

DAY 12

BREAD

Matthew 6:11

"Give us today our daily bread."

As many of you know, this is part of the Lord's prayer in the Sermon on the Mount- which was Jesus' response to his disciples when they asked him to teach them how to pray. He begins his prayer with a focus on the Father and his holy name. And, the very first thing he asked for was for God's kingdom to come and for his will to be done. This is how he teaches his disciples how to pray—and he invites them to ask for daily bread. I think

it's telling that he didn't teach his disciples to pray for a "one-time 'fix it for us forever' solution" to their daily needs. He didn't tell them to ask for enough money to guarantee they could feed their families for days or weeks, or years. That would've been nice, right? The point Jesus seems to make here is to pray in dependence on the Father, to acknowledge AND ask him to meet the needs of each day. In doing so, He disrupts the idea that believers usually have of being self-reliant and to only check in with God when we're faced with a huge need. Instead, Jesus showed clearly that every child of God must be God-reliant for every need every day.

In raising our kids, my husband and I sought to teach our kids the difference between their "needs" and their "wants." We sought to be role models to point out the things they needed for survival (food and shelter) and the things that would bring them a sense of luxury (vacations and some extravagances). We do well to remember these differences as adults!

The prayer for our daily bread is the humble expression of understanding that it be true. Jesus' request for daily bread points us toward our utter dependence on God for sustaining our lives. This simple request highlights God's provision for what we truly need on a daily basis.

And of course, when we are willing to pray like this, God turns our hearts toward looking beyond ourselves and our own needs. It's impossible to pray for our daily bread without a keen awareness of those who don't have any bread at all. The simple act of praying for our daily bread encourages us to acknowledge our hungry neighbor, too.

What is it that you honestly need right now? What is it? To ask for what we need is to do what loved children do, quite naturally, when they turn to one they call daddy or mommy. We simply ask our heavenly parent for what we need for today- or we ask for what we need now. Take a moment and ask Him for what you need.

Daily Practice

Let me suggest something tangible for you to do today: At one meal time today, cut a slice of bread. And as you eat it, give thanks to God, who sustains you with every breath you take. Amen

The below reflections are written by congregants & staff of CPC. All reflections are following Trevor Hudson's book Pauses for Lent and are both heavily influenced and borrowed from his work. Any quotes without attribution should be credited to him.