

Give Us Our Daily Bread

Տուր Մեզի Ամենօրեայ Հացը

Exodus 16:1-5

John 6:31-35

We move on to the fourth petition in the Lord's Prayer: **"Give us this day our daily bread."**

Jesus started his prayer with three petitions. He prayed and asked for his *Father's name* to be holy in the midst of us, he asked for his *Father's kingdom* to come and rule over us, and He asked for his *Father's will* to be implemented in our lives. In other words, whatever is in heaven, let the same be on earth. **"Heaven, come down to earth."**

Once we experience God's holy presence and identity, His authority as King, and His will being our will, then asking for bread makes sense. Why do we need bread? We need bread to be nourished. We are created with bodies, which should be fed and nourished. Our bodies are important. We need to take care of them. Yet, asking for daily bread has to have a spiritual context. We need the first three petitions that prepare the way to continue asking for daily bread. Jesus knew this and said: **"Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God"** (Matthew 4:4 ESV). This means bread is important to sustain our lives. Yet, bread alone without God's word and presence, what's the use of it?

Let us study this petition.

1. From "You" to "Us".

There is a shift of the pronoun from **"You"** to **"Us."** Shift from "Your name, Your kingdom, Your will" to "our bread, give us, forgive us, lead us from temptation." If the first three requests were dealing with God doing things in our cosmos, now we are asking Him to interfere in our daily life, in the economy, to sustain life

(bread) and relationships (forgiveness) and to shield us, protect us against the evil (temptations). **Economy, relationship and protection.**

2. Bread.

In Syria, when I went to the bakery to buy bread, there was only one kind of bread, namely pita bread. Now when I go to the bread section in the market, I am overwhelmed with many different kinds: white bread, whole wheat, multi grain, bread with cheese, pita, *lavash*, Afghani bread, hamburger or hotdog buns, you can go on and on. Bread in the Middle East is the most basic food for everyone. In Syria and Lebanon the government subsidizes bread so that everyone can buy bread.

Two ideas:

a. Everything we need for our bodily well-being:

Early in the 16th Century, Martin Luther asks in one of his catechisms (a discipleship tool): “What is meant by daily bread?” He answers, “Daily bread” means everything we need for our bodily well-being.”¹ Indeed, when we pray for daily bread, we are asking God to be with us in our daily work. The food cycle starts with the farmer who plants, then all the workers harvesting the crop, to the packing facilities, to the truck drivers who take the food to the grocery stores, then the grocery store workers, and then we who consume it. Do you see the cycle? Because of food we have a society that can plan, think, study, work, create, play music, innovate... etc. “Daily Bread” means “everything we need for our bodily well-being.”

As we read in our passage in Exodus, God provides manna to teach the Israelites who He is. God loves to feed His people. My wife gets really worried if any of us are hungry. If I bring a guest by surprise, she would do everything just to put “the bread” on the table. That is a characteristic of our God.

We read in the Heidelberg Catechism:

“Give us this day our daily bread.” That is: be pleased to provide us with all our bodily needs so that we may acknowledge that thou art the only

source of all that is good, and that without thy blessing neither our care and labor nor thy gifts can do us any good. Therefore, may we withdraw our trust from all creatures and place it in thee alone. (Heidelberg Catechism of 1563)

By asking our Father to provide our daily bread, we are acknowledging Him as the only source of provision. The ONLY...

b. Bread could also mean everlasting life.

We should also understand that Jesus is not just asking God to provide the “bread.” He, himself became the Bread of life.

It is not a coincidence that Jesus was born in Bethlehem (*Beit Lahm*) House of bread.

“I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst. (John 6:35 ESV)

Here Jesus goes much further in providing us physical nourishment. Jesus is **interested to feed us eternally.** The “earthly bread” will make us hungry again. And it is so true. Nothing can satisfy us. We will always need more. The bread Jesus gives is eternal, like Living Water.

3. Give US and not ME

I read about Lord’s Prayer:

You cannot say the Lord’s Prayer, and even once say "I".

You cannot pray the Lord’s Prayer, and even once say "my".

Nor can you pray the Lord’s Prayer and not pray for **another**.

For to ask for "*our*" daily bread, you include your sister and brother!

All God’s children are included in each and every plea.

From the beginning to the end of it, it does not once say "me."

(Author unknown)

It is **our** bread. We care for each other. We pray for each other's work, so that God would provide us with work. We help each other. We find the needs of the community and reach out to the needy. Give US, and just me. The important word that I taught you some weeks ago is interdependence and not independence.

4. Daily

Do you realize that this is a prayer for **daily** bread, and not bread in abstract time? Why daily? (In the passage of exodus)

Behold, I am about to rain bread from heaven for you, and the people shall go out and gather a day's portion every day, that I may test them, whether they will walk in my law or not. (Exodus 16:4 ESV)

Gather just one day's portion. What did they do?

And Moses said to them, "Let no one leave any of it over till the morning." But they did not listen to Moses. Some left part of it till the morning, and it bred worms and stank. And Moses was angry with them. (Exodus 16:19-20 ESV)

The Israelites did not trust God, gathered more manna and had it all spoiled. I wish humanity could learn the meaning of "daily." We should put limits to how much time we should give to work.

Only in America we find people who gather so much things that they need to rent storage space. We have so much; we don't know what to do.

I pray that you do understand when you pray to God to provide us with our daily bread. You are surrendering your daily economical life to God. You are declaring that God is the daily Provider for your income; God is daily Provider for everything you have.

There is a reason not to be anxious about tomorrow. Dallas Willard clarifies this by saying: "To have provisions in hand today does not guarantee we will have them tomorrow when we need them." Willard writes, "Today I have God, and he

has the provisions. Tomorrow it will be the same. I will have God and he will have the provisions. So I simply ask God today for what I need for today.”²

There is nothing wrong for having a savings account. But something is wrong when you do not give to God, when you do not generously give to God. When all you think is about the black days, you believe God never helped you or gave you anything.

5. Today (This day)

God loves Today. Some live in the past. Some always say, “What happened to the good old days?” Well, Mr. and Mrs. they are gone, and God will give new days. The past will never come again. Stop looking back...

Some live wishing tomorrow would be better, so they wait for tomorrow to come. The problem with tomorrow is that it will never arrive...

Jesus loves today. In his first sermon, he read a short passage from Isaiah:

“The Spirit of the Lord is on me,
because he has anointed me
to proclaim good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners
and recovery of sight for the blind,
to set the oppressed free...

Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.” (Luke 4:18-21ESV)

-After having meal a with Zacchaeus, Jesus said: “**Today** salvation has come to this house...” (Luke 19:9ESV)

-The crucified thief asked for Jesus for salvation: “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.” And he said to him, “Truly, I say to you, **today** you will be with me in Paradise.” (Luke 23:42-43ESV)

-In Hebrews, the author stresses the word Today. He says: “**Today**, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion.”(Hebrews 3:15 ESV)

This is the day God has granted. This is the day God saves: today. When we are asking our Father to provide us our daily bread TODAY, we are asking His kingdom to come in us TODAY, His salvation to be in us TODAY, His Spirit to be in us TODAY. Please experience God in your heart TODAY. Satan loves to teach us to postpone things. Not today, postpone it till tomorrow. Not with Jesus. Today give us our daily bread, TODAY. Today may your name be holy, your kingdom rule, and your will be done in US.

What is application of the fourth petition?

1. Everyday remind yourself that God is the Provider of your daily bread.

2. Do not lose the focus of your prayer. First things First. May you seek His Kingdom and His will first. Being in tune with God will guide you in what to do with the “bread” that you receive.

3. Remember you are asking for OUR BREAD. How the world would be different if we really meant what we prayed!

Some have more “bread” and worry about how to protect it. Some wonder how to take care of the minimal needs of their families and yet, ironically, seek to share what little they have. A Latin American prayer puts it this way: “O God, to those who have hunger give bread; and to those who have bread (give) the hunger for justice.” To pray “give us” leads us into solidarity with the whole family of God.³

4. Use whatever is given to you. The young boy brought five loaves and two fish. Peter and the disciples brought their boats and nets. You have your share of daily bread. The Israelites gathered the food that came from heaven. The farmer put the seeds in the soil then he slept. When you ask for daily bread, bring yourself and your means to God.

5. We have harvest banquet, Founders Day banquet, Merchant Luncheon, Men’s Forum Breakfasts, Dorcas Guild Luncheons, personal food preferences. Those are part of our daily life. All those activities should be focused on one thing. **The bread of Life.**

I am the bread of life. Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. This is the bread that comes down from heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die. I am the living bread that came down from heaven. 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.” (John 6:48-51 ESV)

So let us approach the table that our Lord Jesus Christ prepared.

Amen

- 1 Martin Luther, *The Larger Catechism* P 565
2. Dallas Willard, *The Divine Conspiracy*, P 261.
3. Darrel Johnson, *Fifty Seven Words Changed the World*. P64