

Bread for Days

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[0 : 00] Okay, let's read our text, Matthew chapter 6 and starting at verse number 9. Pray then like this, our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.

Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our debts as we also have forgiven our debtors.

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.

But if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

Again, Father, we ask that you would bless to us the reading of your word.

And be with us by the Holy Spirit as we continue in this time together. Sitting under the preaching of your word. We ask this for your glory and our good.

[1 : 12] In the name of our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen. Abundance produces an illusion of independence.

Like mold on leftover mac and cheese. Prosperity provides the perfect context for unhealthy independence.

Individualism. The more you have, the less you think you need others. And when self-sufficiency begins to rot into autonomy, thoughts of God also become increasingly rare.

Why? Well, because you no longer feel your need of him. Abundance produces an illusion of independence.

Jesus told this parable in Luke chapter 12. A rich man's land was very productive. And he thought to himself, what should I do?

[2 : 38] Since I don't have anywhere to store my crops. I will do this, he said. I'll tear down my barns and build bigger ones and store all my grain and all my goods there.

And then I'll say to myself. You have many goods stored up for many years. Take it easy.

Eat, drink, and enjoy yourself. But God said to him. You fool.

This very night, your life is demanded of you. And the things you have prepared, whose will they be? That's how it is.

With one who stores up treasure for himself and is not rich towards God. Jesus is not opposed to money.

[3 : 43] He is not opposed to you having money. Jesus is not opposed to you making more money. If you get a promotion at work and that comes with a bonus and a larger paycheck, praise the Lord and figure out how to use that money for the glory of God.

Jesus is also not opposed to wise preparation for an unknown future. That is not the point of this parable.

What is the point of this parable that Jesus drives at? That's one way I think is helpful. This is a little freebie. This is one way that I think is helpful when you look and you read and you study the parables is to realize the people hearing the parables did not have them written down the way that we do.

So we can kind of slice and dice and dissect parables down to the nth degree. And then sometimes, you know what we do? We miss the point. I've done that.

Maybe you've done that too. What's the point that Jesus is getting at here? What's the point that he drives home? Well, I think the answer to that is in verse number 21. Look at it again.

[4 : 57] That's how it is with one who stores up treasure for himself and is not rich towards God. That person is a fool in God's eyes.

Jesus warns those who have ears to hear.

He warns about the connection between material wealth and spiritual bankruptcy. You see that? He is rich in the things of this world.

But he is not rich. He is bankrupt in the things concerning God. His treasure is here.

And that's where his heart is. His treasure is not God. And as a result, God says to him, You fool.

And Jesus warns those who listen about this connection between having material wealth and also then being spiritually bankrupt.

[6 : 08] Abundance produces an illusion of independence. Jesus understands this magnetic draw towards independence that happens when we have too much.

Jesus understands this. And so he teaches us to pray. Matthew chapter 6 and verse 11.

Give us today our daily bread. Give. This is a change in focus.

If you've been working your way through this prayer with us, or if you're familiar with a prayer, then you should sense this change. There have already been three previous requests, but all three of those requests were related to God.

Do you remember them? Hallowed be your name. What's the second one? Your kingdom come.

And the third? Your will be done.

[7 : 13] All three of the first requests are appropriately directed towards God. But now comes this fourth request, and it should catch our attention. It's a shift in the prayer.

And now suddenly we are concerned about our own needs. Give. Give us. Give us. Give us. Give us. Did you know that your Father in Heaven cares about your physical needs no less than your spiritual needs?

Did you know that? Your Father in Heaven cares about your physical needs no less than your spiritual needs. Give marks a change in focus.

And it is also a plea for mercy. Here's what I mean. Remember that when Adam sinned in the garden, he forfeited the beautiful buffet that was the Garden of Eden.

And it was a beautiful buffet, wasn't it? God planted a garden. It had everything that they needed to survive in it. All kinds of fruits and vegetables and beautiful things to eat.

[8 : 34] It was a beautiful buffet. But Adam forfeited that by his sin. And when he forfeited the beautiful buffet that was the Garden of Eden, he also received as a consequence having to work hard in order to get a cursed earth to produce food through thorns and thistles.

By Adam's sin and by our sin following in the patterns and the behaviors and the practices of our Father, Adam, we deserve deprivation.

That can be a hard one to wrap your brain around. But that is what our sin deserves. Adam was cut off from the beautiful buffet.

And as a consequence has to go into the earth and has to try to make the earth produce food. We deserve deprivation. And yet give is a plea for mercy.

Do you see that? Because if we deserve to be deprived and we are asking God to give us something, but not what we deserve, that's mercy.

[10 : 03] We deserve mercy. We deserve deprivation. But we don't get deprivation. Give is a plea for mercy.

Give also admits childlike dependence on the Father's generosity.

I don't know how things go exactly in your house, but generally speaking, kids don't worry too much about money. Sometimes, kids, you may actually hear your parents, older kids especially, if you're listening and you're paying attention, you may hear your parents say something like, I don't really think our kids understand the value of money.

That's true. That's just straight up a true statement. Kids often don't understand the value of money. You don't know the difference between \$10 and \$100. You just know one is bigger.

But you don't understand the value of that. That's okay. You're a kid. Your parents will teach you.

That's what parents are for. So kids don't worry about money.

[11 : 15] Kids are not fretting about paying the bills. Elam, are you worried about paying the mortgage? Do you know you have to pay a mortgage? Right. But you're hoping that someone pays the mortgage so that you have a house to live in.

There you go. Kids are not, thank you. Thank you for making this illustration so easy on me. Kids are not fretting about the mortgages. But you're also not fretting about the meals.

Any of you under the age of 15 worry about this afternoon, like, hey, I wonder if there's going to be money for us to eat food. Like, is there going to be food on our table when we get home? Are we

going to eat something? No.

Kids are not fretting about these things. You're not worried about doctor bills or clothes or gas for the car or paying for the insurance. Not for a minute are children fretting about this thing.

Because children are totally dependent on their parents. And so give creates for us.

[12:13] When we say give us our daily bread, we are being like children. Childlike dependence on the Father in heaven and saying, we need you to give us what we need.

Because we're not fretting about it. We're not worried about it. We're not thinking about it. But we know we need it. So would you, Father, give us what we need?

Give admits childlike dependence on the Father's generosity. It is a plea for mercy.

And it is a change in focus in the Lord's Prayer. What does Jesus tell us to ask the Father to give us? What are we supposed to ask for?

Well, Jesus says that we should ask for our daily bread. Bread. Most people believe that this is a figure of speech that Jesus uses here called a synecdoche.

[13:25] Anybody want to fess up they know what that nerdy word is? Okay, good. Because I wrote down some ideas for illustrating this. So I'm happy that there's a lot of blank stares.

Synecdoche.

Because you see this time and again in the scripture. So it's important to know what this is. It's not going to say in the margin synecdoche. You just have to kind of pick up on it. Okay, synecdoche.

Here's the definition. It's when part of something represents the whole thing. Or when the whole thing represents a part of something. This is synecdoche.

Here's an illustration. If you hear your parents say, all hands on deck. We have company coming to our home in one hour.

And we need to prepare our house for company. Your parent says, all hands on deck. You know that your parent does not mean that there's going to be little disembodied hands running around your house picking things up.

[14:23] You understand that when you hear that phrase, all hands on deck, it means all of you. Everybody. All of the people need to come and participate in getting ready.

All hands on deck. We had a moment like this. Actually, we had an afternoon like this on Friday. Where we had to have all hands on deck. I even said that. All hands on deck to one of the particular teams at work.

Because we had an issue that needed to be dealt with. And it needed to be dealt with speedily. All hands on deck. That is a synecdoche. Here's a second one. You might say to someone, nice wheels.

What do you mean when you say nice wheels? Nice car. It's the whole thing. But you just say nice wheels. That's synecdoche.

It's a figure of speech that refers to the whole thing. Here's one for adults. We will probably hear this more than we want in the next 60 days or 58 days or whatever it is. The White House issued a statement.

[15:23] We know what that means, right? The White Building in Washington, D.C. did not draft a statement. Somebody inside that White House wrote a statement and issued it to the press.

The whole, the White House, is used to represent a part. One, maybe a team of people, I'm not sure, within the White House who actually did the writing. This is synecdoche.

So when Jesus says, give us our daily bread, he means more than yeast and flour and salt and water that has been baked.

He means more than just bread that we might eat when we sit down at a meal. He means all that we need to live.

All of the necessities of life. He means food. He means clothing. He means money and the ability to earn it.

[16:21] He means health and rest and safety. He means shelter and security. All of these are necessities, not luxuries. Your Father knows that you need them, Jesus says in Matthew chapter 6, just a little later.

He knows that you need them. And so we pray, give us this day our daily bread. Now I suspect that we all believe that no request is too big for our Father in heaven.

But I do wonder if we believe that some requests are too small. Jesus helps to correct us here when he says, give us this day our daily bread.

I do wonder if we believe some requests are too small to bother praying about. They just seem too insignificant, too unimportant, too earthy, too temporal.

As if our Father would be more concerned about a devastating tornado than about the weather at your outdoor event.

[17 : 45] As if our Father would be more concerned about who is the president of the United States than he is about whether or not you have a peaceful night's rest.

As if our Father in heaven is more concerned about a crisis in the housing market than a crisis that is happening in your own home.

Or that your Father is more concerned about geopolitical posturing than whether or not your children get home safely from playing at the playground.

Why do we pray for one? Why do we pray for one? The big requests. And why do we hesitate to pray for the smaller requests?

When Jesus says that we ought to pray, give us this day our daily bread. All that we need for life.

[18 : 56] If there is no request too great, then I submit to you there is also no request that is too small. When it is asked in faith, believing that God will do whatever maximizes his glory.

In other words, this request comes under the first three requests. No request too small, too insignificant, too important.

When it is asked in faith, believing that God will do whatever maximizes his glory. In other words, whatever hallows his name.

Notice that there is one qualifier. In this request, give us today our daily bread.

Daily bread. If I were to tell one of my children, I was going to say a name.

[20 : 08] I did not ask permission to use this illustration, so I am just going to say one of my children, and you will bear with that failure on my part for not asking and being more precise with my story. If I were to say to one of my children, I will deposit for you one million dollars today, or one hundred dollars a week for the next 40 years.

What do you think? What do you think? I mean, economics will tell us you ought to take the money right now, right?

Economics says take the million dollars right now. Time value of money, I think that's called in economics, the only class I got to see on. Time value of money tells you take the million dollars today.

Take it right now. Don't take a hundred dollars a week for the next 40 years. Even though, even though, if you get to the end of that, you'll have more, take the money today.

It's worth more today than it is going to be in 40 years if you wait that long. Taxes will tell you, the time value of money will tell you you ought to take the money right now.

[21 : 25] But let me ask you this, which one of these two gifts will deepen grateful relationship between a child and a parent?

Which one is going to deepen dependence? Which one is going to encourage that we continue to have a healthy, ongoing relationship?

Which one is going to cultivate moderation in the child? Which one is going to guard against both entitlement on one hand and covetousness on the other hand?

Give us today our daily bread. Do you remember what happened when the children of Israel were traveling from Egypt to the promised land and God began to provide them manna?

Every day, they would wake up and there it was. Literal, daily bread. No synecdoche. Straight up, bread on the ground. All you got to do is go pick it up and you can eat for today.

[22 : 44] How kind of God. How gracious of God. How good of Him to be so generous with all of His gifts just to put it on the ground all they have to do is go pick it up. Do you know what the children of Israel did over time?

They said, we want meat. We want meat. We don't want to eat this bread. Give us meat. Do you know what God did?

He gave them what they wanted. He gave them meat. So much meat all at once that it was sickening to them.

They had to learn the hard way. And sometimes we have to learn the hard way. This request is for daily bread.

For daily necessities. What do I need for today? What are the things that are on my mind for today? It's not that God is unable to give the million dollars right up front.

[23 : 47] I am unable to do that for any of my children. So I'm hoping they pick the hundred dollars a week for the rest of my life, right? Because I'm not going to be able. God is not limited.

He is our Father in heaven. It is not about His lack of ability to give it all at once. It is about what is good for fostering and deepening our childlike dependence that results in greater and greater faith in Him.

And that comes from asking and receiving daily bread. Notice finally the pronouns that are in this request.

Who can help me? What's the first pronoun? Us. And what's the second pronoun? Our.

Are these singular pronouns or plural pronouns? It's like we went back to school this week or something, right? These are plural pronouns. What do you think that means?

[25 : 02] That He doesn't say give me this day my daily bread and instead He says give us today our daily bread.

What is Jesus teaching us? Well, don't pray this just for yourself. I think there's a there's actually a broadening of this request.

Here's what I mean. We might pray for ourselves give me the food that I need but if we are praying this request in the way that Jesus presents it to us with these plural pronouns then we will pray also for food service workers and for farmers in the field and for appropriate weather for farmers to put their crops in and get their crops cultivated and get them harvested do you see how this broadens this request?

We might pray for ourselves for clothing and for shelter and for a house that isn't breaking down and for a water heater that doesn't need to be replaced and so on we might pray for those things those would be appropriate requests tied in with this particular portion of the Lord's prayer but if we're praying for us and our then we will also pray for truck drivers and for pilots moving goods and services and for firefighters who are going to show up and help to make sure that the homes that we live in stay there even if we have a fire do you see how this broadens the request?

We might pray ourselves for money the money that we need for today the money that we need for this bill the money that we need for an upcoming medical procedure we might pray those things but when we pray it we are also praying against unemployment and we're praying against poverty we're praying for businesses that make their jobs available so that people can work for a living and not be idle like Paul tells the Thessalonians when we pray ourselves for rest and for security we are also praying for safe neighborhoods and for police officers and for governments and rulers that will enable followers of Jesus to live a quiet life like Paul writes to Timothy and the Thessalonians do you see how give us this day our daily bread broadens this request out and helps us to be mindful of others and not just ourselves

[27 : 55] I wonder has abundance deceived you with the illusion of independence many of us have stable jobs many of us have recurring direct deposits our paycheck goes right into our account some of us it might take a day or two before we even notice if for some reason a paycheck didn't get to our account we have well stocked pantries and freezers some of us have growing savings accounts praise the Lord some of us have well funded fully diversified retirement portfolios these are all wonderful blessings wonderful gifts from God but just like the rich man in Jesus' parable I ask you have these good gifts deceived you into doubting that you need the Father's provision every single day perhaps perhaps you are embarrassed to pray for requests that seem too small and too insignificant or just maybe praying for such things feels kind of childlike you know maybe you wonder if it makes you look spiritually immature to be praying for your daily needs but remember childlike dependence deepens faith don't be more spiritually sophisticated than Jesus

Jesus Jesus says that we ought to pray for our daily bread don't be more spiritually sophisticated than Jesus and say I would never pray for that request it's just too small it can't possibly matter so let me ask you these questions and see if we can begin to crack open perhaps some of the pride perhaps some of the doubt that has crept in that we need God that we need our Father for every day let's see if we can crack open some of that what troubles your heart today what troubles your heart today those would be excellent requests to bring before your Father under this heading of give us this day today our daily bread what troubles your heart what causes you to worry oh oh make that list and then pray about every one of those things on that list these are the things that I'm worrying about today and then commit all those to your

Father and say I can't keep worrying about these it's going to drive me crazy I know you care about them would you give us our daily bread in all of these matters what stirs up anxiety and fear in your

heart what makes you anxious take those things to the heavenly Father here's one what makes you sad take that take that to your heavenly Father that falls under this heading of the of the Lord's prayer give us today our daily bread this makes me sad Father would you do what seems best in this situation and give me exactly what I need what would make you smile what would delight your heart to receive from God your

Father in heaven knows what you need before you ask but asking demonstrates childlike dependence that deepens faith I'm gonna bring Kenzie a fig bar every Sunday for the rest of my life until I can no longer do it I'm just gonna keep giving them to her but do you know what really makes me smile when she comes and looks up at me and I know what she needs she needs a fig bar before worship I wonder if our Father in heaven has that same feeling if I can use that word he knows what we need he is going to continue providing everything we need whether we ask for it or not but consider how much joy and delight it gives the Father in heaven when his children come to him and say you know what I need just give me what

I need for today children are innocently unconcerned about the size of their requests and that kind of dependence on the Father it pushes up against greedy materialism and also this self centered individualism that we talked about at the beginning where I just don't think I need anybody else children are innocently unconcerned about the size of their requests I wonder if that needs to be more true of us as children of the heavenly Father innocently unconcerned about the size of our requests because it pushes back materialism and it pushes back individualistic thinking independent thinking and this is important for us to remember because as with the previous requests praying this request sincerely means a willingness to be

[34 : 45] God's means for making this request true for others if we pray this sincerely give us today our daily bread then that also means being willing to be the means by which God answers this request in someone else's life Paul talks about this in 1st Thessalonians I've been thinking a lot about this text and I invite you to join me in thinking about it always pursue what is good for one another and for all may God give us eyes to see the needs and the worries and the hurts of others around us and cause us by the spirit's power to be more like Jesus in our merciful concern and gracious compassion for those that we encounter who are hurting if dependence sorry if abundance produces an illusion of independence then childlike dependence will deepen faith when was the last time your prayer request seemed so insignificant that you hesitated to pray

Jesus teaches us to pray and so when you pray pray like this our father in heaven hallowed be your name your kingdom come your will be done on earth as it is in heaven give us today our daily bread father you know our needs before we ask for them and yet you are delighted as any father or mother would be to hear the requests from a child innocently unconcerned about the size of the request father would you please help us to be more consistent and more mindful of praying for these things that we are tempted to believe don't matter or don't require prayer would you please help us to bring to you the things that trouble us and the things that cause us anxiety and the things that make us sad and the things that would make us happy that would give us joy for today and then would you please help us gracious father would you please help us to receive whatever you give whatever you provide as evidence of your loving care and your concern for us for today help us to show you gratitude and help us to live by faith holy spirit would you please help us as we take a moment now to prepare to receive communion we don't know what you have done holy spirit in the hearts of others in this room and so in these moments would you please just draw our attention to our own hearts the ways that your word has pricked our hearts this morning and the ways that you are working in us right now and and pointing!

out some sin or some weakness! or some failure would you please help us as we take time right now to prepare to receive the Lord's Supper Father you are good and you do good we are grateful to be your children grateful to be brought into a relationship with you by the life and the death and the glorious resurrection of our Savior the Lord Jesus Christ Lord Jesus thank you for taking a body and going all the way to the cross thank you that you know what it feels like to be in a body like ours you know our weaknesses thank you for your kindness to forgive us our sins not just in these moments when we have had them brought to our attention by the Holy Spirit but in an ongoing active way thank you for your blood that still pleads for our forgiveness before the Father we are grateful to receive your gracious forgiveness and ask that you would continue to keep us in faith in the name of the Lord Jesus we pray Amen