

January 26, 2020

The Lord's Prayer  
Our Daily Bread  
Matthew 6:5-13

**Opening words:** The Lord's Prayer has been called "The Greatest Prayer" and the cornerstone of the Christian faith. It has been recited by billions of believers through the ages and is cherished by everyone, regardless of theology or tradition. We recite the words regularly at Western Reserve. It is safe to say we recite the Lord's Prayer about 200 times a year, including Sunday morning worship services, Lenten vesper services, Holy Week services, as well as weddings and funerals. We know the words, but do we understand the meaning behind those words? In this sermon series, *The Lord's Prayer*, your understanding is my goal.

In this series, we have learned the Lord's Prayer is a model prayer. That means, the various elements of the Lord's Prayer must be found in all prayer. Two weeks ago, we looked at the first element, praise. It is found in the very first line, *Our Father, who art in heaven hallowed be thy name*. Last week, we looked at the next line, *thy kingdom come, thy will be done*. That line tells us every prayer must have an obedience element. In the next two weeks, we will look at the last need elements, praying for our spiritual needs and protection. Today, we discover our prayers must have an element of God caring for our physical needs, *Give us this day our daily bread*. Our scripture reading for the entire sermon series is Matthew 6:5-13. Let me call this message *Our Daily Bread*.

**Matthew 6:5-13** "And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. <sup>6</sup> But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. <sup>7</sup> And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. <sup>8</sup> Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him. <sup>9</sup> "This, then, is how you should pray:

"Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name,

<sup>10</sup> your kingdom come,  
your will be done,

on earth as it is in heaven.

<sup>11</sup> Give us today our daily bread.

<sup>12</sup> And forgive us our debts,  
as we also have forgiven our debtors.

<sup>13</sup> And lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from the evil one.

Stephen Hawking (1942-2018) was an English theoretical physicist and author. He suffered with Lou Gehrig's disease for over fifty years. He once said, "*When one's expectations are reduced to zero, one really appreciates everything one does have.*" How can you disagree? If you agree with that quote say, "**Amen!**"

Harry Houdini (1874-1926) was a Hungarian born American illusionist and performer, noted for his sensational escape acts. Once he was locked and shackled into a Scottish town jail. The old turnkey shut him in a cell and walked away. Houdini quickly freed himself from his shackles and then tackled the cell lock. But despite all his efforts, the lock wouldn't open. Finally, ever more desperate but completely exhausted, he leaned against the door--and it swung open so unexpectedly that he nearly fell headlong into the corridor. The turnkey had not locked it. He was limited by his own assumption. Have you ever assumed something that turned out to be wrong? That thought is at the very heart of this message today. If you are ready to begin say, "**Amen!**" Give us this day our daily bread.

Today, we look at this line in the Lord's Prayer: *Give us this day our daily bread.* "Don't just run through those words, think about those words. There is a school of thought that says this line is not about our physical needs, but our spiritual needs. They align this line with the next line, forgive us of our trespasses, or debts. They connect these lines of the Lord's Prayer with John 6:48, where Jesus calls himself the bread of life. They may be right, but they may be wrong. I was raised in a steel town in northeast Ohio, so I read it at face value. When Jesus mentions bread, I believe he is talking about physical bread, which represents are the basics things we need to survive. When was the last time you praised God for the basics of life? Do you appreciate those things, or do you assume they will always be there?

They tell us there are five basic things we need to survive. This is the list:

1. **Air** – The body's greatest need is air. As little as five minutes without air will result in brain damage. After fifteen minutes without air, the brain damage is so severe that most people will not recover. If you enjoy the fresh air say, "**Amen!**"
2. **Water** – Water is the most essential element of life. Our bodies are made up of 70% water. As we live, we deplete our body's water resources. That is why we must stay hydrated. As 2.5% loss in water volume in a person leads to a 25% of blood volume. That effects every organ in the body. If you are thankful you can get a glass of water when needed say, "**Amen!**"
3. **Food** – The body can last quite a while without food. Without food the body will exist on its own fat. They average person could exist for three weeks without food, but we are much more comfortable with food. If you are thankful you are going to eat lunch today say, "**Amen!**"

4. **Shelter** – It is not just proper housing. This includes proper clothing. Both proper housing and clothing help you maintain a proper body temperature. Without a proper body temperature, you run the risk of hypothermia and heat stroke. If you are thankful you can escape the heat and the cold say, **“Amen!”**
5. **Sleep** – Never underestimate the power of a good night’s sleep. A severe lack of sleep can be detrimental to your health and your life. If you are thankful you have a bed say, **“Amen!”** Give us this day our daily bread.

One of the great things about being an American is we are almost guaranteed each one of those basic needs. I love walking my dog, Macy, the world’s best dog, early in the morning when the air is fresh. I love drinking a cold glass of ice water on a hot day. I love a good meal. I am not alone. Many do. Did you know roughly 30% of Americans are considered obese? I love getting into bed after a long day and drifting off to sleep. Do you know what? In America, we have good lives because we have what we need to survive. They are so abundant we can take them for granted. We assume it will always be that way. That is not the case everywhere.

Our world is facing some tremendous problems. When some in the world pray, give us Lord our daily bread, they are desperate for the basics. Look at those five things again through a different filter.

1. **Air** – In 1993, Kathryn and I went on a volunteer in mission trip to the Philippines. We stayed near the city of Manila. When we first arrived, our hosts gave us washcloths to place over our noses and mouths because the pollution was so thick. Many escaped to the mountains where the air was clean. Give us this day our daily bread.
2. **Water** – The World Health Organization reports 11% of the world’s population, 790 million people, don’t have an adequate water supply. They also report 25% of the world’s population, 1.8 billion people, don’t have adequate sanitation. Give us this day our daily bread.
3. **Food** - The Food Aid Foundation says 12.9% of our world is undernourished. That is 795 million people. They also say one in seven people are hungry and one third of all food is wasted. Give us this day our daily bread.
4. **Shelter** – On January 12, 2010, Haiti was hit by a massive earthquake. People who had nothing, suddenly had less than nothing. When I was there several years after the earthquake, many were afraid to enter any building because they feared it would fall on them. Give us this day our daily bread.
5. **Sleep** – You don’t have to leave the country for this one. The Smithsonian reported one-third of Americans get six hours of sleep a night or less. We

should be getting between seven and nine hours. How much sleep do you get on an average night? Give us this day our daily bread.

Let me say it again. We have good lives. We have grown to take the basics for granted. We assume they will be there. That is why it is good to be reminded occasionally of our daily blessings. When was the last time you had to go without? Give us this day our daily bread.

About four and a half years ago, Kathryn and I were in Ukraine. It was an exploratory trip. We hoped to return with a Volunteer in Mission Team, but that never happened because the Russian took control of the Crimean Peninsula. The negative press made it impossible to organize a team. Regardless, Kathryn and I have warm memories about that trip. The people we met were wonderful.

Our guide for that trip was a man by the name of Patrick. We stayed near the city of Chernivtsi near the Hungarian border. It was a hard trip to Chernivtsi. We flew into Kiev, their capital, and had to take a twelve-hour train ride to our destination. The scenery was not impressive. With every mile we saw more economic depression. When we arrived, we found that city to be like many cities in Eastern Europe, tired and worn out. We were thankful to arrive and enjoyed the various people we met. There was only one problem. If we wanted to return to the United States, we had to make that same trip again. About a week later, we climbed back on the same train and rode those same rails again back to Kiev. We traveled at night and arrived in Kiev in the morning. Patrick, Kathryn and I locked our luggage into a locker at the train station, and we began to walk. At first, it felt good to walk and stretch our legs. Kiev is a beautiful city and I enjoyed the sites. Somewhere along the way, I asked Patrick the question, "Where are we going to spend the night?" He responded, "I think, we are going to spend tonight at a friend's apartment." He got his cell phone out and called. However, there wasn't answer. Over the next nine hours, Patrick called his friend countless times and he never answered. Once, we stopped and got a cup of coffee at an outdoor café. Once, we stopped and had lunch. However, by and large, we walked, and my pleasant personality began to change. I was tired. I had gotten next to no sleep on the bumpy train filled with odd smelling people, who didn't speak English. My few possessions were locked up in a locker and I was convinced they wouldn't be there when I returned. My feet hurt from all the walking. We were at a McDonald's when the reality hit me. Patrick didn't know what to do with us on our last night in Kiev. I asked him two things. Did you tell your friends we were coming? Do you have a Plan B? He just gave me the deer in the headlights look. I walked over to Kathryn, who looked like she was a cast member on the Living Dead and told her Patrick didn't know what to do with us tonight. She looked at me and in perfect Russian said, "I want an ice cream cone!" I am not a natural leader, but I found my way being forced to the front. In the middle of a crowded McDonald's filled with Ukrainians, I walked over the Patrick and said, "This is what you are going to do. You are going to take Kathryn and I to a hotel as close to the airport as possible. I don't care what it costs. I am tired and hungry." Patrick looked at

me and said, "That is a good idea!" I walked over to Kathryn and told her we were going to spend the night at a hotel near the airport. She asked, "What is Patrick going to do?" I answered, "I don't care!" Went back to the train station and got our luggage. Within an hour we were checked in the hotel, which wasn't too expensive." A few minutes later Kathryn was asleep in our room and I was sitting in the hotel restaurant. It was nice and quiet. I ordered my meal and a beverage. Before I ate, I prayed. I don't remember the exact words, but it went something like this: *Give us this day our daily bread.*

When you live in America, you have a good life. We take so much for granted. Don't assume they will always be there. It doesn't take long to remember how it could be. Stephen Hawking wasn't wrong. He once said, "*When one's expectations are reduced to zero, one really appreciates everything one does have.*" And all of God's people said, "**Amen!**" Give us this day our daily bread!