

Teach Us To Pray: Daily Bread

Luke 11:2-4; Exodus 16:4-7; Exodus 16:19-21

Recap: Last week we looked at the purpose of the line, “Let your kingdom come, let your will be done, on earth, as it is in heaven.” This line presents an opportunity that is reminiscent of the opportunity lost in the garden. Not my will, but your will. Not what I want, what you want. The idea of giving up what you want to grow closer to someone and valuing someone apart from yourself and elevating them over your ambition, in your mind.

Give us this Day, Our Daily Bread: Read Luke 11:2-4. Tim, from the Bible Project, interprets the Lord’s Prayer as this:

“Our Father Who is in the skies, May Your name be recognized as holy.

May Your Kingdom come, and may Your will be done, as it is in the skies, so also on the land.

Our daily provision of bread, give to us today.

And forgive us our debts, just as we have also forgiven those indebted to us.

And don’t lead us to be tested, but deliver us from the evil one. Amen”

The first half of the prayer is about God. It states God’s station as a reminder to us of his reputation. Repeating this prayer reminds us of the love and might of this entity we have trusted. “Father in the skies, be recognized as holy.”

It states a submission of will to this God. Trusting His intent. Repeating this prayer reminds us of His intentions and gives us an opportunity to draw closer to Him by giving up our own way for His way. “May your kingdom come.”

The second half of the prayer shifts the focus to us, starting with “Our daily provision of bread, give it to us today.”

How it Sounds: Most of us are familiar with the line “Give us this day our daily bread.”

Growing up, my mind viewed this in a variety of different ways...largely dependent upon my mindset at the time.

The first way that I regarded it was to think of it as a simple throw away line. People ask God for stuff all the time. Almost like it was included as a “hey, don’t forget to ask” or “it’s rude not to ask”.

The next way I regarded it was as kind of a “gimmie” attitude. Like this is the part of the prayer to ask for stuff. This is the proper time to ask, specifically the 3rd line. This focus is on the *order* of the prayer and not the *content*.

The next way I regarded this line was as a form of begging. Humbly and fearfully asking for a meager meal of bread so as not to offend an angry God who will be ever so furious to hear you ask for anything more than bread. Please don’t starve me because I’m a poor wretch who should despise myself.

After attaining a more mature mindset and understanding the wholesome and trusting nature of the first 2 lines, I realized that this line actually continues the trust and submission of the first 2 lines. Of course He will give me what I need. Why wouldn't He? He's holy, almighty, and always just. This was the closest to the truth, but the way the line itself is framed makes it so much more.

The Construction: The literal speech in Greek is: "*The bread of us, this day, give it to us, today.*" It emphasizes 3 things.

- Emphasis on Bread. It is the bread that we need to survive. The focus is what is needed by you in order to live. "Bread of us" means the bread that is owed, but not owed in debt, owed for survival. The amount that I need to make it out alive. That's the context. It refers to provision.
- Emphasis on Giving. It's not asking for giving fearfully or greedily. It is simply expecting to be given something. As in, "You've already agreed to give. This is when I prefer you give it." Or "That gift you said you had for me, if you could deliver it around this time, that would be great". It is simply arranging a timeframe for what is already promised.
- Emphasis on Today. The bread is of this day. The gift is of this day. The heaviest emphasis in the line is on the concept of today? Why?

Why does it use bread as the reference of provision? Why is the idea of giving expected, as if it were already a done deal? Why is today emphasized so hard? All in just one line

The Deep Dive: Let's start with the 'today' concept. It has the heaviest emphasis. The actual word in Greek is *Epiousios*. It is a compound word and is remarkably specific. It is so specific that in all of Greek literature written before the Dark Ages, it is only ever written down in this prayer. It was never used before or after, in writing, in all of the ancient world.

Jesus spoke this prayer to his disciples in Aramaic, the disciples recorded it in Greek writing. They decided that this word was the best representation of what Jesus originally said. So either the intent behind this word was so important, that they dug up an ultra rare word just to explain it...OR the intent behind this word was so important, that they created a compound Greek word to do it justice.

In either case, it was, in their opinion, really really important to use this word. The compound nature of the word breaks down into "*Upon existence*". Greek speakers would understand it to be "*Upon this moment's existence*". So to put it together, it would be "*The bread of us, upon this moment's existence, give it to us, upon this moment's existence*" or "*The bread of us, needed for this moment's existence, give it to us, upon this moment's existence.*"

Are you catching the meaning yet? What is glaringly absent from this verse's context? It has no concept of the future. No storehouses. No hoarding. No schemes. No keeping it for later just in case. God has me covered, now. Without delay. There is no delay. There is no wait. Only His intent.

It doesn't refer to tomorrow. It doesn't put in a recurring meal order or menu item. It gets as close to this single solitary moment, a single picosecond, a single planksecond as possible. The smallest unit of time. This moment's existence and no further!

Why? What does this verse have against the future? What does it have against planning for the future? To answer that. Let's look at the bread bit.

The Call Back: Can you think of another time in the Bible where God provided bread only for a day? Read Exodus 16:4-7. Each day they were to gather a day's portion and not save any until morning. Guess what they did. Read Exodus 16:19-21.

Did they keep only a day's worth? No. Did they hoard some for later? Yes. Is that a passing grade? No.

Why, if God provides it to fresh each morning, would they try to keep it stale for later? They didn't trust God. They lived in fear. They gathered for themselves and their own interests. These people would have stocked up on toilet paper in 2020...

Why did God not want them to keep sustenance for 2 days, except for the weekend when they rested? They needed to rely on him for their needs and not themselves.

But why? Is there anything wrong with looking after yourself? When you trust in your own stockpiling of resources, that gives you the idea of said resources becoming scarce. And if you believe in scarcity of resources, you now believe that you may need to choose yourself over others in the attainment of said scarce resources. Congratulations, you now believe in Necessary Evil.

But if the Israelites relied on God. They would have believed that they had no need to take extra at the expense of others because God would continue to provide. Scarcity is an illusion in God's camp. All things were made by God, from what we perceive as nothing, and thus, He could always provide more, from nothing. With God in your camp, why would you keep for yourself? Why would you not give as He gives because you expect Him to give more?

Bringing it Together: *"The bread of us, needed for this moment's existence, give it to us, upon this moment's existence."*

God does not want us to trust Him to keep us alive day to day. He wants us to trust Him to keep us alive moment to moment. The verse is a statement of complete faith in God's intention and complete trust in God's capability.

This line in our English could be phrased like this: *"Sustain my life with your power each and every moment, and don't give me any more than what I need right now, because I expect you to give me more in the next moment."*

Does this mean it's bad to make plans? Is it bad to have savings? Doesn't the book of Proverbs say it's unwise to not work and plan?

I say it's not bad to make plans because everyone's moment is different. A fisherman only knows his income when the day's catch comes in. His moment is a day.

A farmer doesn't know if the crop will be good until the harvest, at the end of a full season. Her moment is a year.

A business entrepreneur may make a plastic product that has an expiration date of every seven years. Then it needs replacement. That'd be waiting seven years to see if you get another surge of orders. His moment would be 7 years.

The point is, whatever your interval of income is, don't expect a God who speaks universes into existence, to be stingy. Do your work. Plan well. Budget well. But don't let your income become your God because you suspect that the real God might be stingy.

Whatever your manna harvesting looks like, trust that the manna will be there in the morning. However long you wait until the next morning, trust that the manna will be there in the morning. Don't look to take from others because you don't trust God to give to you. Don't define yourself by providing for yourself. You'll have to go get that manna, but in the meantime, focus on your neighbor, because the manna will be there the next time around. He is faithful.

"Sustain my life with your power each and every moment, and don't give me any more than I what need right now, because I expect you to give me more tomorrow."

Discussion Questions:

- This portion of the prayer places the person in the position of a beggar or a person who works for a daily wage.
 - Why do you think Jesus prayed in this way?
 - Why wouldn't He have prayed for success and abundance?
 - Do you think God wants us to have very little and not plan ahead or save?
- Read Matthew 6:25-34. A man named George Mueller took this to heart and lived his life in this way in the mid 1800s. Read about him at www.georgemuller.org/devotional/the-life-of-george-muller.
 - What would it be like to have this kind of trust in God?
 - George not only believed for his own provision, but also for the provision of the orphans in his care. Many people stepped up and became God's hands here on earth as they provided food and resources to these children. In what ways can we help carry out God's provision to those in need around us?