

Give Us This Day Our Daily Bread

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[0:00] Take your Bibles this morning. You can be looking for Matthew chapter 6. I guess you know or knew we would be there.

! Matthew chapter 6 and go ahead and find verses 9 through 13. I'll read that in just a moment as we continue. This study of the, quote, Lord's Prayer, which of course is a pretty detailed study of Jesus' teaching on prayer as He taught His disciples and through them as He teaches us.

But before we get to the text, what an age we live in. Have you thought about that lately? I think we think about it about every day. We come in contact with new things, especially in the field of technology, and we think, what a day we live in.

I mean, you know, today with iPhones and iPads and smartphones and apps, aren't you tired of hearing about apps? You know, I'm really tempted to do a little survey to find out how many of you even know what an app is.

Okay? Of course, it's short for application. And the thousands and thousands of them that are out there that you can purchase or have on your, quote, smartphone.

[1:34] Some of you have those. I don't. And I'm not sure that I ever want one. But all these apps for every conceivable thing. What a day we live in. What an age we live in. I mean, we have really become a culture of technological geeks.

You know, it used to be a geek with someone out of the ordinary, some weird person out there. But we're all becoming that, or at least some of us are. Your pastor probably excluded.

And the Internet. Think about that. The Internet. Amazing. Did you know that according to Netcraft, that's a website, by the way, Netcraft and Netcraft is an Internet research firm.

According to them, as of March 2012, there are now 644 million websites.

Now, for some of you who really end all this, you're thinking, well, I really thought there'd be more than that. But that astounded me. 644 million websites.

[2:40] Now, I know what you're thinking. And you're thinking, Pastor, what does that have to do with prayer? Well, I'm glad you asked. Did you know that you can now have all of your praying done for you on the Internet?

I'm serious. I'm not kidding. You can have it all done for you. You can just jot this website down.

Informationageprayer.com. Go ahead and write it down because you may need to know this.

And then, too, I really encourage you to check this out to make sure your pastor is not just speaking ministerially. That means lying. I'm not lying to you.

Informationageprayer.com. Let me read just a little bit from the homepage. Welcome to

Informationage Prayer. We provide information on prayer.

That's okay. And a unique computer prayer service. While here, you can pray along with streaming sounds.

[3:49] And, now listen to this, request to have a computer read some prayers in your name. I'm not kidding. I'm not making this up.

And then it adds, sign up today and you will receive ten free points which you can use to request prayers. I'm not sure exactly what that means. And, folks, basically this is an outsourcing service for prayer.

An outsourcing service for those people who are too busy to pray themselves. That's really what this is.

Informationageprayer.com allows subscribers to leave the praying to their computers. This company's computers.

And for \$3.95 a month. I know you were interested in how much this cost. I think you could afford \$3.95 a month. Just \$3.95 a month. And the computer uses text-to-speech software to recite the

Lord's Prayer every day and to do it in your name.

[5:02] And if you don't want them to do the Lord's Prayer, there are other prayers to choose from. A whole list of them. And they will pray. This computer, not a person, but the computer, will pray it in your name.

I mean, what could be better than that? What a day we live in. And, by the way, they're very ecumenical because for a little extra charge each month, they also offer Catholic users a rosary service to, quote, show God that you're serious, end quote.

And the company also automatically recites prayers for Muslims. It does. And they promise, now get this, they promise to point the speakers in the way of Mecca.

Toward Mecca. Now, I know you think I'm making this up, but I am not. I wish that I was. This is what we've come to.

Now, I know we're laughing and I'm making fun and I intend for it to be humorous. I don't even have to make it that way. It just simply is humorous and yet sad, isn't it?

[6:15] Very sad. And really sacrilegious. Really an affront to God. I mean the very idea.

That we could, because we're too busy, have a computer, do I pray. It's ridiculous. But we as God's people, true followers of Christ, we know what prayer is all about, don't we?

We really do. And we're learning even more, because Jesus taught us how to pray. And here in Matthew 6 and verse 9, and you've turned to it, this is what Jesus said.

After this manner, therefore, pray ye. And again, I'm quoting it in the King James. Amen. Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.

Thy kingdom come, thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.

[7:22] And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen. Right out of the King James Version of Matthew 6, 9 and following.

An incredible prayer. Or, again, model for praying. A model that has tremendous depth to it. It really does. Because we're taking each line of this prayer and considering so much that Jesus and the Bible is teaching us about prayer.

The depth of this prayer. Now, here's what we have learned from this model prayer. We have learned that prayer is about resting. Resting in God our Father.

Our Father in heaven. That's how Jesus said to pray. We have learned that prayer is about reverencing. Reverencing. Reverencing God. Jesus said pray in this way.

[8:25] Hallowed be your name. Thy name. And we have learned that prayer is about reigning. Reigning in the kingdom of God. Jesus said pray this way.

Your kingdom come. And then we learned last week that prayer is about resigning. Resigning. That is resigning to the will of God.

Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Vance Havaner, a great preacher of yesteryear, he used to say, nothing is ever settled till it is settled right.

And nothing is ever settled right until it is settled with God. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. And now we're ready for the fifth lesson.

Because we've come to the fifth phrase or fifth segment of this prayer. The fifth lesson on prayer. Prayer is about requesting.

[9:27] Pretty simple. Pretty simple to see. Prayer is about requesting. That is requesting what we need from God.

It is that, isn't it? Give us this day, Jesus said. Give us this day our daily bread.

Prayer is about requesting. Now, at this point, I would have you notice something. That the first half of this model prayer is exclusively focused upon God.

Have you noticed that? What we have looked at thus far. As we've taken phrase by phrase. We've learned that this prayer. The first half of it is focused upon God.

We are to embrace Him and trust Him as our Father. Right? And we are to reverence and worship His glorious name in our prayers.

[10:27] And we pray for His kingdom to come. And we pray for His will to be done. It's all about Him. Right? The first half of this prayer is all about God.

And, dear people, that in itself is part of the lesson that we should not miss here. I think Jesus is saying, when you pray, start with God.

Now, analyze your own prayer life and see if that's the way it is for you. I'm frank to admit that generally, in my prayers, I start with me.

And yet, if we're to take this as a model for praying, then I think we are to assume that Jesus is saying to us that when you pray, start with God.

Start there with His person, His works, His glory, and His glorious kingdom, and His will to be done. But when you pray, start with God.

[11 : 30] Then, move in your prayers to man, to yourself, to others. I think this is part of the lesson.

And so here in verse 11, the focus changes, doesn't it? Clearly, there's a dramatic change, a dramatic shift in focus. Jesus now teaches us to pray for ourselves and for one another.

I mean, the rest of the prayer is that. Give us, He says. Forgive us. Lead us.

Deliver us. And so, the first of these is, give us this day our daily bread. So, prayer is about requesting.

It's about requesting. Some of the most basic things, requesting what we need from God. And though this is a prayer about requesting some of the basic things that we need, it is not just a basic part of the prayer.

[12 : 34] There's nothing basic about it. And so, I want you to learn, I want us to learn this morning, three truths about this aspect of praying. Three truths.

First of all, the devotion of this request. There's devotion in here. Second, the dependence of this request.

And third, the depth. I mentioned that a moment ago. There's depth in the entire prayer. But there's depth in this part of the prayer. The depth of this request.

The devotion, the dependence, the depth. And so, first of all, the devotion of this request. The devotion of it.

Now, even though this part of the prayer focuses on me. On us. Even though the focus here is personal at this point in the prayer.

[13 : 38] This aspect of praying is still intensely spiritual. But I would go a step further and say that this portion of this part of the prayer is also profoundly worshipful.

And we need to see that in this part of the prayer. It's worshipful. In fact, I would say to you that no higher requirement for worship exists than for a child of God to enter into the presence of his or her heavenly father and to unashamedly declare, Lord, I cannot make it on my own.

This is important. In this prayer. This is how it is worshipful. And in our worship, that is required.

Not just in the context of prayer, but in the context of life. As we are worshipers of our Lord and our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.

And it is this, that we admit to him that we can't make it. That we're utterly dependent upon him. And so you see, when you daily prayer, and I want to emphasize the word daily.

[14 : 52] Daily pray. This is what Jesus said. When we daily pray for our daily needs, you're saying a number of things in devotion.

You're saying, first of all, that you believe in the power of God. Do you believe in the power of God when you pray? If you don't, then what's the point?

What's the point? If you don't believe in the power of God, but this is what your devotion is. In prayer. That you believe in the power of God.

It's power. Job prayed, by the way, in Job 42 and verse 2. He said in his prayer, in his speech to God, he said, I know that you can do everything.

That's what Job said. Do you believe that? Do you believe and know what Job said he knew in prayer?

[15 : 53] That is a belief in the power of God. The angel Gabriel, remember when the angel Gabriel came to Mary? Mary is now with child and she's known no man. And so the angel comes and says and announces to her that the child in her womb is conceived, has been conceived by the Holy Spirit.

This is a miracle. And so the angel Gabriel said to Mary in Luke 1.37, For with God nothing shall be impossible.

Do you believe that? I tell you, dear people, if the virgin birth is something possible for God, then what is it you could bring to God that would be impossible for him?

See, we're talking about this devotion in prayer. When you come and pray, God, give me this day. Give us this day.

Our daily bread. This is a prayer of devotion. A request of devotion. A devotion to the power of God. You fully believe in the power of God. Paul gave glory to God in Ephesians chapter 3 and verse 20. [17:04] And he said this famous passage, and you know it. Now to him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think according to the power, that's his power, that works in us.

Do you believe that promise? Do you believe in that power? So when you pray this way, you're saying, I believe in the power of God. This is your devotion. Did you know that that is what Jesus is teaching us here? When he says, give us this day our daily bread.

But also, when you daily pray for your daily needs, you are saying, Lord, I believe in the promises of God.

Not just in the power of God, but the promises of God. That is, you are confessing by praying in this way. You're confessing your faith in the promises God has made in behalf of his beloved children.

[18:08] That's what you're believing. Do you remember something David wrote in Psalm 37 and verse 25? You'll remember it as soon as I quote it.

David said, I have been young and now I am old. Yet, I have never seen the righteous forsaken. Nor his descendants begging bread. That's what David said. This is the promise of God. Do you believe that promise? Do you?

Really? And what about this one? In Philippians chapter 4 and verse 19, the apostle Paul testified without reservation, without qualification.

He said, my God is, shall supply all your needs according to his riches and glory by Christ Jesus. Isn't that a great passage?

[19:03] That's a promise. Do you believe that promise? When you pray? This is basic. This is prayer 101, dear people.

And what about the words of Jesus? As a matter of fact, we're here in Matthew chapter 6 looking at his instructions or his lesson on prayer itself. But on down through the chapter, when you get to verse 25, listen to what he said there.

Therefore, I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air. For they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?

Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature? And then he goes on to give a lesson on worry. But the whole context here is prayer.

[20:07] God knows how to take care of us. And he promises to do that every day. And this is what you're devoted to. When you pray in this way, Lord, give us this day our daily bread.

You're believing in the power of God and you're believing in the promises of God. This is the prayer of devotion. And you're saying something else too, by the way. You're saying, I believe in the person of God.

That is his character. His good character. His supreme character. That's what you're saying I believe in. See, when you pray in this way, you are humbly acknowledging God's willingness to give.

Think about that. His willingness. Not his reluctance. To give. And so, what I'm saying is, when you ask God to give you your daily needs of life, you don't have to somehow persuade him.

See, we don't understand because we try to approach God and treat God as we do one another. And when we want something from someone else, a friend or someone, we're very careful to word it in just a way so that somehow we can persuade them.

[21:45] We do it just automatically. We're just so good at it. We know how to say it just the right way. And so, when you come to God in prayer, you're not coming to him to try to somehow convince him or persuade him in choosing your words carefully and phrasing your prayer smartly in a way that's going to bring him over to your side.

Have you ever thought about that? Have you ever caught yourself praying that way? As if you were asking something from a mere person?

Using body language and words and phrases and different things and even maybe emotions and crying so that we can somehow persuade them. That's not what we do with God.

We're not framing our requests in just the right way so as to make our case to God. Put that aside.

You're not trying also, not trying to twist his arm. You're not trying to somehow overcome his reluctance to meet your needs when he has already promised to meet those needs.

[23:00] What a distorted view many of us have of God. He's not a mere man. We don't speak to him and come to him and pray in a certain way as we would make a request from a man.

He's God and he knows your heart. He knows what you need. And you come and you pray and you say, Give us this day our daily bread and you're devoted there not only to his power and his promises, but also to his person, the person of God.

Our Heavenly Father delights to give us above what we need. How we need to be convinced of that. So ask him. Ask him.

Ask him. The devotion of this request. God's power. His promises. His person. Second, the dependence. Of this request.

The dependence of it. This kind of praying reveals an utter dependence upon God. For our daily needs.

[24:12] An utter dependence. And so, this kind of praying consists, first of all, of a confession. Not a confession of sin.

That's part of prayer. But that's not what I'm talking about here. This prayer, this request of dependence, first begins with a prayer of confession.

And what is it that we are confessing when we pray to the Lord, give us this day our daily bread?

We're confessing, Lord, I am not self-sufficient. That's a part of this prayer.

I'm not self-sufficient. Now, I know that's hard for many of us. Most of us. For a number of reasons. One, because we're Americans. And for most of us, though we are kind of losing this in our culture, this self-dependence and self-reliance is woven into the fiber of our being.

We're Americans. We're Americans. Self-determined and reliant and self-sufficient. And in some context, that's not a bad thing.

[25:22] It just has no place in our relationship with God. No place at all. And especially in prayer. We must confess.

And in our praying this way, we are confessing daily, Lord, I depend totally upon you for everything I need.

Now, in case you are misunderstanding, we are to work. Okay. We're not just to simply let go and let God.

That's not what Jesus is teaching us here. There's no excuse here to be lazy. Not at all. I tell you, the church is not a welfare state. God expects you to work.

And to work hard. And to use the gifts He's given you. And the abilities He's given you. And to have a good work ethic. There are many places in the Bible that teach that. There's no contradiction with that. Don't just let God do it all.

[26:27] That's not it at all. But this prayer does confess that all our needs come from the gracious hand of God. All of them.

Whether they come by way of an employer through wages, a salary because you have worked hard to deserve it. Or whether God gives it and rewards us by way of our own God-given wisdom and ingenuity and hard work and abilities and so forth.

Or whether it is provided through some work of His grace outside of ourselves. Through gifts and blessings that come from places unexpected and so forth.

And God does bless in that way no matter where it comes from. We are depending and praying and depending upon Him for every single thing we need.

Now you might be thinking, Pastor, I have a job and I work hard and I make a really good living. Great. Bless God.

[27:26] But you might then come to a false conclusion and say, Well, then why should I confess to the Lord that I am dependent upon Him for my daily bread when I can easily afford all the bread I ever need and more?

Well, let me ask you something. Do you know the future? Do you know what this day will bring?

How about tomorrow when you go back to work? Do you know for sure that you'll have a job tomorrow? Do you? Some of you are retired and you say, Yeah, my job's secure.

What about your retirement? Is it secure? Do you know for sure? Do you know what you will need this day?

Do you know all these things? No, we don't know any of these things. And so this prayer confesses some of the most basic truths of the Christian life.

[28:34] That if you have anything, And most of us have much more than we need. But whatever you have, whatever you have, If you have anything or you are personally anything, In who you are and what you're able to do, If you are able to do anything, It is because of the gracious work of God in your life.

Isn't that true? Yes, it is. And so praying, Give us this day our daily bread, Is a prayer of dependence, Because it is a prayer of confession, A daily confession to self, As well as to God, That I am utterly dependent Upon you, God, For everything I have and everything I need. I think most of us, Because of our culture, Because of our affluency, You say, I'm not affluent, But you certainly are in relation to the rest of the world. But because of that, This part of the prayer, Seems to be unimportant. And so we leave that out. And yet it's not.

It's a prayer of dependence. A prayer of confession. But also this request is a prayer of dependence, Because it is a prayer of confidence.

[30:13] It's a prayer of confidence. By praying this way, I'm revealing a confidence That day by day by day, God is going to meet the needs of my life.

I'm praying confidently. A confidence in the Lord. And by the way, Did you notice that Jesus said, Give us this day, Our daily bread?

Did you notice that? You say, Well, What's the big deal? The focus is on this day. Not tomorrow. But this day.

He did not say, Pray, Give us this week. Or give us this month. Or give us this year. And so the idea is that God requires that we renew our dependence upon Him every single day.

There's something about the day that needs to be much more of our focus. You remember back in the Old Testament when the children of Israel had been delivered from Egypt and God led them through the wilderness and He provided for them there.

[31:34] Remember how He did that? I mean provided for their food. He sent manna. Remember? I mean every morning suddenly there it was just laying out on the ground.

Kind of like the dew on the ground. And it was manna. That is the children of Israel looked at it and said, What is it? And that's what manna means. What is it? Well, it was good and sweet and it was sustenance for them and God provided it for them each day, didn't He?

In fact, God said, Gather it up and only gather what you need for the day. And those who gathered up more than they needed for the day, they found out the next morning it was spoiled. The only exception, of course, was for the Sabbath.

The point is that it's the daily need that we are focusing on. But the bigger focus is that our commitment to Him, our confidence in Him is a daily thing.

And we renew it every day. So we're talking about the dependence of this request. This is a prayer of dependence because it is a prayer of confession.

[32:45] And it's a prayer of confidence. And because it is a prayer of contentment. Contentment. You know, let's just be honest.

We don't always like the bread God gives us. We don't always like it.

But you know, a large part of our spiritual growth is to learn to be content. Regardless of our circumstances. Paul taught that in Philippians chapter 4 and verse 6.

I want you to listen to what he said. At one point in this passage, we come to a very familiar verse of Scripture. Yet one that is almost always misapplied.

Listen to what Paul said. Listen to what Paul said. He said, Be anxious for nothing. But in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God.

[33:52] And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

And then if you skip on down to verse 10. But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly that now at last your care for me has flourished again.

He's commending them for taking up some offerings again for him and taking care of his needs. But then he says in verse 11, Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am to be content.

He's not talking about state as in Oklahoma. He's talking about the circumstance of life. Whatever circumstance of life, whatever it is, I've learned to be content. I know how to be abased, he said. That is, I know how to have humble means. And he says, I know how to abound. That is, to live in prosperity.

[35:01] Everywhere and in all things, I've learned both to be full. That is, to have more than I need. And to be hungry. Both to abound and to suffer need.

And then he says in verse 13, I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. That's the source of his contentment.

I can do all things. And we almost always apply that to good things. But Paul is saying, I can do all of these things I've just mentioned. I can live in the barest and humblest of conditions.

And I can bear living in prosperity. I can live being hungry. And I can live being full. I can have more than I need. Or have barely nothing.

Barely anything. Because he said, I know in Christ I can do all things. All things. See, this is the source of his contentment.

[36:10] Sometimes the bread we ask for is answered with bread we didn't really want.

Sometimes, in our opinion, the bread God gives us, the needs he provides, are a little less than what we were hoping for.

And of a different nature than we desired. And yet, in him we can do all things.

All those things. We have to learn to be content. And this is what we're saying when we pray this prayer. It is a prayer of contentment.

All right. So this is what we're learning today. Jesus is teaching us that prayer is about requesting. Requesting what we need from God. Give us this day our daily bread.

And here's what we've learned about this kind of request. It is a devotion. The devotion of this request. The dependence of this request.

[37:18] And then one more real quickly. The depth. The depth of this request. This is not a surface kind of request.

It's not just a kind of a basic kind of surface thing. There is real depth in praying this way. Especially when you consider who it includes.

Did you notice something here? That Jesus said pray this way. Give. Who? Us. It's plural.

Not me. Though. Me is included there. But he said us. This day.

What? Our. Our daily bread. You see. We need to learn. This is not a request.

[38:27] That can be prayed. Selfishly. It is personal. But it's not to be prayed. Selfishly. This is not. Just.

About. Getting. Your. Needs. Met. Or our. Needs. Met. Or my. Needs. Met. It's not that. It is that. But it's more than that.

This is. About. Praying. For the needs. Of the family. Of God. This family. And our.

Extended family. That's what this is about. We're to pray for one another. And so. This. Simple prayer.

Has depth. It's. It is depth in. Who it includes. But also. In. What. It includes. Not just who.

[39:24] But what. This is more than. Prayer. For food. Isn't it? More than just food. Food.

For our pantries. And. Food on our plate. It includes that. But it's more than that. Is Jesus. Telling us. To pray for food. When most of us. Could live.

A week. Maybe longer. On the food. We've accumulated. In our pantries. And in our refrigerators. And in our. Freezers. I don't think so.

There is. Much more. In what this prayer. Includes. And the fact is. This prayer. Includes everything. That we need. Every.

Single. Thing. That we could possibly need. Each. Day. Don't leave anything out. Even some of the most insignificant things. If it's important to you.

[40:22] It's important to God. Whatever it is. You. See that you need. Ask him. All right. So. Then. Jesus said.

Pray in this manner. Give us. This day. Our. Daily. Bread. Prayers. About. Requesting. Requesting. The great Billy Graham. Once noted.

He said. Every religion. Teaches. The men ought to pray. But only the biblical faith. Promises. That God will answer. Amen. Amen. The story is told.

A fable. I suppose. It would be better called. A fable about a poor woman. Who stood at the gate. Of the king's vineyard. And she was looking at a beautiful luscious cluster of grapes. Hanging there. Which she sorely needed. Because she had a sick daughter. And so she went home to her spinning wheel. And earned half a crown.

[41 : 23] Came back to the garden. And offered it to the garden. Of the king's gardener. And he refused. And he ordered her away. Not to be defeated.

The woman went home. And took her blanket. The blanket off of her bed. And pawned it for five shillings. And returned to the garden. Offered it to the king's gardener.

And again. He refused. And this time with angry words. Because she was continuing to bother him. About this cluster of grapes. And so the poor woman began to cry.

Well. The princess. Happened to be walking through the garden that day. And she heard the gardener's harsh words. And she saw the woman's tears. And so she inquired about what was wrong.

And when the story was told. She said to the woman. She said. My dear woman. You have made a mistake. My father is not a merchant.

[42 : 25] He is the king. And his business. Is not to sell. It is to give.

And with that she. Pulled the cluster of grapes off. And dropped them in the woman's apron. You see. We need to learn.

That God. Actually wants. To ask. For us to ask him. So that he can give.

He is not a merchant. We are not earning. Paying. For God's blessings. We are asking him. And when we ask.

He is promised. That we will receive. Our God. Our Heavenly Father. Is not. Tight fisted.

[43 : 28] He is not. A. Stern. Dictator. He is not reluctant. And our Father.

Our Heavenly Father. Does not delight. In. Seeing his children. Struggle. Being one. He does not delight in that. He is.

Gracious. Beyond all measure. Our Father is. And I assure you.

He delights. In giving his. Best gifts. Who know him. And. Follow him.

Give. Us. This day. Our daily.