

I've talked with many people who really aren't sure how they got to where they are today. What I mean by that is that two years ago, they thought they couldn't take a single thing more. Stresses and struggles had piled up to such an extent that it felt like it was all they could do to get out of bed in the morning. And yet, once they did get out of bed, they got hit with something else. That something else may have been relatively small or it may have been a tsunami at any point in their life. The point is, that they were barely holding on and then they got hit with something else. And that reality has played itself out many times over the past couple of years. And while they are still barely holding on most days, they *are* still holding on. They don't know how, but they are. And in the midst of the weariness, there is still some joy and pleasure and beauty on most days. How do we keep going for weeks, months, and years when it often feels like we won't have anything left even for today? That's our topic on the Covenant Weekly Podcast Season 2 Episode 21 - For Today.

### *Theme Music*

During this series, we are starting each week by reading a contemporary translation of The Lord's Prayer. Listen closely and think deeply about what we are praying together.

*Our Father who is in heaven, uphold the holiness of your name.*

*10 Bring in your kingdom so that your will is done on earth as it's done in heaven.*

*11 Give us the bread we need for today.*

*12 Forgive us for the ways we have wronged you, just as we also forgive those who have wronged us.*

*13 And don't lead us into temptation, but rescue us from the evil one.*

Today, we are considering the second request in this prayer:

*Give us the bread we need for today.*

Actually...this isn't written as a request. It is more of a statement. *Give us the bread we need for today.* I actually love the bluntness of this. God. I don't know how I'm going to make it through today so you've got to come through. You need to give us what we need in order to survive today.

It is this part of the prayer that I have been repeatedly coming back to over the last while. Because there have been many days, for me and for others, when we haven't known how we were going to get through. Looking ahead to tomorrow or next week

or next year seemed ludicrous. We've simply needed to get through today and we've needed help with that.

I don't particularly enjoy this posture. Our culture *trains* us to think we need to have things together far beyond today. It starts when we're kids and we're asked, "What do you want to *be* when you grow up?" Early in high school we're already encouraged to plan on our path toward university, college, trades, or other work. Once in college, we've got to be planning for work - either the work of the summer coming up or for when we're done school. And when we're working, we're immediately told we need to plan for how to get ahead, how to save for all the things we want or need, and even how to plan for *stopping* work at retirement. If we're not in a relationship, people talk to us about getting into one. If we're in one, we're asked about its future. Married? What about kids? It seems like our entire lives are spent looking ahead at the days to come - planning for the future.

And there is some peace in this! I can relax if I know I have enough money squirrelled away to pay for something unexpected. I don't want to wonder what I'm going to eat tomorrow. I prefer a fridge full of food and a freezer that will last me even longer. If I wanted to rely on whether the rain fell and the sun shone to provide me with food, I would have become a farmer! I want my days ahead to be planned and secure and known.

But that expectation creates issues when we become aware that my days ahead, no matter how much I *think* they are planned, secure, and known, are out of my control. No amount of planning today can guarantee what tomorrow will be like or bring. It can't guarantee anything for today.

Jesus talks about this with his disciples when he said, "Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat; or about your body, what you will wear. 23 For life is more than food, and the body more than clothes. 24 Consider the ravens: They do not sow or reap, they have no storeroom or barn; yet God feeds them. And how much more valuable you are than birds! 25 Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to your life? 26 Since you cannot do this very little thing, why do you worry about the rest?"

I don't think Jesus is telling us not to work, not to buy or even not to save. He's putting things into perspective and letting us know that a) life is more than those things, and b) God is working with us in the world to provide what is needed.

Sometimes this provision comes through financial means. I've told this story several times, but a few years ago I was preparing for a board meeting where we were going to have to make huge cuts to our budget because we were almost \$20,000 in the hole that year at the church as we headed into our December board meeting. I was anxious about how we would walk through this financial challenge so I got to my office about 45 minutes before the meeting in order to pray and calm my heart. In my office, on my desk was a closed envelope addressed to me at the church. When I eventually opened it, there was a \$20,000 donation to the church from someone I didn't know but was aware of us somehow. They made it anonymously and to this day, I have no idea who they are. But God provided, at that moment, what we needed for that day.

Sometimes this provision can come through support from other people. I'm aware of several stories from the past few weeks where people stepped in to support and encourage those who didn't know *how* they could get through something. Often, the call or message that led to that support came out of the blue. It came at the perfect time, but at a time when there was no way the person offering support could have known just how much their support was needed.

Sometimes this provision comes in completely unmiraculous ways. We are simply provided with *just* enough – just enough energy, patience, food, or solitude – to get through the day.

In a world that tells us we need to have answers and a plan not just for today, but for next week, next year, and for our “five-year plan,” are we able to adopt a different posture? Can we accept that while we may have a plan and some hopes, we don't have answers for tomorrow? Can we accept that all we really have at any given moment is *right now*? The past is over and cannot be changed. The future won't be here until it is and until then it is unknown. We have this moment. This day.

And if we want to make the best in light of the past and move into the future well – actually, if we want the future to be *at all* – this prayer Jesus teaches us to pray embodies the best way to live today. Give us the bread, the provision, we need for *today*. When we're barely holding on – give us what we need for today. When things have gone so bad in the past that we feel overwhelmed by it – give us what we need for today. When things are so great that I'm tempted to fast-forward into my imagined wonderful tomorrow – give us what we need for today.

I'll add this final reminder. By praying this, "Give us the bread we need for today." We remind ourselves that we're not in this alone and not everything is up to us. In addition to telling us that we need to have everything planned out, our world often feeds us the lie that we are to be self-sufficient. Nope. We live interdependent lives, whether we readily admit it or not. We live *in relationships* with other people and in a relationship with a God who is there and ready to provide for our needs. Let's acknowledge that and lean into it as we pray.

*Give us the bread we need for today.*

### *Announcement Music*

- This coming Sunday is going to be a full day!
  - Sunday morning we will be receiving communion together as a part of our gathering.
  - And Sunday afternoon, we are gathering at 3:30 pm for our annual meeting as a church. If you go to the event page on our website, you can see the meeting information. There you will find the Zoom link for those who will be joining us online. And you will find our annual meeting documents. It has our agenda, reports, budget for 2023, nominations for 2023, and a motion we are asking the membership to vote on regarding moving toward renovating our building for the purpose of accessibility. There are paper copies of these documents at the church building or you can read them online.
  - After the meeting on Sunday afternoon, we will be enjoying a pot-luck supper so bring some food to share! We'll put it in the kitchen when you get there and join together to eat following our meeting.
- We've mentioned the Camp Kahquah women's retreat several times over the past month. Well, this Wednesday is when registration opens for that retreat. If you want to go, registering early is important because it will likely fill up *very* quickly. If you want more information or need any help with this process, you can message Angie Limmer at [jonandanj@hotmail.com](mailto:jonandanj@hotmail.com).
- We watched a video on Sunday to get us excited about our Inspire Maker Space Camp coming on the evenings of July 10-13! We are going to have an initial planning and brainstorming meeting on Sunday, March 12 following our morning gathering so please plan on joining us for that. Adult helpers are essential for the success of this impactful program!

- Finally, we are still looking for some adult tech people, some greeters, and some backup help for our coffee ministry. Please consider helping in one of these areas.

As we close today, we will again pray the traditional version of The Lord's Prayer. I encourage you to pray it with me.

*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,  
the power and the glory,  
for ever and ever.  
Amen.*

Blessings to you as you move through the remainder of the week.

*Theme Music*