

Wellspring – Life & Teaching of Jesus (41) Sermon on the Mount – Daily Provision (Matt 6:11)

“Give us today our daily bread. (Matt 6:11)

The Primary Focus of Prayer

For the last two weeks we have looked at “Thy Kingdom come...” and seen that this is the primary focus of the Lord’s prayer – the kingdom or rule of God being released on the earth. This kingdom is perfectly expressed in heaven, and it is God’s will and purpose that his kingdom rule is released on the earth. We saw that this happens as God chooses to work through his people to release his kingdom on the earth. We then focused last week on the basic currency of the kingdom – obedience to the word of God – and we saw that obedience releases the blessing of God into our lives and into our world – whereas disobedience aligns us with the evil one and keeps us living under a curse.

This process starts in the secret place of prayer, but works out through the very practical issues of life – and the Lord’s prayer goes on to focus on some of these areas.

Daily provision

Today we are going to focus on the next sentence of the prayer, which has to do with one such area – the practical provision of our daily needs – such as food, drink and shelter. Jesus is saying that it is fine to ask God to provide for these practical needs. This acknowledges

- That all that we have comes from our Heavenly Father.
- We live by faith, simply trusting Him to richly supply all our needs.
- We live in dependence, not on our human resources, but on His heavenly resources.

Faith not worry

Whereas Jesus encourages us to pray in simple faith, he goes on to make it very clear that we are **NOT** to make these things the **primary** focus of prayer. Such a focus springs from **worry** and **not from faith**.

No-one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money. Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more important than food, and the body more important than clothes? Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life? And why do you worry about clothes? See how the lilies of the field grow. They do not labour or spin. Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendour was dressed like one of these. If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?

*So do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For the pagans run after all these things, and **your heavenly Father knows that you need them**. But **seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well**. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own. (Matt 6:24-34)*

Yes, by all means acknowledge your faith in God by asking him to supply your needs, but never get so caught up and consumed with this that you lose your heavenly vision and focus.

There are no food shortages in heaven!

Jesus lived his life **from** heaven **toward** earth. He could at any moment draw on the abundant supply of heaven and release this on earth. He was not bound by earth’s limitations. He tried to teach his disciples to think “this way up” and not be bound by earthly thinking.

The disciples had forgotten to bring bread, except for one loaf they had with them in the boat. "Be careful," Jesus warned them. "Watch out for the yeast of the Pharisees and that of Herod." They discussed this with one another and said, "It is because we have no bread." Aware of their discussion, Jesus asked them: "Why are you talking about having no bread? Do you still not see or understand? Are your hearts hardened? Do you have eyes but fail to see, and ears but fail to hear? And don't you remember? When I broke the five loaves for the five thousand, how many basketfuls of pieces did you pick up?" "Twelve," they replied. "And when I broke the seven loaves for the four thousand, how many basketfuls of pieces did you pick up?" They answered, "Seven." He said to them, "Do you still not understand?" (Mark 8:14-22)

The disciples get the wrong end of the stick! Jesus is not talking about bread, but about mindsets – ways of thinking that will prevent the kingdom of God being released through us. The yeast of the Pharisees is a religious mindset that is limited by human beliefs and traditions. The yeast of Herod speaks of a secular mindset that focuses on human power and control. Both of these mindsets make no room for heavenly thinking and prevent us from receiving God's supernatural power. Jesus is calling them to a heavenly mindset, and he reminds them of the two miracles of multiplication – if you compare the two you will see that when they started with more, they fed less people and had less left over. God is not bound by earthly limitations!

The true bread from heaven

God gave the Children of Israel an amazing supernatural provision of manna to eat throughout the 40 year journey through the wilderness, and He tells them that this was to teach them a vital principle:

He humbled you, causing you to hunger and then feeding you with manna, which neither you nor your fathers had known, to teach you that man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord. (Deut 8:3)

Every provision of God that we see in the natural realm, has its origin in a word or decree of God that is spoken from heaven. Moses understood this – his focus was on the ways of God, not merely on the acts of God

He made known his ways to Moses, his deeds to the people of Israel (Ps 103:7)

The people's focus was on what they saw in the natural, Moses' focus was on what God was saying to him in the heavenly realm.

John 6 begins the feeding of the five thousand. He then goes on to teach them about the true bread from heaven – his flesh. The crowd fail to understand the message and refer back to the bread from heaven, or manna, that they received under Moses. Jesus echoes Deut 8 by turning this back to God and saying that the Father alone is the one who gives true bread from heaven. Jesus is the living word of God; He is that true bread from heaven.

God has made an amazing supernatural provision of bread from heaven for each one of us. Jesus is that provision – he is the living word of God telling us of the Father's love, and demonstrating that love on the cross to bring us into an amazing inheritance of spiritual blessing. When our primary focus is on the provision of the cross – every other area of lives can be provided for. We simply need to get hold of heaven's thinking.

How do we do this?

We simply focus on the promises we have been given in the Word of God, and receive by faith the provision of the cross – the bread of life. Through that spiritual, heavenly act of provision we have received everything we need:

Grace and peace be yours in abundance through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord. His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires. (2 Peter 1:2-4)

When we pray "give us our daily bread" we're acknowledging that he's made provision for everything we need for life and godliness. It's already done! We can't separate "spiritual" provision from material provision. As we seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, we have his promise that all our material needs will be provided.