

The Lord's Prayer (Week 4)

The petition we look at this week appears to be the easiest part of the Lord's Prayer for us to pray!

Give us today our daily bread (Matthew 6, v.11)

The translation of "daily bread" does vary, depending on which version of the Bible you are using. My Greek translation says "the meaning of the Greek is unknown"! Apparently the Old Latin translates it as "*bread for today*" and Jerome (died 420 A.D.) quoting a Hebrew Gospel has "*bread for the oncoming day*". Certainly Jesus is encouraging us to live in the present – not to look too far ahead. "*Let the day's own trouble be sufficient for the day*". Matthew 6, v.34.

Living as we do with online shops, supermarkets, corner shops, bread shops, fruit and veg shops – it is not easy to recognise that much of the world's population lives "hand to mouth". In praying this simple prayer for ourselves, we need to pray also for those who are in daily need. There will be many villages in the Horn of Africa at the present time, devastated by the locust swarms. The news at present is very self-centred on the C. virus in the U.K., Europe and America. But the whole earth belongs to the Lord, and He cares for all His children.

But can we really leave it there?

We can easily find ourselves well fed physically. Food here in the U.K. is relatively cheap and plentiful. However, the spiritual needs of ourselves and others, does demand more than "bread". Our Lord Jesus, in replying to the temptation of Satan said "*Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God*". (Matthew 4, v.4: quoting from Deuteronomy 8, v.3 which refers to manna in the wilderness.)

Isaiah 55, verses 1 -2 are appropriate:- "*Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost. Why spend money on what is not bread, and your labour on what does not satisfy? Listen, listen to me, and eat what is good, and you will delight in the richest of fare.*"

(The whole of Isaiah 55 is profitable reading in this context)

Our Lord Jesus Christ probably had these words from Isaiah in mind as he taught His disciples of the value of the Kingdom of God. Read again Matthew 6, verses 25 – 34. Our Heavenly Father knows our physical needs. The emphasis of our Lord's teaching is on our spiritual needs!

Read John, chapter 6. The teaching of our Lord Jesus Christ regarding the "Bread of Life" (verses 35 and 48). It begins with a reference to the Passover (v.4), the feast of unleavened bread. Moves on to the Feeding of the 5000 (verses 5 – 14), then the main teaching on "*the true bread which came down from heaven*" (verses 25 – 65).

If this is the teaching of our Lord and Saviour, then our constant prayer should be "*Lord, give us this bread always*" (v. 34)

In praying "*Give us today our daily bread*", we need to constantly ask for spiritual food. Food for our souls as well as daily bread for our bodies!

*Break Thou the bread of life,
O Lord, to me;
As Thou didst break the loaves
Beside the sea.
Beyond the sacred page
I seek Thee, Lord;
My spirit pants for Thee,
O living Word!*

Mary A. Lathbury 1877