

**Lord's Prayer 2: GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD** Exodus 16:11-26; Luke 11:1-4 [MW20-31]  
Sermon preached by Rev Wayne Thornton at Mangawhai, Sunday 23 August 2020

“Give us this day our daily bread” [Slide 1]

- this picture was much easier for a six year old boy to get a handle on!  
something to do with food, with relationships, dynamic, lively
- Mum dishing up, children eating  
one child holding a plate out, the dog begging

This petition in the Lord's Prayer is perhaps the most obvious

- the most straight forward, easiest to understand  
I mean it's bread, give us the bread man  
and we all know about bread, right?

With the smell of fresh coffee (or tea), toast in the rack, homemade marmalade

- it's easy to pray: “give us this day our daily bread”  
however we need to begin further back than that  
not only with ploughed soil, seed sown, grain harvested, milled, ground into flour
- further back than that to the words “our Father”  
for bread comes to us under that same family relationship
- *our* Father ... *our* daily bread  
it is inseparably linked and bound
- “our Father in heaven” implies our brother and sister on earth  
which is the relationship by which we pray  
“give us this day our daily bread”

There's a poem which I discovered while doing some research on “daily bread” [Slide 2]

*You cannot pray the Lord's Prayer and even once say “I”  
You cannot pray the Lord's Prayer and even once say “my”  
Nor can you pray the Lord's Prayer and not pray for one another  
And when you ask for daily bread, you must include your brother  
For others are included ... in each and every plea  
From the beginning to the end of it, it doesn't once say “me”*

To say “our Father” reminds us of his loving, caring presence with us

- in all the concerns of life  
of which perhaps bread is the most basic  
... that's where it all begins

There are roots in Jewish family life

- Reverend Geoffrey Harding in his seminar on the Lord's Prayer  
relates that a Jewish child in a Jewish household at the main meal of the day  
would see their father take a loaf of bread and offer it to God in thanksgiving
- then he would break the loaf and share it round the table saying  
“this is bread from heaven”

This illustrates two major principles of faith

- all good things come from God  
all of them need to be shared

The great reformer, Martin Luther, wrote

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

So indeed God gives “daily bread”, but what is “daily bread”?

- is it just the things in this picture [Slide 3]
- or is there more to it???

Martin Luther goes on to say [Slide 4]

[“daily bread”] ...is 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 honour; true friends, good neighbours and the like

When we think of daily bread we are to thank God who is the source of all our life

- Jesus is the only teacher in the history of religion who taught that the need of human beings is hunger and that the answer to human hunger is bread
- bread matches physical hunger: to get bread is the first object of toil

If you think about it, the people Jesus knew best

- lived close to what we might call the ‘breadline’
- a great part of their lives was spent in getting bread

Even when the grain had been safely harvested and stored

- it still had to be ground before anything could be done then, grinding done, it had to be kneaded into dough leavened with yeast left over from a previous occasion cooked with a fire that had to be lit and fuelled
- the getting of bread was no simple business

A few years ago there was a TV series called “Pioneer House”

- about a family in Auckland living as if in Victorian times there was one episode that focussed on bread the fire has to be kept going, always, that’s the first thing
- one time the bread was forgotten while rising – a disaster when cooked another time it was cooked too long and burnt
- there was no bread that day – it really was a disaster they couldn’t just go down to the dairy ... and you couldn’t in Jesus’ day
- there is a process involved even with our bread-maker it takes 2 hours and 38 minutes on the quickest setting

Bread is very important in the history and the life of God’s people

- can you think of some stories from the Bible?
- (space for reflection and response)

Think of Jesus and bread – temptation in the wilderness

- “command these stones to turn into bread”
- it was a real test for Jesus
- telling us that indeed Jesus knows what it is to be hungry, to be without bread

And what would have been so wrong with turning stones into bread?

- well, stones are not bread  
and perhaps even more telling: God our Father was out of the picture, not involved
- the relationship would have been broken  
it is very down to earth: Jesus knows first hand people's need for bread
- there is a saying:  
"you can't worship God, or love your neighbour, on an empty stomach"

Jesus knew what a disaster it could be if an unexpected guest turned up

- and told a story about a friend at midnight,  
and borrowing bread
- when people followed him into the countryside, he fed them  
after his resurrection, he was recognised in the breaking of the bread

Though I'm sure Jesus longed with all his heart for the crowds to whom he spoke

- to hunger for the satisfactions of the Spirit [Slide 5]  
at no time did he preach a strained asceticism
- Jesus gave the people bread  
as he gave to his disciples this petition for bread

Jesus said if you ask for bread, you'll receive bread

- our Heavenly Father desires to give us good things

In Exodus we heard how God fed the people with manna in the desert

- how they could only gather food for the day at hand (except for the Sabbath)  
it could not be hoarded  
they had to rely on God's provision each day
- they were not to worry about an unknown or uncertain future  
just to trust God

"Give us this day our daily bread"

- is more than a prayer of thanks  
more than a prayer for hallowing the bread we eat
- in one sense it is a reminder to be thankful for what we have  
for most of us are very fortunate [Slide 6]  
we can choose what we eat
- we can, if we so desire, be picky about our food  
not eat pumpkin, carrots, peas  
we live in a country abundant with fresh fruit, and can choose not to eat it
- this prayer perhaps takes me back to my time in a university hostel  
where meals were pretty much a lottery  
yes, there was food every day, but quality, quantity, edibility were huge variables  
however I was a hungry young man in my late teens – so I ate
- if we have food each day then we may be truly thankful and grateful

This petition also reminds us of God's part in the business of bread

- in this age of machinery, technology, fertiliser, chemicals, agricultural science  
are human beings truly self-sufficient?
- no way! no way!  
no person alone can make a seed grow, much less a tiny ear of corn fill out
- the vital power is God's!

Another vital point from Reverend Geoffrey Harding

- he says if we really accepted food was a gift from God we would cherish it and use it so much more wisely
  - we would not waste it
- he says the food in the dustbins of our town would feed a whole city in a famine area

In praying: “give us this day our daily bread”

- we become aware that many of God’s children are hungry physically hungry, spiritually hungry
- we pledge ourselves to help feed them

As I said at the beginning, this prayer is addressed to God our Father

- *our* Father, *our* daily bread, *our* brothers and sisters
- there is a family relationship

Dr Nikolai Berdyaev puts it like this [Slide 7]

The question of bread for myself is a material question; but the question of bread for my neighbour, for everybody, is a spiritual, religious question.

We cannot pray “our Father ... our daily bread” and not care

This part of the Lord’s Prayer is bound up with responsible use of the land

- preventative measures against erosion and flood production and distribution of new types of seed
  - development of new tools and technology
- economic justice

In closer, personal terms it is bound up with the meals that come daily on our tables

- the grace we bow our heads to say
- and the food we throw away

Rita F. Snowden writes [Slide 8]

God provides for all His children but only on one daring assumption: that we will pray and live together as one family. So long as we have a selfish world we shall have a hungry world; and as long as we have a hungry world, we cannot have a peaceful world.

So much depends on bread

- which is why Jesus taught his disciples to pray “give us this day our daily bread”

There will be some time for reflection, and then I will pray [leave Slide 8 showing]

*Dear Jesus, thank you for being the Bread of Life.*

*Thank you that whoever comes to you will not leave hungry.*

*If we ask for bread, you will not give us a stone;*

*instead, you give us your very life*

*and by it offer forgiveness, healing, reconciliation and love.*

*May the Spirit of the living God move on each of us this morning.*

*In Jesus' name, Amen.*