



## Our Daily Bread

*"Give us today our daily bread."*

(Matthew 6:11)

Jesus taught us to pray for our daily bread. Today we don't need food for tomorrow, but instead we need to trust that our heavenly Father will provide for us tomorrow again. Now, many of us do our work and then we get paid, weekly or bi-weekly, or maybe only after a job is completed. So we cannot budget from day to day. Instead we must think ahead and plan at least from paycheque to paycheque. We also have numerous regular financial commitments – to the church, the school, our mortgage, etc. – which make it impossible for us to think about today in isolation. We might wonder then whether it still makes sense for us to pray for our daily bread.

But Israelite farmers harvested the grain once a year, in May. In July and August they harvested the grapes and the summer fruit. And when that was stored in the barn it had to last until the following season, unless the following year was a sabbatical year, in which case the farmer had to manage his food supply for two whole years. True, the Lord gave the Israelite farmer bread for every day. But the Lord didn't ration it out for him, day by day. So Jesus didn't teach his disciples to pray for their daily bread just because they received it every day. Likewise for us to say that praying for our daily bread isn't necessary anymore because we live in a different world with credit cards and food banks would be nonsense.

Why did Jesus teach us to pray for our daily bread? Clearly Jesus expected that after the farmer had finished praying he would go to his barn and take from his barn the bread that the Lord had already given to him, possibly even many months before. Praying for our daily bread is not so much about God giving it to us each day, but more about us being thankful each day! It means praying: "Father, the food and drink that appear on our table today we did not earn by ourselves, and it does not really belong to us! Instead, it came to us from your gracious hand and it is still yours, even today. We acknowledge this humbly, and we thank you for it!"

Praying for our daily bread will also make us content. Because we first pray that God will give us our daily bread, and then we open our eyes and we eat the daily bread that God is giving to us in response to our prayer. So praying for our daily bread is a confession that whatever he gives to us is always enough, and it is always exactly the right amount! God clothes the lilies of the field and feeds the birds of the air; He gives to all his creatures exactly what he wants them to have. Who can pray, *"Give us today our daily bread,"* and then be dissatisfied? That is only possible when we pray in unbelief, when we don't trust our heavenly Father to love us and provide for us.

The world makes it difficult for us to pray in this way, however. At the breakfast table we confess that our heavenly Father graciously gives us what he knows is good for us. Yet all the advertising today for "no down-payment," "no repayment for six months," and "zero percent financing" comes to us with a different message. This advertising says that it doesn't matter how much God gives you. Don't let him cramp your style! Don't let him decide how much is good for you or how much you can have! But God teaches us that whatever he gives us is our daily bread, and it is sufficient.

So praying for our daily bread means we also confess to God: "In your infinite wisdom and fatherly grace you have decided what is good for us, and how much we should have. Teach us to believe that whatever you give to us – or withhold from us – is good! Work in our hearts by your Spirit and make us content!" Our heavenly Father commands us to do our work, and then to pray for a blessing over our work. May all his blessings move our hearts by causing us to grow in thankful dependence on him.

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