



Worship – Part 19
Acts of Worship – Part 7
Prayer: Give Us This Day Our Daily Bread
GCSP – 09/15/2007

This may come as a surprise to you, but I enjoy eating. I may be a little picky as to the foods I choose to eat, but the varieties I do choose, I enjoy – sometimes to excess.

Partly because I am so picky and partly because it is more convenient for me to do so, I also do the vast majority of the grocery shopping for Connie and me. I refuse to shop like my mom used to though. Mom would clip coupons, scan all of the sale papers, and then waste \$3.00 worth of gas and several hours of her time, driving from store to store to store to save 50 cents on a can of soup. I will shop a Sam's Club, a Wal-Mart and one grocery store to get all the different items we need, but I will not go from Safeway to King Soopers to Albertson's just because one store has a better price on frozen pizza.

I am exaggerating about my mom, because she was a bargain hunter. If she could save 50 cents on that can of soup she would buy 20-30 of them and let my dad figure out where to store them. At any given time, you could go to my mom's house and hunker down for months without ever going hungry. As a matter of fact, my sister-in-law is still using up some of the canned goods my mom bought; and mom went home to be with the Lord almost three years ago.

I am nowhere near that extreme, but Connie and I could probably live off the food in our cabinets and freezer for at least 2-3 weeks, even without picking up milk, eggs and other perishables that you typically buy every week. And I think it would be safe to assume that most of you could do the same, and the majority of Americans could probably say the same thing.

Because of this abundance of food we have access to, and because of the stockpiles in our homes, the phrase in God's Word we will look at today may seem to be lacking in urgency and immediate application for our lives. But if we take the time to look beyond the words and dive into the principle Jesus is teaching us, we will see our prayer lives enriched and our attitudes enhanced.

Turn with me in your Bibles to **Matthew 6**.

We are working our way through a passage that is commonly known as the Lord's Prayer. I have been taking the time to look at each phrase of this model prayer to help us gain a better understanding of how we are to pray.

Matthew 6:9-13

"Pray, then, in this way: 'Our Father who is in heaven, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen'" (NASB).

Let's pray.

We have already discovered the proper attitude we need when we pray; one of great humility; we have gained an understanding of the fatherhood of God, and how He longs to have an intimate relationship with us just like a little child has with his loving and compassionate daddy; we studied the balance between seeing God as our papa and seeing Him as the holy and righteous God of the universe; we have looked into the importance of longing for and looking

forward to the coming of God's Kingdom; and last week we spent some time understanding the desire for God's will to be done in our lives and on this earth.

Let me just add a comment or two to last week's sermon before we move on.

I laid it on pretty thick concerning our need as Christians to be like Isaiah, who said, "**Here am I, send me**" (**Isaiah 6:8**) when God asked for a volunteer to represent Him. And I don't apologize for that. In far too many churches, ours included, the pastor and the leaders have to do way too much begging for people to step in and take over a ministry, even on a temporary basis. I made a point to sarcastically mention some of the typical excuses I have heard over the years, like, "I just don't feel led to teach, or serve", or whatever the need happens to be. Or an immediate response of "I'll pray about that" and never here back from them again.

If any of you did not pick up on the sarcasm in my remarks, let me be abundantly clear tonight. There is nothing wrong with looking for the Holy Spirit's leading in regards to which ministries to lead or assist in, and there is obviously nothing wrong with praying about volunteering for that ministry. The problem is that it rarely happens; most of the time it is just a way to gracefully back out of serving.

To use the example of Grace Church's current need, if you have never taught before, you will be hard pressed to ever feel "led" to teach. If you are not a mature Christian who is well-versed with the Bible and consistently have intimate prayer time with the Lord throughout the day, and you are not accustomed to the leading and the promptings of the Holy Spirit, you will either never feel led to step out of your comfort zone or you probably won't recognize it when the Spirit is leading.

So here me when I say, I am not giving you an excuse to not volunteer when needs are present, and I still stand by my comments of Christians being arrogant at times when they pick and choose how and when they will answer God's call, but I do understand that there will be times when you will genuinely not feel led to volunteer, and I fully accept a genuine request to spend time in prayer over the issue.

Another aspect of "**Thy will be done**" I did not cover last week is the statement that follows, "**on earth as it is in heaven.**" I somewhat touched on it when I refused to head down the rabbit trail of, "If God is sovereign, isn't His will always done?" Let me just briefly say, in heaven, God's will is perfectly accomplished without question and without delay. God has an army of holy angels who are ready and waiting for an assignment from God and there is absolutely nothing that gets in their way.

The earth is temporarily under Satan's command to the extent that God allows. And while God's will is still perfectly accomplished on earth, it does not seem to happen as seamlessly and willingly on earth. Our prayer is for God's will to happen on earth just like it happens in heaven: the same urgency, the same quality, the same willingness, and the same attitude from those who carry out His will. And again, if we spend too much time trying to wrap our brains around this, we will all be suffering from migraines.

Everything that happens on this earth is in God's control, so from that perspective, his will is perfectly done. But as long as Satan and sin have a place on this earth, God's will is not accomplished in the same way as it is currently in heaven. Jesus instructs us to pray for the quality of God's will to match on earth with the quality that is already in heaven. And it is not a coincidence that this request immediately follows the request for God's Kingdom to come. The one will follow the other.

Okay, let's move on to the next request in this model prayer.

The first three requests made in this model prayer are focused on God and not us: Hallowed be Your name, Your Kingdom come, Your will be done. Jesus has taught us to make requests, but thus far the requests have not been for the things we think we have need of while on this earth.

This aspect of what we are being taught changes tonight.

v. 11

"Give us this day our daily bread."

As I alluded to in the opening comments tonight, most of us have little or absolutely no concept of the daily provision of food the people in Bible times dealt with and the majority of the modern day world deals with. We may say that we live from week-to-week, but we really have no concept of living life not knowing where your next meal is coming from. We may experience times when we may not be thrilled with how simple our next meal is going to be, but I would guess most, if not all of you here tonight, have ever been completely out of food and missed a meal because you had no food. And while this is a concept we need to empathize with to gain a better understanding of the weight these words carried to Jesus' original audience, we also need to understand there is a principle here that goes beyond food.

Bread, especially in Bible times, is symbolic of all of our physical needs. God is our provider. He is Jehovah-Jireh. God has obligated Himself to supply our needs and we must be careful to acknowledge that all of our sustenance comes from Him and Him alone.

Turn with me to the Book of James.

James 1:17

"Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow" (NASB).

I looked up the Greek word that is translated "**every**" in this verse. It is the Greek word "*pas*" and the literal meaning of the word is, every, all, or everything. There is no possible rendering other than "every." You can't try to squeeze in even the slightest possibility that "most" good things, or "almost all" good things, come from God. Every good thing comes from God, period, end of story.

And if you truly love the Lord your God as you are commanded to do in Scripture and you are genuinely saved, then **Romans 8:28** comes into play as well. Most of you can quote this verse in one translation or another. I originally learned it in the King James Version, which says, "**And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to His purpose.**"

That means that "**all things**" (and again, there is no room for most things or almost all things) that come into your life are for your ultimate good. So armed with these truths, is it any wonder that God also commands us to give Him thanks for all things, all situations, all trials, all pain, all suffering, and yes, all the things we view as good in our human understanding (**1 Thessalonians 5:18**).

Let's quickly take this verse apart.

First, notice that it says "**Give us this day our daily bread.**" In specifically using the words "us" and "our" Jesus is teaching us to be selfless in our prayers. He first taught us to request things for God's glory and now He is teaching us to look upon the plight of others as we look on our own. There is still no room in this model prayer to be self-centered and only concerned for

our own well being. All people who have needs, and that includes all of humanity, need to be of concern to us (because they are of concern to the Father), and all then should be a part of prayers.

We obviously cannot specifically pray for each and every person on the earth, but we can pray for God's provision to all who have need in a general way – and when you have specifics, pray specifically.

Secondly, we pray for "**this day**." Jesus is teaching us to not be concerned about tomorrow.

Turn with me back to **Matthew 6**. You could read **verses 25-34** to get the whole thought, but let's just read **verse 34** tonight.

Matthew 6:34

"So do not worry about tomorrow; for tomorrow will care for itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own."

By praying only for this day's provision, we are living as God desires for us to live. All throughout the Bible God expects and even demands that we live by faith. In **Romans 1:17**, the apostle Paul quotes the prophet Habakkuk, when he says, "**the just** (or righteous man) **shall live by faith**." The writer of Hebrews tells us, "**without faith it is impossible to please Him**" (**Hebrews 11:6** – NASB). And we could go on and on reciting verses about faith.

By appropriating the principles of this model prayer into our lives, and thus living with joy and contentment for God's provision for **this day**, we are pleasing Him.

Practically speaking, this is immensely difficulty to do when you live in a country such as ours. We start growing a little antsy when the cupboard is only half full. Beloved, God is faithful even when we are not. But He does require us to live a life of faith. If you are concerned about His provision; if you are worried that He may forget you on occasion; turn with me to the Book of **1 Kings**.

1 Kings 17:1-16

God provided for Elijah first by commanding the ravens to bring food to him and then God provided for the widow by always replenishing the flour and the oil after she used it to make daily bread.

The same God is ready, willing, and able to do the same for you if you will have faith.

Thirdly, it says, "**Give us bread**." God blesses our requests for the things that are necessary for life. He doesn't tell us to request dessert. He doesn't tell us to request a BMW when you need a vehicle. He doesn't tell us to request the body of a 20-year old when we have health problems at age 60. Now God can and usually does grant us far beyond what our basic necessities are, but our request is to be for what is needed – and then leave it up to God for Him to determine what is needed.

Psalm 37:4 tells us, "**Delight yourself in the Lord and He will give you the desires of your heart**" (NIV). We could spend a whole sermon determining what it means to "Delight yourself in the Lord" but suffice it to say that as we mature in Christ, are content with His provision, and exhibit true faith in our lives, God will give you the desires of your heart, primarily because your desires will be changing to His desires. You will begin to live selflessly and the things of this world that were once important to you will become trivial.

Fourthly, we see that it says for God to "**Give.**" We acknowledge by this that the source is God. We admit that all things come from Him and apart from His provision we would have nothing. If He did not give to us what we need for life, we would no longer be alive. If God did not feed us, clothe us, shelter us, heal us, or give us life, we would be hungry, naked, exposed, diseased, and ultimately dead.

God is our only source for all things, and when we come to Him requesting that He give, we acknowledge this fact.

Lastly it says, "**daily bread.**" This teaches us that we must come to our Father in prayer for our needs on a daily basis. The great Puritan commentator, Matthew Henry, says, "*We could as well go a day without meat, as without prayer.*" And I would add that we as well should go without meat if we dare go without prayer.

The Bible does not specifically command us to pray before each meal, but whoever started this tradition that most Christians follow, had the right idea. We just need to make sure we are sincerely thankful and that we are acknowledging that the meal you are about to eat would not be there if God did not provide it.

God cares for your well being. He cares about your physical needs, your emotional needs, your mental needs, and your spiritual needs. And all of these things are wrapped up in the simple phrase, "**Give us this day our daily bread.**"

So are we to respond to this tremendous truth?

Proverbs 30:8-9, says, "**Give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with the food that is my portion, that I not be full and deny You and say, 'Who is the Lord?' Or that I be in want and steal, and profane the name of my God.**"

The apostle Paul says in **Philippians 4:11**, "**I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am.**"

We respond to God by being content and resting in Him. We trust Him for our daily needs and we are thankful and satisfied in however He chooses to provide.

Let's pray.