

The Lord's Prayer: Prayer of Dependence
Matthew 6:25-34
August 15, 2010

This morning we will continue to unpack the phrases of The Lord's Prayer. Over the past couple of weeks we have considered the first two phrases – especially as they lead us toward finding peace in our lives. I want to suggest to you this morning that there is great peace to be found in the prayed phrase, *Give us this day our daily bread*.

As we begin, I want to point something out to you. The first two parts of The Lord's Prayer point us toward God – the God who is intimate with us, yet all-powerful and holy; the God whose will is all-important and to whom we are called to submit ourselves. In other words, the beginning of the prayer leads us toward a worshipful mindset as we confess who God is.

Once we worship, then Jesus tells us we can move toward petitioning God. Yet, even as we petition God, we will see that inherent in the petition is another confession about who God is – He is the source of all that we need – and *we* need more than food.

In a day when our refrigerators are full and our pantry's are stocked, why would we need to pray for more daily bread? We live in a generation where a lot of us need to stop eating so much bread; so, why would we pray for more daily bread?

Here's why. Because the issue is not really bread. In fact, in these six words Jesus gives us life lessons that will help us understand how to achieve inner peace in our lives.

1. The first thing we learn is to seek *God* as the answer to our needs.

Whenever I begin to look beyond God for an answer to my needs I find myself getting frustrated and anxious. For example, in this early 21st century America, we find many people who are looking to the federal and state governments to satisfy their every need. Sometimes, even I find myself getting sucked into that mentality. When I think that Social Security might not be around for me to draw on for income when I retire, I get irritated. You can think of a hundred and one ways in which our American society has become accustomed to finding peace by suckling at the nipple of the government.

When you think about relying on God for your needs, it just may be that your theology is like that of Woody Allen, who accuses God of being an underachiever. He writes, "I would believe, if only God would give me a clear sign like making a large deposit in my name in a Swiss bank."

You may not end up with a divinely funded Swiss bank account; however, Jesus reminds his followers that their *every* daily need is supplied by their heavenly Father, not the powerful and well-resourced Roman government of his day. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus reminds his

listeners (and us) that our heavenly Father is more loving and competent than even our earthly parents. He says:

“You parents—if your children ask for a loaf of bread, do you give them a stone instead? Or if they ask for a fish, do you give them a snake? Of course not! So if you sinful people know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give good gifts to those who ask him.” (Matthew 7:9-11)

I understand that verse because I’m a dad. I have two kids. And I understand that as a father, God has built into me a desire and a fulfillment that comes in meeting the needs of my children. I care what their needs are. I’m interested in their needs. And I will do everything that I can and everything within my ability to meet their needs. That doesn’t mean I fulfill their every request. That doesn’t mean that they get everything they want. But what it does mean is that part of what it means for me to be a father to my kids is I am absolutely committed to meeting their needs.

If that’s true of me as an imperfect Father with incomplete knowledge and limited resources, how much more true is it of our heavenly Father who is all powerful?

Now, maybe you are one of those people in the world who is not really convinced that God could love you like that. Or, maybe you believe that God is only concerned with the bigger things in life like war and famine. I want you to know today: He’s interested in your life; He is your Father and He delights in you.

Listen to these words out of Romans 8:32 where Paul says, *“Since God did not spare even His own Son, but gave Him up for us all, won’t God who gave us Christ also give us everything else.”*

Here’s an honest question. Are you willing to take God at His word? God says that he will meet your needs. The question is do we really believe that. I think a lot of the anxiety we have in our lives comes from the fact that we don’t really believe.

I want to say to you that the closer you get to Christ, the more you get to know Him, the more intimate your relationship is with Him, the greater your confidence will be that as a loving Father He’ll meet your needs. And the more He will build a track record with you that will show that He is always faithful. That’s one of the reasons that I keep encouraging everyone in this congregation to engage in Bible study – like the Disciple Bible study that is beginning in a couple of weeks. Because the more you get to know God, the greater your confidence will be in Him ...and that will affect your level of peace in every part of your life.

2. Declare your daily dependence.

Notice something interesting about this prayer that Jesus teaches: two times in the space of six words He reminds us that this prayer is day by day. He says, “Give us *today* our *daily* bread.”

The word used for *daily* was one that referred to the perishable items on a shopping list – the items that one would need to get fresh each day – not enough for tomorrow, not enough for next week, but one day at a time. I have a cousin who lives in Rome, Italy, and there are certain food items that they still go to the market and pick up fresh each day.

It’s hard for us to connect with this concept of *daily* in our modern world of freezers and buying in bulk. So, the truth is this – while you still need to understand and claim that your food is supplied by God (and can be taken away by Him); maybe the search for daily bread is not really a felt need of yours. For some of you here this weekend you have an spiritual need that really is a day to day issue of whether or not you’re going to trust God. Some of you are in a marriage relationship, and for you right now the issue is not whether you will have food tomorrow. The issue is can I trust God to keep my marriage together today. For some it’s an issue of finances or it could be an addiction. It’s probably not food that’s the day to day issue in your life. But your need for God is still just as great.

There are issues in your life where day to day you have to trust God. This is very important point: God wants you to ask daily not so He can hear you beg but because *we* have short memories. God wants *us* to be reminded that He is the one who supplies our needs.

In the story of the Exodus, as the children of Israel wandered in the desert God provided food for them. Each day they would find manna (which literally translated means *what is it?*) on the ground. If they tried to gather enough for more than one day, it would spoil. God wanted them to learn that they could rely on Him (and learn to turn to Him afresh) with each new day.

What is your manna? What is it that every 24 hours it drives you to say “God, I trust You. I declare my dependence on You.”

God promises to provide for us. In fact, look at the verse, Philippians 4:19 “*God will supply all that you ever need from His glorious resources in Christ Jesus.*”

One of the truths that it would behoove us to learn is that prayer is not primarily for God, it is for us. As we talk to God, and if we let the Holy Spirit guide our thoughts, we will find that we can grow a great deal in our understanding of who God is and who we are called to be. Listen to these words from a prayer at the end of Proverbs chapter 30:

Give me neither poverty nor riches.

Give me just enough to satisfy my needs.

For if I grow rich I may deny You and say ‘Who is the Lord?’

And if I'm poor I may steal and thus insult God's holy name."

The message of this portion of The Lord's Prayer is very simple and straight forward; yet so very hard for us to remember and practice: God, alone, is the source of all we need; and we need to go to Him daily for our own spiritual health and inner peace.