

Jesus Lives!

August 6, 2006

Lord's Prayer # 5
Give Us our Daily Bread

Last Tuesday evening, Virginia and I went to the grocery store.

Earlier that day, I had put out our garbage cans.

Coming back home from the store, I noticed that the garbage cans had not been picked up.

As I started putting away groceries, I found several pieces of fruits and vegetables in the bottom shelf that had to be thrown away.

I quickly ran outside to put these items in the garbage can.

As I continued putting away items in the refrigerator, I found
An old mayonnaise jar that was empty,
can of olives that had been forgotten in the
back of the refrigerator,
piece of cheese that would never be used

I made several trips outside to the garbage can, the last one just as the garbage truck was two houses away.

Weeks earlier we had carefully thought how we might use these food items - and now I was running to get them into the garbage can.

I can't help but wonder what if any relationship there was between my actions of throwing away food we couldn't use and the words we are looking at today --**Give us our daily bread?**

These 5 words are loaded with meaning - more than we can handle this morning.

There are, though, several thoughts I want to share with you about this petition.

First thought -- When you pray: **Give us this day our daily bread** - you are not coming as some beggar looking for a handout.

Instead you are acknowledging that *God* is the giver of all that we have.

Your heavenly Father is already aware of what you need and want

So when you pray these words, you are admitting to yourself that it is *God* who provides.

Maybe that is not so hard to admit - that *God* is the one who gives.

What I suspect many stumble over is the fact that what *God* gives is a gift.

There's nothing you and I can do or say that would put us in a position to bargain with *God* over Him giving you daily bread.

That's hard to swallow - especially for those of us who didn't go through the Great Depression or World War II.

We have never had to struggle or face obstacles.

Many of us grew up in a society of plenty, in families that provided for all our wants.

We grew up in a society that had as its motto **Have it Your Way!**

But here we are admitting even if we don't always feel it, that all that we have is a gift from our good and gracious Father.

It's not even a gift—our daily bread.

It's a gift from *God* that we have for just a period of time.

Second point I want to leave with you is that when you pray **Give us our daily bread** -- you are acknowledging the gifts *God* gives you today as well as thanking him for what He will give you tomorrow.

Give us this day our daily bread.

That's what most of us learned to pray.

If you make a literal translation of this passage from the Greek it would be something like this:

Give us bread today for the coming day

Or, as many Biblical scholars are now translating it

Or Give us today the bread we need for tomorrow.

I like this translation.

Not only are we acknowledging God's goodness today, but at the same time we are also praising God for what He will give us tomorrow even though we haven't seen it.

That's not how we normally do it.

For instance, it would be rather ridiculous for me to thank Virginia today for my Christmas gift, or birthday gift next May.

I'm pretty certain that she will give me a gift, but usually we thank the person once we have it in hand.

How can I thank God for what I haven't seen?

How can I thank God for tomorrow's bread, when I'm still finding out what today's bread is all about?

The real question is: How can I trust God to give me tomorrow my daily bread?

You can trust God because of what God has done for you.

I'm referring to the God's work in the cross.

A God who would sacrifice his son, Jesus for you and for me - is a God we can trust.

A God who would free us from sin and death by dying in my place and in your place -- is a God we can trust.

We can trust that He provide for our needs tomorrow even though we don't know what lies ahead.

That takes faith -

- a faith that trusts in God's goodness and faithfulness,
- a faith that trusts that God really is a loving and caring Father especially in light of difficulties and hardships.

Third thought I want to share with you is this:

- when you pray: **give us** this day our daily bread,
- or **give us today** the bread we need for **tomorrow**,

you are praying not only for your own needs but the needs of others.

Notice Jesus said, Give us our daily bread - not give me my daily bread.

By wording it this way, Jesus wanted us to know that we are part of a community.

Last Tuesday National Night Out.

This is a national movement to help people come out of their houses one night a year and become connected with their neighbors.

It's sad that we now have to be reminded that we are a community.

Each week in church we are reminded of that same thought - we are a community -- the body of Christ.

We are

- a family,
- a village,
- a community of believers.

As a family we need to be concerned about the daily bread for our fellow brothers and sisters.

Marie Antoinette was the wife of King Louis XIV of France.

Tradition says that on one occasion when Marie Antoinette was told of how the poor people of Paris didn't have enough bread to eat she responded by saying - **let them eat cake**.

Shortly thereafter she along with her husband were beheaded during the French Revolution.

It's doubtful that she ever said these words.

However, this phrase has come to symbolize an indifference towards the suffering of others.

They don't have enough to eat: Let them eat cake.

Many don't have bread to eat.

Some are quick to blame God for this.

But it's not God fault.

You can't blame God or question God's goodness in light of the suffering of so many today.

Not when God has placed us on a planet of abundance.

- If people are starving,
- if people are living without homes or clean water,
 - o it's our fault,
 - o it's the fault of the nations of the world

- it's the fault of our nation.

To the wealthy nations of this world, *God gives more than enough daily bread!*

Maybe God blesses us so that we can use a part of that blessing to bless others?

Give us today and tomorrow the daily bread we need.

Our daily bread is a gift/loan from our good and gracious Father. God has promised to provide for our needs today and tomorrow.

We need to trust that God will keep His word as He truly will keep it!

God gives us more than what we need, even enough that we sometimes have to throw it away - so that we can have the joy of sharing a part of our daily bread from God with others.

Thank You Lord for the daily bread You are giving me today and for the daily bread You will give tomorrow. Amen.