

Lord's Prayer Part 2 – Our Ask

Last week we quickly ran through the first 22 words of the most famous prayer in the world. And those 22 words acknowledged who God is, who we are, and what our sole purpose in this world is. In the second part of this prayer, we move from glorifying God to asking God to help us glorify Him. So let's get started with bread...

GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD

So, in creation, God provides every human soul enough to survive and to survive well. In fact, there are more grains, fruits, vegetables, nuts, and fish to provide every human being on this planet with 3500 calories a day. God gives us all our daily bread. Yet, some still hunger. This is a very literal way of understanding "give us our daily bread." Interpreting this prayer literally, acknowledging that not everyone is given what they need to survive, is essential in our understanding of what it means to be instruments of God's love.

As God's hands and feet, we are called to be creators and we must create channels for every human being to have their basic human needs met. That's why this Family Promise ministry is so important. Because it is a way for you and I to specifically create space for our brothers and sisters to have their most basic needs met so that they can pursue ways that will lead them to happiness and wholeness. Acknowledging this line literally is absolutely necessary for us if we are to participate in bringing God's Kingdom to earth. I have a whole sermon on this issue, but Emmet Fox lifts up another interpretation that is less physical and more spiritual. Both interpretations have equal value.

From a spiritual perspective, bread is not just our food, bread is a symbol for all things humans require in order that they live healthy, happy, free and harmonious lives. Jesus took the bread at his last supper and held the bread before his disciples, blessed it, broke it and shared it. This bread, our bread is the Christ and the Christ is all we need to live a free and fulfilled life.

And basically, here is the spiritual bread that will lead to that life of freedom and wholeness. The bread of life is the realization that God's presence is with us always. And in all things. It is also the realization that God loves us. Most of us have a very difficult time with that realization, that God's presence is always with us and that God loves us. Sometimes we have moments of insight and realize this to be true for a moment or even a day, but then we forget.

The key to a free and fulfilled life is to realize that God is present, and God loves us to the very marrow of our bones. If we capital K, KNOW this to be true, then out of that realization we will live our lives as God created us to live our lives. Everything we do will come from the one and only reality that God is Present and God is Love. Our sole job on this planet is to come to that realization every day of our lives.

The Old Testament gives us a story that makes this very point. When God's people were wandering around in the wilderness for decade after decade, God provided them with Manna from heaven. Manna is a form of bread that is created from the morning dew and can be collected at dawn before the sun dries it away. God's people always had an abundance of manna every single day and they never hungered. They all had more than they needed. But they could not collect it and save it for tomorrow. Stored manna becomes filled with parasites and can kill a person. God's people had to trust that tomorrow manna would be given to them again.

Give us our daily bread is about trusting every single day, every new day, trusting that God's presence and God's love will sustain us. The story of God's people wandering about in the wilderness reminds us that this is

a daily prayer. In fact, the art of life is to live in the present moment which is made perfect by our realizing that we are the instruments and expression of God Himself. It's all about taking one day at a time.

FORGIVE US OUR TRESPASSES AS WE FORGIVE THEM THAT TRESPASS AGAINST US.

Forgiveness is the key to living without chains. I found a video, that I've already shared with many of you, but it is a video that I find best captures not only HOW to forgive, but WHY we should forgive. Please forgive the title of the message, Nadia-Bolz-Weber is a little rough around the edges, but she also has an undeniable wisdom about her. Let's hear what she has to share with us.

LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPATATION BUT DELIVER US FROM EVIL

Thank God that we have been blessed with a will of our own. Thank God we are not simply robots programmed to love God and one another, but we have the choice to do that. Why is choice so important? Because a robot's love means absolutely nothing. The love of someone who has to choose to love, means absolutely everything.

Having free-will means that we have a choice. We can live for our own desires OR we can live for God's desires. Living for our own desires is when we live our lives by putting ME in the center. Living our own will means that life is all about me. May the best man win. Living for ourselves means that our ego is running the show. Our sense of self leads our decision making. And our lives are centered around ME. In other words, we view ourselves as God. As the most important thing in our lives.

On the other hand, living for God's desires is an entirely different thing. Seeking God's will is letting God be God. Acknowledging that we are here to serve God and God alone, not serve our own selfish desires. Seeking God's will for our lives is the only way we can ever live free and fulfilled lives.

So, our temptation that we are praying to be delivered from is our temptation to put ourselves in the middle of the universe. It is the temptation to put our own desires before God's desires. It is the temptation to allow our ego to lead us in all relationships, all decisions, all our thoughts and so on. Ego will absolutely lead us to a separation from God. And separation from God is the definition of sin.

No matter where we are on our spiritual journey, no matter how far along, how close to God, how much we are living the lives we've been created for, we are always a simple breath away from the temptation of living for self. Therefore, it is critical that we pray to be led away from this tantalizing temptation every day, every hour, every moment we catch ourselves putting our own desires first, we must pray for God to lead us away from our ego.

THINE IS THE KINGDOM AND THE POWER AND THE GLORY FOR EVER AND EVER.

Here we have three final points that are not new to the prayer but are more like an exclamation mark. By the way, this line was not taught by Jesus but added to the prayer by others centuries later. Yet still we pray it so that we can simply emphasize, WE MEAN IT WHEN WE PRAY THIS PRAYER.

THE KINGDOM – it is all creation on every plane there is. The Kingdom is simply the very presence of God.

THE POWER – God's power. The source of all that is Good. An analogy that can help us understand God's power is to imagine a pianist. The fingers touch the keys and produce the music, but the fingers cannot produce anything without the pianist who has all the power. We are the fingers of that Divine pianist who has ALL the power and is the source of the most beautiful music imaginable.

THE GLORY – As we begin to realize that God is everywhere and in everything and is love, this realization (you may want to call it salvation), but this realization is the very thing that transforms us in every phase of our lives. This is the realization that turns sorrow into joy. It turns darkness into light and it turns death into life. As we 'created beings' of the Grand Creator realize everything about this prayer, then there is no way we can do anything at all other than to glorify God. Our glory is God's glory.

And this my friends is the most famous prayer in the world. If all we have is this prayer and no other, it is more than we ever need. We must not simply mouth the words, but if the prayer is to benefit us in any way, we must mean every single one of those words. When we pray from our hearts, our prayers have the power to change the world. When we pray simply by our mouths, we may as well be reciting our grocery list.

So my brothers and sisters, pray this way...

Our father, who art in heaven
Hallowed be thy name
Thy Kingdom come
Thy will be done
On earth as it is in heaven.
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
For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory for ever and ever. Amen.