



Matthew 6:11

11 Give us today our daily bread.

Reflection

Over the last few days we've begun to take a close look at Jesus' model for our prayer life, the Lord's Prayer. He's been encouraging us to use the Lord's Prayer as the template to shape our own prayers.

Jesus suggests we open our prayers with

words to this effect: 'Our Father in heaven.' Don't just pray for yourself, but pray on behalf of all Christians. In your mind, as you think about the word 'Our' perhaps work in concentric circles out from your immediate Christian family and friends, through your church and then out into wider world – when you pray, pray for yourself but for them as well. And remember that you are praying to your Father, who loves you intimately, who's responsible and committed to your welfare through an unbreakable family bond. Experience the closeness of the relationship that you have with him but also remember that he is in heaven. Remember his character. Your Father is the most extraordinary being in all of the universe; his perfections are innumerable – he's all powerful, all knowing, perfectly righteous, holy and just– that's your dad,

that's who's looking after you, that's who you're growing up to be like, he's your hero and he's going to love you and protect and provide for you, not just today for but for the rest of all eternity.

After praying through these precious reminders of who we are and who God is in relation to us Jesus then recommends six prayer points, six petitions. The first three frame up the eternal realities of which we have become a part. In them we pray for the advancement of God's name, God's kingdom and God's will throughout all the earth. The second three petitions are for God's gracious provision of our personal needs: life's necessities, forgiveness of sins and deliverance from temptation and the devil.

And so today, halfway through the prayer we turn to the first of these petitions for our personal needs. Jesus teaches us to pray words to this effect,

11 Give us today our daily bread.

Father because of who you are, and who we are in relation to you, as your precious children, as members of the kingdom of God, give us today our daily bread. There's much to consider in these few words.

Firstly, notice again that we aren't just praying for our individual needs, we are asking our Father to provide for all of us, for all our Christian brothers and sisters. This doesn't mean we always have to pray for every Christian on earth, but it does mean that our prayer should always be bigger

than just ourselves. Chances are many of the Christians that God has put in your life aren't praying today, perhaps they're having a rough time in their faith; but you've got their back, if they're not praying at least you're interceding for them, petitioning God on their behalf. One of the most righteous men in the Old Testament, his name is Job, his daily practice was to pray for all his children, and even to sacrifice an offering to the Lord on their behalf, just in case any of them had done something to offend God. He daily interceded with God on their behalf.

By way of a second reflection, with these words Jesus is encouraging us to pray each day for God's provision of the daily necessities of life. Bread here is very likely meant to be more than just food. It

includes all the other necessities for our survival, all those other blessings that God provides for us like a place to sleep at night, the clothes on our back, relationships and other necessities of life. Remembering the Jewish nature of Matthew's audience, his original hearers could not have helped but recall here the forty years that God provided bread for them from heaven when Israel was wandering in the desert on their way to Canaan. Because they had been disobedient to God, they wandered in the desert for forty years, until a whole generation had died out. A journey that should have only taken a couple of weeks took forty years. In this time, God graciously provided for them, by sending manna from heaven which was a type of bread. But this was also a lesson for them. You see they couldn't store up the bread,

it went off over night. So God taught them to rely daily on him for their needs.

It's the same with us. In the Western world we tend to think and plan so far ahead, and yet in reality we are 100% reliant on God for everything we receive, every day – yet often nothing could be further from our minds. The bible says in Acts 17 that God gives everyone life and breath and everything else. In God we live and move and have our being, which means that at any point our life might be demanded of us. Most in the world are not only blind to the uncertainty that each next day brings, but also can't see that every single thing we have only comes about through God's common grace. And so Jesus is teaching us to see reality for what it is, and to acknowledge God's provision for our lives

every day when we pray ‘Give us today our daily bread.’

You know, and again for many of us in the West, we can't even remember the last time we skipped a meal because we couldn't afford one. Our problem is too many meals, not lack of food. But this isn't the case for many of our brothers and sisters throughout the globe. Life was more precarious in Jesus' time as well. Many first century workers were day labourers. They worked day to day. They'd turn up at the marketplace and see if they were hired that day. And a day's wages was good for pretty much a day's food. Getting sick meant not eating – life was precarious. To them, and to many Christians in third world countries today, and to us in the West as well Jesus is not only remind-

ing us of God's daily provision for our lives but he's also guaranteeing it. Your Father loves you and he will provide for you when you trust him with your daily needs. Jesus will soon teach us:

31 So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' 32 For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them.

Think & Pray

Please take some time now to think over this passage along the lines that we've just been discussing. And then spend some time praying that today, God would give us our daily bread. Maybe for you this is seeing more clearly than ever God's hand in

every necessity and luxury that you enjoy. Maybe for you this is thinking more deeply over those in the world church who pray to God fervently each day for their next meal. Is there a way that you could become part of God's answer to their prayer?

Plenty to think about and pray over so please do so now and I'll see you again tomorrow.

