

WELCOME 25th August 2019 – 11 Pentecost '19 C

Matthew 6:9-13 & 6:25-34 and Philippians 4:10-20

Good morning! Welcome to worship today! Special welcome guests & visitors! It's our privilege & joy to serve you in worship.

'The Hungry Mile' was a colloquial name that workers gave to a stretch of docklands along Darling Harbour during the Great Depression. Maritime workers would walk from wharf to wharf in search of casual, low-paid day work. Success meant money for a family's food/shelter, failure meant going hungry...it was often a hungry mile.

For > 85% of Australians, food insecurity is not something we think about, but for many more than we care to imagine both here & around the world it's a daily reality. '*Give us today our daily bread*' is a prayer for survival. Globally, 1 in 9 people live in hunger. Australians throw away enough food to feed untold millions.

What does it mean to pray '*Give us today our daily bread*' for those of us who live in relative affluence & worry most about being overweight? Today we come face to face with "The Father's provision" & discover the Father's promise, His invitation & His challenge within these six little words.

Praying '*Give us today our daily bread*' allows the Father to work in us the miracles of gratitude & contentment, boldness & generosity that transform our lives & empower us by the Holy Spirit to impact others in amazing life-changing ways.

We'll explore & experience that today...

Let's pray...

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Father in heaven, in your goodness you pour out on your people all that they need so they lack nothing. Make us bold in asking, thankful in receiving, tireless in seeking, & joyful in sharing your gracious provision with all who are in need. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen!

11 PENTECOST '19 C – FROM HIS FULLNESS: THE FATHER'S PROVISION

- FAITH CHAT:** 1. What 3 things do you pray about most often? What do you pray?
2. Share 3 things from the last week for which you are thankful.

Supply – Demand – Choice – Incentive – Cost – Benefit – Unlimited Wants – Limited Capacity My uni Econ 101 class was filled with words just like that. We were taught the basic structure & workings of western economic systems. How the market system we all live with & benefit from operated. In the long run it came down to a final chilling word the professor scrawled on the chalkboard: Scarcity. In the final analysis; we always find ways to want more than we can acquire. Maybe not you in a particular instance, but humans in general always have desires that exceed our capacity to fulfill them. From Adam & Eve falling prey to the temptation to “be like God” human reach always exceeds our grasp.

It's odd...I've been really shaken as I've read/re-read the Lord's Prayer leading into this series & I'm pretty sure Jesus meant for it to be like that when he gave this prayer to the 12. In the 1st 3 petitions, as we pray them, 1st we pray **against** ourselves. Father YOUR Name be kept holy, YOUR kingdom come, YOUR will be done...always aware that I'm *NOT ASKING FOR* my name my rule or my will...but that of the Father. From the moment Jesus places his prayer on our lips, the first thing we do is pray against ourselves...That the Father first & foremost would thwart the sinner in me – would bend the knees of my pride – would break the determination of my self-will – would overthrow my pretensions & posturing...so that I am reborn in his image... my heart conformed to his. That God would not only align the world with his will but that he would align my life to his design...pray vs my own unlimited wants/striving/reaching

Having done that...then we pray **for** ourselves that the Father would provide for, pardon & protect us. *Give us today (each day) the food we need... 'Give us today our daily bread'*. Luther says, Truly, God gives daily bread to evil people, (like us) even without our prayer. But we pray that He will help us realize this & receive our daily bread with thanksgiving. What is “Daily Bread”? Everything that nourishes our body & meets its needs like: food, drink, clothing, shoes, house, yard, fields, cattle, money, possessions, a devout spouse, devout children, devout employees, devout & faithful rulers, good weather, good government, peace, health, discipline, honour, good friends, faithful neighbours & other things like these. OTLT...just in case I've forgotten something...

Why do you think God wants us to pray for “daily bread”?

A couple of weeks ago in the opening part of this series, I noted that you & I are adopted by the Father & brought to the throne of grace & given the privilege of bringing to our Father every imaginable need...not because God is unaware of our needs & needs us to beg, but because *WE ARE* unaware of the abundance our Father seeks to pour out & until we ask we have no idea how vast his desire to give & how deep the well of blessing he opens for us. *Give us today our daily bread* puts us in a position to discover His vast desire to give & that deep well He opens.

In fact...as we just discussed...what we realize instantly as those words leave our lips is that you & I live (admit it or not) in moment by moment, 100% dependence on God for the things we need...EVERY. DAY.

Interesting textual note: little word “daily” up there? Scholars say it's not an easy/common word in Gk. χημερον only appears 2x in the NT: Mt & Lk Lord's Prayer. Some suggest the gospel writers took an Aramaic word that Jesus used & made up a Gk equivalent because it just doesn't appear often in common 1st century Gk usage...But then archaeologists dug up a small manuscript that appeared to be a householder's shopping list & alongside the beans & squash & rutabagas...now & again there was that word...implication was “buy just enough for today” “get today's amount/ration/allotment”

Give us today our daily bread should cause us to recognize that from our first waking breath to the last flutter of our sleeping eyelids, all of it comes from beyond our capacity & control. I am from top/bottom inside/out a dependent being. Everything in my life flows through the hands of the Father - ALL OF IT. Because of that dependence & because of that limitless generosity flowing from the Father to us...what did Luther say: we pray that He will help us realize this & receive our daily bread with thanksgiving. Real power in life might just be thanksgiving...Real strength might just find its origin in praising God for everything he gives...I love what Moses said right b/4 the Israelites entered the Promised Land: Deut 8...Remember how the Lord your God led you through the wilderness for these 40 years...For all these 40 years your clothes didn't wear out, & your feet didn't blister or swell...For the Lord your God is bringing you into a good land of flowing streams & pools of water, with fountains & springs that gush out in the valleys & hills ...When you have eaten your fill, be sure to praise the Lord your God for the good land he has given you. (Be sure to say Thank You) For that is the time to be careful! Beware that in your plenty you do not forget the Lord your God...For when you have become full & prosperous ...be careful! Do not become proud at that time & forget the Lord your God, who rescued you from slavery in the land of Egypt...He did this so you would never say to yourself, 'I have achieved this wealth with my own strength & energy.' Remember the Lord your God. He is the one who gives you power to be successful, in order to fulfil the covenant he confirmed to your ancestors...It's all straight from the Father's hand to our ours...& our best response is thanks/praise/gratitude/contentment...Remember HE is the one who gives

Pr 30:7-9 magnificent: *O God, I beg two favours from you; let me have them before I die. First, help me never to tell a lie. Second, give me neither poverty nor riches! Give me just enough to satisfy my needs. For if I grow rich, I may deny you & say, "Who is the Lord?" And if I am too poor, I may steal & thus insult God's holy name.* I am from top/bottom inside/out a dependent being. Everything in my life flows through the hands of the Father - ALL OF IT...& real strength real power is found in thanksgiving – in praising God for his gifts...And it may be that when I am dissatisfied with what the Father provides...when I am constantly grasping for more...when I begrudge someone else their blessings which seem so much bigger than mine...& it's not fair or right or... that I cut myself off from that unlimited abundance the Father holds for us. When I waste what I am given...when I live unwisely with what God has provided... I cut myself off from that unlimited abundance the Father holds for us.

'Give us today our daily bread' Reminds us of our Complete dependence – Calls us to Wholehearted thanksgiving – Invites us into shameless persistence...What? Where did that come from? Luke...as he recounts Jesus teaching his disciples this prayer, Jesus immediately continues: *Suppose you went to a friend's house at midnight, wanting to borrow three loaves of bread. You say, 'A friend has just arrived for a visit, & I have nothing for them to eat.' And suppose he calls out from his bedroom, 'Don't bother me. The door is locked for the night, & my family & I are all in bed. I can't help you.' But I tell you this—though he won't do it for friendship's sake, if you keep knocking long enough, he will get up & give you whatever you need because of your shameless persistence.*

Jesus assures us we can come to the Father boldly for the smallest things. For daily bread. Not just for the kingdom or world peace, but for daily needs & specific desires No prayer is too small. No need of ours is beyond the care & interest of our Father. And we continue to pray persistently. We come boldly to our Father, asking for what we believe is best, & sometimes He says, No. Scottish pastor, PT Forsyth, says, "We shall come one day to heaven where we shall gratefully know that God's great refusals were sometimes the true answers to our truest prayers." He gives us what we would have asked for if we knew everything he knows. *So if you sinful people know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give good gifts to those who ask him.* How much more will the Father respond in love to those for whom he sent his Son to die? How much more will the Father grant his presence his Spirit his comfort his power his hope & joy to those whom he loves?

Scarcity...my economics professor was right. The world lives by that principle...that if I don't take care of my needs there won't be enough...that there's only so much of anything & if I don't get mine & store some away for the future it'll run out...I've got to get mine & you? Well tough for you if there's none left. But Jesus says pray 'Give us today our daily bread' when we acknowledge our complete dependence & respond w/ wholehearted thanksgiving & approach the Father w/ shameless persistence & childlike trust...we open ourselves to the Father's unlimited generosity...I let go of my desire to acquire & accumulate & stockpile & hoard & instead trust His providing which is endless & abundant...In that I discover his abundance flowing through me.

For God is the one who provides seed for the farmer & then bread to eat. In the same way, he will provide & increase your resources & then produce a great harvest of generosity in you. Yes, you will be enriched in every way so that you can always be generous. – 2 Cor 9:10-11

Give, & you will receive. Your gift will return to you in full—pressed down, shaken together to make room for more, running over, & poured into your lap. The amount you give will determine the amount you get back. – Lk 6:38

Jesus says pray 'Give us today our daily bread' when we acknowledge our complete dependence & respond w/ wholehearted thanksgiving & approach the Father w/ shameless persistence & childlike trust...we open ourselves to the Father's unlimited generosity...Remember... *"your heavenly Father already knows all your needs. Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, & live righteously, & he will give you everything you need."* *And this same God who takes care of me will supply all your needs from his glorious riches, which have been given to us in Christ Jesus.*

Praying 'Give us today our daily bread' allows the Father to work in us the miracles of gratitude & contentment, boldness & generosity that transform our lives & empower us by the Holy Spirit to impact others in amazing life-changing ways.

Let's pray with that in mind...

Merciful Father, you are the provider of all things necessary for our lives here and eternally. Lead us to trust you without wavering, thank you without fail, and praise you through increasing generosity. Cause us to see our blessings as an opportunity to bless and enrich others through our hands by your grace. Defend us from worry and anxiety over earthly goods, and let contentment and joy be our daily offering. By your Spirit conform our hearts to yours and our lives to your glory...Through Jesus Christ we pray...Amen.