

(08-18-24) The Kingdom Prayer (3)

Give Us Today Our Daily Bread

Matthew 6:9-13

The Lord's Prayer is [the Model Prayer](#) because it was given by Jesus Christ to his disciples as an example of how we should pray. It is also [the Kingdom Prayer](#). It reveals not only how we should pray but also how we should live out the prayer as God's Kingdom people. The Lord's Prayer is a [dangerous and revolutionary prayer](#), as it is our determination to live out His will in our lives.

Let us read the Lord's Prayer on the screen. **"Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy Kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."** At the beginning of the Lord's Prayer, we orient ourselves toward God's holiness, God's Kingdom, and God's will on earth. Before we pray, "Give Us Today Our Daily Bread," we adjust our thoughts and minds completely to God's holiness, Kingdom, and will in our prayers. Before presenting our needs to God, we first reflect on who God is (remembering that God's love is an expression of His holiness), the purpose and goal of our lives and missions (the Kingdom of God), and God's will (to transform the world to be more like God's Kingdom) first. Then we can ask God to meet our specific needs. The Scriptures say, **"Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise. Give thanks to him; bless his name."** (Psalm 100:4). It does not say, "Enter his presence with petitions and his courts with requests."

Why is praying first for God's holiness, Kingdom, and will important? God knows our needs better than we do. Sometimes, the needs we perceive are not our true needs. When we first align ourselves with God's holiness, Kingdom, and will, our hearts can be connected with God, and we can have God's perspectives on our needs and the needs of the world. Sometimes, we are able to notice things that we have never thought about before. That is why God changes our prayers as we enter His presence during prayers. Have you ever experienced God changing your prayers?

Then let us unpack the meaning of the prayer, "Give Us Today Our Daily Bread."

Is there anyone who couldn't have breakfast this morning? I think all of us have our own bread every day. Then why do we need to pray this prayer? Some and I eat steamed rice as our staple meal every day. Then how come we need to pray for our daily bread instead of our daily steamed rice?

"Bread" - Our Daily Needs

Then what does bread mean here? The word "bread" in the Lord's Prayer doesn't only mean bread. Bread represents our daily needs, or everything we need for

our daily lives, including food, clothing, housing, health, family, friends, and honest government etc.

“Today & Daily” - Our Daily Dependence on God

As we pray, “Give Us Today Our Daily Bread,” it means that we must depend on God every single day, knowing that without God’s grace, provision, guidance, and protection, we cannot stay on the right path to God in our journey.

About a month after the Exodus, God provided Israel with manna and quail, except on the Sabbath, when they were given a double portion the day before. How long did this last? Forty years. This period served as God’s training for the Israelites to fully trust and depend on Him for provision. The wilderness was the ideal place for this training. Jesus says, **“I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.”** (John 15:5 NIV)

How can we know that we depend on God? Our prayer life reflects our dependence on Him. If we can intentionally invite God to be with us, guide us, and provide for us throughout each day, both day and night, it shows our reliance on Him.

“Our Daily Bread” - We-ness of Christian Community

As we pray the Lord’s Prayer, we are to recover the value, meaning, and purpose of the **“We-ness”** of God’s community. Then what is the meaning of Christian we-ness?

“Christian We-ness refers to a sense of unity, togetherness, and collective identity within the community of believers. It emphasizes the importance of shared values, mutual support, and a common purpose centered around faith in Christ. This concept highlights the idea that the community operates not just as a collection of individuals, but as a unified body, working together in love, fellowship, and service to God and others. It reflects the biblical principle of being “one body in Christ” (Romans 12:5).”

It is very clear in Jesus’ teaching, especially in the Lord’s Prayer, how we should live our lives and how we should actualize God’s Kingdom on earth - we are taught to pray, **“Give US this day OUR daily bread. And forgive US OUR trespasses, as WE forgive those who trespass against US. And lead US not into temptation; but deliver US from evil.”** If the actualization of God’s Kingdom on earth is a process, our role as God’s Kingdom agents is to repeatedly rediscover the value, meaning, and purpose of the “We-ness” of God’s community.

In Nehemiah chapter 1, Nehemiah prayed **“O Lord God of heaven, the great and awesome God who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him**

and keep his commandments, let your ear be attentive and your eyes open to hear the prayer of your servant that I now pray before you day and night for your servants, the Israelites, confessing the sins of the Israelites, which **we** have sinned against you. **Both I and my family** have sinned. **We** have offended you deeply, failing to keep the commandments, the statutes, and the ordinances that you commanded Moses your servant.” (Nehemiah 1:5-7 NRSV).

Nehemiah had felt the strong “we-ness” as he prayed for his brothers and sisters, the Israelites. He identified himself with them and with their ancestors and even with their sins. After his prayers, Nehemiah felt God’s call to return to Jerusalem and leave his safe and comfortable life in Persia. He prayed for the Israelites and acted for the Israelites.

Let me share with you one more scripture that reflects the “we-ness” as we pray as God’s Kingdom people. “I prayed to the Lord my God and confessed: “Lord, the great and awesome God, who keeps his covenant of love with those who love him and keep his commandments, **we** have sinned and done wrong. **We** have been wicked and have rebelled; **we** have turned away from your commands and laws.” (Daniel 9:4-5 NIV)

As we can see, both Nehemiah and Daniel started their prayers with praise and thanksgiving because of God’s love and grace toward His people. They appreciated God’s covenant of love for the obedient. This means they experienced God’s love and grace in their lives. Once people taste God’s love and grace, they will be led by God’s love and grace to the strong “we-ness” of God’s community.

“Give Us Today Our Daily Bread”

As I mentioned in my sermons, our prayer is our promise and determination to live out its words. So, when we pray, “Give Us Today Our Daily Bread,” we are promising to God, “God, we will share our daily bread with those who can’t afford to have theirs.” We are also saying to God, “God, we will look out for our church families and neighbors who do not have their daily needs. God, here I am. Use me for those who need my presence, prayer, support, and resources.”

Let us read this scripture together.

“For the Lord your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who is not partial and takes no bribe, who executes justice for the orphan and the widow, and who loves the strangers, **providing them food and clothing**. You shall also love the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt. **You shall fear the Lord your God; him you shall serve; to him you shall hold fast; and by his name you shall swear.**” (Deuteronomy 10:17-20 NRSV)

Through whom does God provide food and clothing for orphans, widows, and strangers? Through God's people. When Jesus commands us to pray, "Give Us Today Our Daily Bread," God is willing and ready to give us our daily bread so that we can share God's blessing with our neighbors who are in need.

According to Deuteronomy 10:20, loving our neighbors in need by providing them with food and clothing shows that we fear our God, serve our Lord and hold fast to our Father. That has to be our spirituality as God's Kingdom agents on earth. That has to be our Kingdom spirituality and influence on the world.

Let us read this scripture from James 1:17 together.

"Every generous act of giving, with every perfect gift, is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change." (James 1:17 NRSV)

According to the Scriptures here, our generous acts of giving are not from us. They are from above, from heaven, or from our Father. Let me show you a picture that I took two years ago. One day, I passed by the church's women's group board, and the words in the middle of the board caught my eye: **"Serving is not what we do for God but what He does through us."** Let us remember that every generous act of giving is from above. We are God's Kingdom agents.

On Tuesday, May 19, 2020, Midland County and the surrounding areas were drowned in floodwater from Wixom and Sanford Lakes after the Edenville and Sanford dams failed. This happened in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. More than 30 families from Midland First were affected by the flood, with some church families losing their homes.

I still remember one church member posting about the situation on Facebook, recruiting volunteers to assist those in need. One church member, whose house was damaged, said, "The damage to my house is minor, but there are people who need my help desperately." Volunteers cleared houses and helped displaced families find places to stay. One church member arranged for a camper from a friend so that a couple from the church could have a place to sleep until they could return to their home. Another church family offered their cottage to college students who needed a place to stay.

As the church volunteers assisted their own members, they couldn't ignore the needs of others in the community. They worked tirelessly to help those in need, prioritizing the well-being of others over their own comfort and safety. This selfless response became a testament to how the church lived out the Lord's Prayer: "Give us today our daily bread."

As we pray, "Give us today our daily bread," we fully depend on God every single day—not only for our daily needs but also for His presence, love, and guidance. At the same time, this prayer is our commitment to being available to those in need. It's as if we are praying, "God, use us to help our neighbors who are in need." This aligns with God's will for the world to become more like His Kingdom as we make ourselves available to those who are hungry, marginalized, vulnerable, ignored, and dejected. We are praying this revolutionary prayer every single day. That is why the Lord's Prayer is the dangerous Kingdom prayer.