

Week #3 Ask for Provision: Give us this day our daily bread

Introduction:

There is a simplicity to the prayer for this week: "Give us today our daily bread." In *The Message* Eugene Peterson translates it this way: "Keep us alive with three square meals." While that translation maintains the passage's literal simplicity, there is far more to this request than simply the meeting of daily nutritional intake needs. Jesus is giving us permission to seek his provision for all of our daily needs.

In Martin Luther's *Short Catechism*, the reformer writes this: "God indeed gives daily bread to all men, even to the wicked, without our prayer; but we pray in this petition that he would lead us to acknowledge our daily bread as his gift, and to receive it with thanksgiving. What is meant by daily bread? Everything that is required to satisfy our bodily needs; such as food and raiment, house and home, fields and flocks, money and goods; pious parents, children, and servants; godly and faithful rulers, good government; seasonable weather, peace and health; order and honor; true friends, good neighbors, and the like."

Over the next seven days we are going to take time to look at some of the promises of God's word dealing with God's provision for our daily needs. Both the Old and New Testaments are filled with both the promises of God for provision and God's practical way of keeping those promises. Much of our turmoil comes when our own resources fall short of the need and when we fail to remember God's willingness and ability to meet those needs. He will do far more than simply keep us alive with three square meals. Paul makes this promise in *Philippians 4:19*: "And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus." It is upon that promise that we can pray with confidence "Give us today our daily bread." It is because we are his children that he desires to meet all of our needs, and he has available all of the glorious riches in Christ Jesus, riches that are more than ample to meet even the deepest of our needs each day.

Rev. Bob Beasley

Week #3 Ask for Provision

Day 1: Jesus instructs us to pray for the needs that we have today.

That evening quail came and covered the camp, and in the morning there was a layer of dew around the camp. When the dew was gone, thin flakes like frost on the ground appeared on the desert floor. When the Israelites saw it, they said to each other, "What is it?" For they did not know what it was. Moses said to them, "It is the bread the LORD has given you to eat. This is what the LORD has commanded: 'Each one is to gather as much as he needs. Take an omer for each person you have in your tent.' The Israelites did as they were told; some gathered much, some little. And when they measured it by the omer, he who gathered much did not have too much, and he who gathered little did not have too little. Each one gathered as much as he needed. Then Moses said to them, 'No one is to keep any of it until morning.' Exodus 16:13-19 (NIV).

Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own. Matthew 6:34 (NIV).

1. Why did God command them to only gather what they needed for that one day?

2. Matthew 6:34 comes right after Jesus' instructions to "seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness." Compare this to the order of the Lord's Prayer. What does God's kingship have to do with his meeting our daily needs?

3. How often have I been guilty of worrying about tomorrow by trying to gather enough manna for what my perceived needs might be. What does that say about my faith?

Thought for the day:

God promises that he will meet our daily needs. He does not tell us to pray "Give us today our weekly needs." May we focus on today's needs, not fearful about what lies ahead.

Week #3 Ask for Provision

Day 2. Praying only for our daily needs is the antidote against materialism.

Keep falsehood and lies far from me; give me neither poverty nor riches, but give me only my daily bread. Proverbs 30:8 (NIV)

Now listen, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to this or that city, spend a year there, carry on business and make money." Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes. Proverbs 4:13-14 (NIV).

1. How much of my concern about tomorrow is really a desire to build up my own net worth?

2. The Message translates Proverbs 30:8 this way: "Give me enough food to live on, neither too much or too little." How easy do I find it to honestly pray this prayer of Solomon?

3. Now consider what The Message says next: "If I'm too full, I might get independent, saying, 'God? Who needs him?'" In light of Jesus' call to pray for my daily needs only, what is He saying about my temptation to get so many things that I no longer need God? Is this a Lordship issue in my life?

Thought for the day:

A missionary recently said that the greatest threat to Christianity is not Islam but materialism. In light of this observation, Jesus teaching about praying for our daily needs drives home the point that we must learn to trust him alone. As the Psalmist says in Psalm 20:7 (NIV): "Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the LORD our God." When we pray "Give us today our daily bread, we are making a similar proclamation.

Week #3 Ask for Provision

Day 3. God gives us permission to ask Him for our daily bread.

"Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened." Matthew 7:7-8 (NIV)

"Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen." Ephesians 3:20-21 (NIV)

1. How important is it for me to understand the principle of asking for our daily bread, before I can understand the privilege of being given permission to ask?
2. Jesus' promise is that everyone who asks receives. Why, then, am I sometimes reticent to ask the Lord even for my daily bread?
3. Why do I have such a difficult time taking hold of the promise of Ephesians 3:20?

Thought for the Day:

Our need is never greater than God's ability to meet that need. Sometimes we miss out God's best because our view of God is far too small. As Paul says in Ephesians 3:20: "God can do anything, you know - far more than you could ever imagine or guess or request in your wildest dreams."

Week #3 Ask for Provision

Day 4. We can trust God to meet our daily needs, because like a loving Father, he desires to do so.

Which of you, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him! Matthew 7:9-11 (NIV)

For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father." The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs--heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory. Romans 8:15-17 (NIV)

1. How does it make me feel to know that I am able to use the word "Abba," which literally means "daddy" when addressing Almighty God?
2. Does having this kind of intimate relationship with God make a difference in how I ask Him for my daily bread?
3. Does my relationship with my human father make it easier or more difficult to ask God for my daily needs?

Thought for the Day:

A good human father doesn't think twice about providing for the needs of his children. It what dads do. In the same way, God loves to pour out His good things on his children.

Week #3 Ask for Provision

Day 5: Each day is different from the day before. At that same time that this truth makes life interesting, it can lead to fear of the unknown.

Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever. Hebrews 13:8 (NIV)

Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows. James 1:17 (NIV)

1. It is interesting to note that James ties the unchanging nature of God with the fact that every good and perfect gift is from above. What does the unchanging nature of God do for me as I ponder what it means to ask Him for my daily needs?

2. How do the truths of these two verses help me to ask God for all that I need to get through today victoriously?

Thought for the Day:

We often worry about what tomorrow might bring. Our lives change so often that too often we begin to fear what might happen tomorrow. Knowing that the Lord never changes helps us to know that just as we ask for what we need for today, He will still be available tomorrow to ask for what we need then.

Week #3 Ask for Provision

Day 6: We never need to fear that God will run out of supplies.

My response is to get down on my knees before the Father, this magnificent Father who parcels out all heaven and earth. Ephesians 3:14 (The Message)

He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all--how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? Romans 8:32 (NIV)

1. God is prepared to "parcel out" all heaven and earth? What is it that I need to have him parcel out to me today?

2. In Romans 8:32, Paul says that if Jesus was a gift from the Father, we can trust him to give us everything else that I need. If I had no problem receiving Christ, why do I so often have a problem believing God for lesser things?

3. Is it more difficult to invite him to meet my need for daily bread than it is for eternal life?

Thought for the Day:

In Ephesians 3:14, we get the picture of a heavenly United Parcel Service, God parceling out heaven and earth. We don't need to phone in an order. We just need to ask, and God will send along the parcel.

Week #3 Ask for Provision

Day 7: When Jesus was with his disciples, they didn't need to ask him for anything. He said that would change.

Jesus saw that they wanted to ask him about this, so he said to them, "Are you asking one another what I meant when I said, 'In a little while you will see me no more, and then after a little while you will see me'? I tell you the truth, you will weep and mourn while the world rejoices. You will grieve, but your grief will turn to joy. A woman giving birth to a child has pain because her time has come; but when her baby is born she forgets the anguish because of her joy that a child is born into the world. So with you: Now is your time of grief, but I will see you again and you will rejoice, and no one will take away your joy. In that day you will no longer ask me anything. I tell you the truth, my Father will give you whatever you ask in my name. Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete. John 16:19-24 (NIV)

1. What can I learn from reading the Gospels and watching Jesus' relationship with his disciples about how he will meet my daily needs today?

2. Why would their joy be more complete after Jesus went away?

3. Am I rejoicing in answers to prayer for God's daily provision in my life?

Thought for the Day:

Jesus knew that his disciples would find great joy in answered prayer. While he was with them, he would provide all that they needed as a matter of course. He would still do that for them after he ascended to heaven, but now in a much more miraculous way. We ask in prayer, and he sends all that we need for our daily needs to be met. Let's ask, and rejoice as we see how he answers.