

# BIBLE STUDIES ON THE LORD'S PRAYER

Matthew 6 vs 9 to 13

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Part 8.

DAILY BREAD

After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdoms come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us

our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

In our study of the 'Lords Prayer' so far, we have considered the part of the prayer, which directed our attention specifically to the Father, His name, and His will. There has been an acknowledgement of God as the supreme one, recognition of who He is, and a belief that His will, which is done in heaven, can be done on earth. Notice that our attention is directed towards the spiritual, before the physical.

The next petition in the 'Lords Prayer' relates to the basic human requirement, without which we cannot live, and that is bread. There are many things in life we can live without, but there is the essential requirement we all need which is bread.

During the journey through the wilderness, the Lord provided the children of Israel with bread each day, to sustain them. The other basic requirement was water, and the Lord gave them that too.

Bread has an important role in our lives because of the value of the nutrients in it, which are vital and keep us healthy. The constituent parts of bread are meal; flour mixed with water, salt, sometimes leaven or yeast, some times olive oil, and then kneaded. In addition to bread being the staple food, bread was used as an offering to God; it was also used in the Tabernacle and Temple to symbolise the presence of God.

It is however important for us to grasp the real meaning behind the petition 'Give us this day our daily bread'. In 'The Lords Prayer' a book written by 'Thomas Watson' and published in 1692 he says: "Bread here is the particular for the whole class'. In other words he is pointing out to us that the use of the word 'Bread' covers far more than what we call bread. It obviously alluding to all our daily provision: work and food. These two are our most essential requirements. Therefore when we pray 'Give us this day our daily bread' we are

asking the Father, who we love and respect, to provide us with the daily requirements of work and food.

Dr Martin Lloyd Jones in his commentary 'Studies in the Sermon on the Mount' says. "It must at least mean this: 'Give us this day what is necessary' in other words all we ask for is sufficient, or what is necessary for each day. It is meant to cover all our material needs, everything that is necessary for the life of man in this world".

Further, in 'The Lord's Prayer for today' Derek Prime says: "Bread sums up our basic material needs, it stands for all the daily benefits we require such as food and clothing, housing and heating, and so forth. We are asking for life's necessities". We can see therefore that the meaning of 'Give us this day our daily bread' encompasses a whole range of things we require, if we are to be sustained each day.

It will be good, before we actually come to the petition, to take note of how many types or references to bread there are in scripture. I have not put in the scriptural references; this is something you can undertake as an exercise for yourself if you wish.

Unleavened bread. Oiled bread. Loaf of bread. Shewbread. Bread of thy God. Bread of his God. Bread of your God. Bread of the Lord. Bread of God. Barley bread. Morsel of bread. Leaven of bread. Children's bread. Breaking of bread. Bread from heaven. Bread of the land. Bread of life. Living bread. Broken bread. Bread of sincerity and truth. One bread. Paul refers to 'This bread' and 'That bread' and of course the one we are considering in this Bible study. 'Our daily bread'.

There are certain things to be considered relating to the words 'Give us this day our daily bread' we will observe them under the following.

## **1. THE PETITIONERS**

In every prayer that is expressed the language used can relate to the person who is petitioning or it can relate to others because they are referred to in the prayer. The one thing that Jesus never meant anyone to be was selfish and independent. In this petition it is 'Give us this day our daily bread' it is not give me, but us. This is a very important statement by Jesus because it is so easy to concentrate so much on self, that thinking of others can be a missing ingredient in our lives. The word 'Us' is what unites us in the prayer. It is essential that in petitioning God for daily bread, that we are conscious of the requirements, necessities and needs of others, apart from our own. The one good thing about belonging to the family of God is that we are not alone. God saw the necessity even from the beginning of creation for man not to be independent and on his own, which is why he created Eve. Jesus Himself sets the example

for us with regard to not being selfish. He says, “When you pray say, Our Father in heaven”. He could have said when you pray say, ‘My Father’. There is to be no thought of self only in this prayer, and there is to be no thought of self in the petition ‘Give us this day our daily bread’ either.

If we become self-centred in our prayers and petitioning, we develop a selfish streak, which is no good to the body of believers. When Paul wrote his first letter to the Corinthians, he had to deal with a problem, which existed because of separatism within the church. Some identified themselves with Paul, others with Cephas. Paul has to say to them in chapter 1 vs 12 & 13: “What I mean is this, One of you says, I follow Paul, another, I follow Apollos; another, I follow Cephas; still another, “I follow Christ” Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Were you baptised into the name of Paul?” The people in the church were failing to identify themselves as one in Christ, and as a result were breaking themselves up into small selfish units within the church. Our horizons have to go beyond the individuals who have influenced us most, we have to incorporate everyone into this prayer, with whom we are related spiritually, no one is then excluded or forgotten.

We are the petitioners, and in our request for daily bread we remember others, so that they too will have the necessities of life granted to them.

## **2. THE PROVIDER**

In petitioning God for daily bread, it is obvious He is the one who has the power to provide it, because if this were not the case we would not be asking Him. We cannot think of God providing us with daily bread without linking it to His ‘Providence’. Peter Lewis in his book on ‘The Lords Prayer’ says: “God’s providence is in large measure. His ‘Provide-ence’ as the English word suggests” (this is referred too later in this study).

Let us note here the words of the hymn, which says.

*“Thy providence is kind and large,  
Both man and beast thy bounty share,  
The whole creation is thy charge,  
But saints are thy peculiar care”.*

‘PROVIDENCE’ is God's faithful and effective care and guidance of everything which, He has made.

The providence of God is linked to **His Creation related people**, and stretches to the people of all nations. God had decreed in Genesis 8 v 22: “While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease.” This

means that even in the most godless of nations God has not abandoned His promise to provide for the people of the earth.

The providence of God is linked to **His Covenant related people**. ‘The Nation of Israel’. The Scriptures have in them numerous instances of how God has taken care of, and provided for, His covenanted related people. The O.T. has detailed in it a history of how God took care of the Nation of Israel in the most difficult of circumstances. From Genesis through to Malachi the providence of God in connection to Israel has been recorded. God provided land, and leaders, gave them prophets, priests, and Kings. He provided!

The providence of God is linked to **His Grace related people**. The Nation of Israel had a special relationship with God, which was based on the covenant He made with Abraham. Stated above is the fact that God has never failed to keep that covenant, and so Israel has experienced His providential care all the time, in the economical and the agricultural. His providence with regard to His grace-related people extends beyond these two things and moves into the area of the spiritual also, so that a new dimension of His providence is seen and experienced. This is based upon the **New Covenant Relationship** established by the Lord Jesus Christ. If we take the word ‘Providence’ and split it into the two words which makes it more meaningful ‘Provide and Hence’ we have a clear insight into the things God has provided for us in Christ. We all know what the word provide means, and in relation to grace it means the Lord Jesus has provided us with salvation. ‘Hence’ or ‘therefore’ we have. Reconciliation. Redemption. Justification. Forgiveness. Peace, and many other blessings which are gifts from God.

God is a great provider, if He can provide for His creation-related people, His covenant related people, then surely He can take care of His grace-related people.

We pray ‘Give us this day our daily bread’. Further we have.

### **3. THE PROVISION**

There are two types of provision that we require, one is in connection to the physical needs we have, and the other is linked to our spiritual needs. The edible animals, vegetation and fruit take care of the natural needs of man, and from them we have all kinds of good things, which sustain us and clothe us. The Psalmist says that God in His goodness makes sure His children have the physical, and natural needs met. He says in Psalm: 37 v 25: “I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread”. The N.I.V. says “I was young and now I am old, yet I have never seen the righteous forsaken or their children begging bread”. It is very comforting to know that however bleak

things sometimes are, whatever little we have, God has provisions for us and will see that we get them. In the O.T. there is a story of a widow who was short and desperate, lets read how the Lord met her need 2 Kings 4 vs 1 to 7.

4:1 The wife of a man from the company of the prophets cried out to Elisha, “Your servant my husband is dead, and you know that he revered the LORD. But now his creditor is coming to take my two boys as his slaves.”

2 Elisha replied to her, “How can I help you? Tell me, what do you have in your house?” “Your servant has nothing there at all,” she said, “except a little oil.”

3 Elisha said, “Go around and ask all your neighbours for empty jars. Don't ask for just a few.

4 Then go inside and shut the door behind you and your sons. Pour oil into all the jars, and as each is filled, put it to one side.”

5 She left him and afterward shut the door behind her and her sons. They brought the jars to her and she kept pouring.

6 When all the jars were full, she said to her son, “Bring me another one.” But he replied, “There is not a jar left.” Then the oil stopped flowing.

7 She went and told the man of God, and he said, “Go, sell the oil and pay your debts. You and your sons can live on what is left”

The spiritual person requires not only physical and natural things to sustain them, but also something, which will feed the spiritual side of their life. Carnal things can feed the carnal man, the spiritual person requires far more than natural things, they have to be sustained by the spiritual, otherwise they will be stunted in their growth as Christians and become weak in faith. Each day we should pray for each other and ask that daily bread, that is the staff of spiritual life, will be granted to each one. Israel went out **each day** to collect manna or bread, the previous days provision was no good for the present day. Each day we should do the same, make sure we feed the spiritual with the right spiritual food.

We are to supplicate each day, we are to appeal to God who is the great supplier, and ask him to give to us the substance we need each day to live naturally, and also spiritually.

‘Give us this day our daily bread’