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it, saying, this is my body, which is broken for you.

Do this in remembrance of me. And in the same way, also we're told, He took the cup after supper, saying, this cup is the new covenant in my blood.

Do this as often as you drink it, in remembrance remembrance of me. And as Paul said, it's through the sacrament of the Lord's Supper that as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death, you proclaim the provision of salvation until He comes again.

Now, as you know, because of the coronavirus, our communion season is cancelled. We're not able at present to gather around the Lord's table and enjoy the Lord's Supper together.

We're unable to enjoy both word and sacrament, but you know, the wonder is we're still able to enjoy the word. And as Moses reminded the Israelites in the wilderness and as Jesus reminded the devil in the wilderness, we need to be reminded that man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the Lord.

[29 : 23] Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the Lord. And you know, my friend, if the United States is known as the breadbasket of the world, then our Bible should be known to us as the breadbasket of the word.

Our Bible should be known to us as the breadbasket of the word because the word of God, it is seed to the sower and bread to the eater.

And it comes to us with the promise that it will not return empty, but it will accomplish the thing for which it was sent. My friend, Jesus is teaching us this evening that we're to come to the word of God for our daily bread.

And just like the Israelites in the wilderness who received that provision of manna each morning and gathered just enough for the day, we're to do the same. We're to come morning by morning to the breadbasket of the word and we're to come in order to receive our daily provision.

We're to live our lives in daily dependence upon the Lord throughout our wilderness journey and we're to do so by enjoying our daily bread.

[30 : 38] And you know, the thing is, like it was for the Israelites, the bread from heaven, it was only good when it's fresh. It's no use the next day. That's why it's daily bread and that's why we're to pray, give us this day our daily bread.

But you know, sometimes we can become frustrated and upset that we can't remember what we read in our Bible or we can't remember what we heard in a sermon the day before.

And yet, my friend, we don't remember every meal we eat, do we? Do you remember what you ate last week? We don't remember what we eat, what we eat at every meal, but we know that we enjoyed it.

We know that it fed us. We know that it did us good at the time. And you know, that's how we should view our daily bread, whether we receive it on a weekday or on the Lord's Day.

Even though we may not remember it, we know that we enjoyed it. We know that it fed us. We know that it did us good. We know that it built us up. We know that it brought us nourishment and nutrition for our soul.

[31 : 50] And that's why we need that daily dependence. We need to keep coming morning by morning, day by day. We need daily dependence upon the Lord. We need to come to the bread basket of the word in order to receive our daily bread.

But you know, and with this I'll close. You know, I love the question which Naomi asked. Ruth. I love the question that Naomi asked Ruth.

You remember that when Ruth had spent the day gleaning in the field of her kinsman redeemer, Boaz, Ruth returned home at the end of the day and her mother-in-law Naomi, she met her and she asked her a wonderful question.

Where did you glean today? Where did you glean today? And don't you just love that question? Where did you glean today? Ruth had received the blessing of a daily provision from the Lord and her mother-in-law, her mother in Israel you could say, she asked her, where did you glean today? And you know my friend, that's the question which we should be asking when we meet one another. You know, instead of talking about the weather or local news or even gossip, we should be asking one another, where did you glean today?

[33 : 16] What did the Lord give you today for your daily bread? Where did you find nourishment today as you came to the bread basket of the word?

Where did you glean today? Because you know, that's what fellowship is. Fellowship isn't a chat about other Christians or about the church.

Fellowship is about Christ. Fellowship is sharing. Fellowship is breaking bread. fellowship is nourishment for the soul. And so this evening I want to leave you with Naomi's question.

And I'd encourage you to ask someone this question this coming week. Where did you glean today? My friend, where did you glean today?

The fourth petition in the Lord's Prayer is a petition for the provision of sustenance and the provision of salvation. Give us this day our daily bread.

[34 : 21] Well, may the Lord bless these thoughts to us. Now, let us pray together. O Lord, our gracious God, we give thanks to thee that we are able to glean from thy word.

We thank thee that it is the bread basket in which we are able to come and find nourishment and nutrition for our soul. And Lord, we pray that day by day as we come to thy word, that we would be built up, that we would be strengthened in our faith, that we would be equipped for every task, and that we might be able to serve our Father in heaven and glorify him, that others may see our good works and glorify our Father in heaven.

O Lord, bless thy truth to us. Give to us this day our daily bread, and give to us every day our daily bread. Help us to keep coming back to the one who is the bread of life, that we might find nourishment in him, knowing that Jesus promises us.

He says to us that whosoever comes to me shall never hunger, and whosoever believes in me shall never thirst. O Lord, bless us then, we pray.

Uphold as we ask. Be gracious to us, we plead. For we ask it in Jesus' name, and for his sake.

Amen. Well, we're going to bring our service to a conclusion by singing from Psalm 103.

[35 : 51] Psalm 103, we're singing a few verses in the Sing Psalms version. Psalm 103, we're singing from the beginning. And as you know, Psalm 103, it's a psalm that emphasizes that our God is a gracious God.

He's a God who gives to us what we do not deserve. He gives to us benefits and blessings, and that's what's emphasized in this psalm. Psalm 103, praise God my soul with all my heart.

Let me exalt his holy name. Forget not all his benefits. His praise my soul in song proclaim. The Lord forgives you all your sins and heals your sickness and distress.

your life he rescues from the grave and crowns you in his tenderness. Psalm 103, to God's praise. Praise God my soul with all my heart.

Let me exalt his holy name. Forget not all his benefits.

[37 : 01] His praise my soul in song proclaim. The Lord forgives you all your sins and heals your sickness and distress.

Your life he rescues from the grave and crowns you in his tenderness.

His tenderness and crowns you in his tenderness. He satisfies your deep desires from his unending source of good.

love and love. So that just like the evil's day, your youth the mayor is renewed.

The Lord is known for righteousness and justice to them draw them apart.

[38 : 15] the Lord is to his love. His ways His mighty deeds to Israel's son.

His mighty deeds to Israel's son. The Lord is merciful and kind.

to anger slow and full of grace. He will not constantly recruit for in his anger I resist.

He does not punish his peace or give our sins their just reward.

Our greatest love has high as men towards all those who fear the Lord.

[39 : 26] Towards all those who fear the Lord. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen.