

2 Kings 1:1-2, 6-14

Psalm 77:1-2, 11-20

Galatians 5:1, 13-25

Luke: 9:51-62

**Sermon text: "Give Us this Day Our Daily Bread"**

"Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy Will be done, on earth as it is in heaven."

That first part of the Lord's Prayer, which we dealt with last week, has been called the God Petitions - asking God to be God. It set the tone for the foundation of our Christian faith. "Our Father" - brings the community together - equally - under one parentage - a perfect loving Father of our Lord. Even if our earthly Fathers were less than perfect - Jesus perfectly loved and his Father is our Father too. This Father is holy and we are made aware of his essence. We are called as a community, implying cooperation - to strive for God's Kingdom - the universality of God's purposes. And we are reminded each time we pray this of the importance and danger of praying for God's Will, because so often our thoughts are focused primarily on our own selfish wants and our shame will be overwhelming if we pray this as an empty prayer, void of that sacrificial essence. So much for the recap of last week.

"Give us this day our daily bread."

This is the first of 3 petitions to God based on our own personal, human needs. There is a shift from passive voice to the active voice in this section of the prayer. Here the scope is broadening to concern all of humanity in contrast to the first section which was focusing on God being God. The focus on the next 3 sermons is on our human needs with the premise being - that we **can trust** God to care for us - then we will be free to be open to serve others. If we have bread, forgiveness and protection, what more do we need to be equipped to help others?

This first petition means so much here. The act of praying for God to supply daily bread is, in and of itself, making oneself vulnerable - trusting that for those of faith we will have what we need to live, both physically and spiritually - everything we need for the body.

**Give us this day** - a prayer of **dependence** - we ask for the humility to know that God provides all we have - all we need for this one day. When we can know that - when we feel safe that God has and will provide - then we can free our souls and thoughts of the fear that can ruin the existence of every human being. How often in our day do our thoughts venture into fear of something in the future that could bring us some harm? Or memories of some pain and loss in the past that stop us from feeling all the joy we could feel today? This is our moment to moment daily prayer. Perhaps it could even be changed to, "give us this moment our daily needs" - meaning help us to be satisfied at this moment with your love, God, and help us to trust that you care for us.

**Give us this day our daily bread.** Bread - it is an ordinary common need of the whole human family - a basic staple necessary to life. But it is also a prayer to protect us from the sin of greed. The reality is, if something happened unforeseen today which would cause us not to be able to get to the grocery store for a few days - most, if not all of us, would survive just fine. We don't really mean this prayer most of the time because we are so far away from feeling what it really means. But ask some starving family and they know this prayer dearly. The reality is that stockpiling does corrupt. It takes us away from the urgency and the true appreciation of **daily** bread. This part of the prayer brings us back to the Moses and the Israelites when they were starving. God sent them Manna for the day - but when they tried to stockpile it, the Manna went bad fast.

Misunderstanding can arise from this section of the prayer. If we focus on the Daily bread, we could live from a scarcity mode – the mental thinking of not having enough to survive on, causing one to try to compensate. We see this so much in the society today. Hoarding is a problem that is growing. There are numerous TV programs based on these extreme behaviors. This hoarding happens as a result of fear and of a lack of true understanding of this part of the prayer. Because, as I said before, the premise of this Lord’s Prayer is that it is familial – it focus on the wholeness of the family of humankind – and the prayers are such that our immediate needs be met so that we will be free to serve others – we call for God’s Will to be done on Earth as it is in Heaven. If we are stockpiling and hoarding – we are not serving others and we are living in fear – a lack of faith in God – the antithesis of this prayer, which is prayed so often by so many Christians.

Another misunderstanding that can arise as a result of this prayer is that if I have a great deal, somehow I deserve what I have more than others. Let us recall Jesus’ words in Luke 12:48, "For everyone to whom much is given, of him shall much be required."

Speaking as one whose cupboards are full and basement is packed with boxes, this prayer can bring along its sense of embarrassment, but yet another point, which pains me the most to mention is also the focus on our religion of incarnation, which literally means embodied in flesh or taking on flesh. Our God is incarnate in Jesus Christ – we celebrate this when we take communion – so bodies do matter. What does this mean when the obesity rate in the US has hit a plateau of 34% in the last 10 years? We are getting more than our daily bread.

According to the sociology department of the University of California Santa Cruz, the Wealth Distribution in the United States “is highly concentrated in a relatively few hands. As of 2007, the top 1% of households owned 34.6% of all privately held wealth, and the next 19% (the managerial, professional, and small business stratum) had 50.5%, which means that just 20% of the people owned a remarkable 85%, leaving only 15% of the wealth for the bottom 80% (wage and salary workers). In terms of financial wealth (total net worth minus the value of one's home), the top 1% of households had an even greater share: 42.7%.”

**And we pray give us this day our daily bread.**

The Lord’s Prayer is a humbling prayer. It seems so easy and simple and kind and harmless, and yet, there is so much more to it than we could ever imagine. This prayer is, as Bonnie Thurston called it, “The lens through which we see Jesus” and “A prayer that implicates us in God’s causes.”

Our needs met every minute of our lives – what we need physically and spiritually – that is what this prayer is about. So what is the minimum that we need spiritually? The minimum is the maximum – it is the same – there is no measure of our one truly pure and simple spiritual need – that is to know God and to love God with all our heart, and all our souls and all our minds. It is to be alone in our chambers and seek to be aware of God; to reflect and see that God has provided even in the darkest of times; to find hope for the future because the trust has been built up from the past; to stop in the middle of a busy day and become aware of our crassness and take time to become holy. We need but be reminded of our hunger for the holy and we are fed immediately with what we need to be filled with blessings.

Our Father who art in heaven,  
Hallowed be thy name  
thy kingdom come,  
thy will be done,  
on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread.  
Amen