

TABERNACLE BAPTIST CHURCH
"GIVE US TODAY, OUR DAILY BREAD"

Matthew 6:11

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Tonight, we are continuing our series on the "Lord's Prayer" with focus on its third petition, "Give us today our daily bread," from Matthew Chapter 6 and Verse 11.

Before we exposit this prayer, I would like you to follow me back in time to when I accepted Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior. For an interim of about 6 months, from when I started attending church to just prior to my rebirth; through discipleship, reading, listening and studying, I gained knowledge of the truth about God, his word and Christ Jesus. But this knowledge was in my head and not in my heart. The truth became real to me when God impressed upon my heart that he truly loved me, and I was able to personalize John 3:16; that "God so loved me that he gave His only Son for me."

From that moment on, I began personalizing scripture and claiming ownership to it. Thus, the "Lord's Prayer" to me, became:

"Pray then, in this way:

My Father who is in heaven, hallowed be your name.

Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

Give me today my daily bread.

And forgive me my debts, as I also have forgiven my debtors.

And lead me not into temptation, but deliver me from the evil one."

Amen?

And oh how I encourage each of you to take personal possession of God's promises to you, his child. I can assure you that the Lord's Prayer will take on new and vital meaning to you when you make it your own!

Let us now see what this petition reveals to us.

When we unpack scripture, we look for the 5 "W's" and the 1 "H" — who, what, when, where, why and how.

The phrase, "Give us", answers the question "who" — us!
Then, "When" is answered by — "today!"

Thirdly, "Our daily bread" reveals the "What!"
And the beginning of verse 9, "Pray then, in this way", tells us "How".

This leaves us with "Why" — why did Jesus instruct his disciples to pray this prayer?

I would suggest to you that a primary purpose of this petition was to instill upon these men and subsequently, to us, two vital truths:

First, that he wants us to be at peace and have peace in our hearts and secondly, that in order to have peace, we must focus on the provider and not on the provision.

Before we can discover "how to be at peace", we need to determine the obstacles that prevent us from experiencing the rest that Jesus desires for us.

Proverbs 12:25a tells us that "An anxious heart weighs a man down," - the word "anxious" is also rendered as "anxiety" or "worry" and worry is the primary cause of stress, which is the main cause of strokes and heart attacks and many other ailments that plague us. Do you find it as incredible as I do that more than 3000 years ago, well before the age of modern medicine, that Solomon understood exactly how anxiety affects us. Wow!

It is interesting to note that the old English word for "worry" literally means to choke or to strangle. Folks, that's what worry does to us — it strangles us and often leaves us helpless. But worrying does not work, it accomplishes nothing! It takes a lot of energy but it never gets us anywhere. It's like a rocking chair, going back and forth and getting nowhere!

It is critical to understand that absolutely nothing changes due to our worrying — except us! Worry is the major cause of stress in our life and often causes us to seek consolation through drink, drugs, sex and many other additions. It affects us in ways we often cannot even understand!

The question then is, "Is there something we can do to reduce or eliminate our worry?" The answer is yes, absolutely yes!

Phil 4:6-7 says, "Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the Peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."

But what kind of prayer do I pray in order for me not to worry, and what do I pray for? Jesus answers this question in Matthew 6:9 & 11, when he says "Pray, then, in this way: "Give us today our daily bread."

In this little passage, Jesus gives us three keys on how to overcome worry. First, the passage says, "Give us", which is asking for God's assistance. So, instead of worrying, request help — ask for help from the one who has the authority, ability, the resources and the desire to provide all that we need!

James, in Chapter 4, Verse 2b says, "You do not have, because you do not ask God."

Over 20 times in New Testament, God says, ask!

He's waiting for you. Things you're worrying about -- don't worry about them. Instead, He says, "Ask me" because nothing is out of my control. If we prayed as much as we worried, we'd have a lot less to worry about.

Actually, worrying is an attempt to control something that is uncontrollable. When we feel helpless, we start worrying. While it may be out of our control, it is not out of God's control!

Matthew, Mark and Luke all tell us that Jesus said, "With man this is impossible, but not with God; all things are possible with God." Yes, all things are possible, not just a few things, not just some things, but "all things".

The bible tells us that God knows our needs even before we do. I suspect that God has already set aside for us the things that we need today and for tomorrow, and is just waiting for us to ask for them.

And I also think that there may be a lot of blessings with our names on them going to waste, because we didn't ask God for them! Is your name on any of these provisions? I truly wonder how much more we would have if we had simply asked for God's help. Remember, "You do not have, because you do not ask God."

But why does God want us to ask? Why, because he is the source. Paul, in 1 Tim 6:17, tells Timothy to, "Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment." God wants us to see him as the source for all of our needs!

Needs such as:

When I don't know what to do, God is my wisdom.

When I run out of energy, God is my source of strength.

When I feel like everything is caving in and depressing me, God is the source of my joy.

He is the source of hope when things look hopeless.

When life becomes stressed out, God is my source of peace.
When I'm irritated, about to blow up, God's my source of patience.
When I'm overwhelmed with guilt, God is my source of salvation. And
When I feel like giving up, God is my source of encouragement.

We have a great God, don't we? Can I have an amen?

He is the source of all of these things. He says, "Look to me". He is waiting for us to ask — to ask for his help.

And if you are not asking today, start asking and you will be amazed how he comes through for you.

The second key to this passage says to trust God's timing. —"today."

I think the most difficult part of praying is waiting for God to answer our prayers. And if he doesn't answer immediately, we wonder if He even heard it! And if He did, then why hasn't He given me what I asked for, when I want it?

Scripture tells us that God hears every prayer that his children make. We say, "God, I need it now!" but God says, "No, you don't. You need it when I say you need it." Remember, he knows what is right and best for us, we don't!

I am sure that you have discovered that God's timing is not the same as ours! As a matter of fact, a lot of the time, it's way off. But God's timing is perfect, but waiting requires faith — we must trust God's timing!

So instead of worrying and saying; "God, how and when is this going to work out?" God says, "Hang loose! Trust my timing!"

He wants us to trust him daily — moment by moment. "Give me today my daily bread." Not weekly, not monthly, not annually, but daily — every day and in every way!

Listen, it's a statement of trust!

If God gave us everything we'd ever need for the rest of our life all at once, how often would we come and talk to Him? For some, not very often.

He wants us to focus on Him and not on what He can provide for us.

He's not going to give us everything all at once. He'll give it to us, one day at a time so we will keep depending on Him, looking only at Him as our source.

But, but, but how do I get the faith to live a day by day lifestyle, trusting God for today and not worrying about tomorrow? How do I do that?

It is simple! You read the bible, God's word. Romans 10:17 says "Faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the Word of Christ."

The more I read his book, the more I study, the more I fill my mind with the stories from this book; the greater my faith grows. Why? Because there are examples in the bible that span over thousands of years of how God always provides for those He calls his children.

God has a demonstrated track record, a whole book of illustrations that tell us how he always provides.

So if your faith is weak and you need examples of God's provision, read your bible. And pay particular attention to the Book of Exodus, where for 40 years in the desert, God fed 3 million people on a daily basis. Now that's providing!!!

He sent bread from heaven that literally covered the ground. Can you imagine how much bread that is? Bread everyday for 3 million people for 40 years!

The bible calls the bread "manna", which is the Hebrew word for "what is it?" The Israelites had never seen anything like it before nor did they ever again.

The interesting thing about the manna that God provided is that it was bland and tasteless, but it was nourishing! They had to get up early in morning everyday and gather it. If anyone missed the wake-up call or just slept in, they didn't get any.

When God says "Don't worry", he's not saying "Don't work." His provision is not an invitation to be lazy. God expects us to work for the crust! He wants us to gather for today and then come back tomorrow, for more!

Yes, God gave them manna and they would gather it early in the morning, each day. And God told them to take only enough for that day, because they could not store manna. They couldn't save it. If they tried to store it overnight, it would get worms and rot away. It was useless.

God gave them only enough for that day, so day in and day out for 40 years, 3 million people were dependent totally upon him for their daily bread.

Why did he do that? Because God wanted His people to rely on His provision day by day, moment by moment. Matt 6:34 says, "Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own." But before we can truly put aside our worries, we must heed the words just prior to this — "But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well".

Oh how I pray that you are seeking Him and depending on Him, every single day, too!

The third and last key is to remember God's resources — "Our daily bread"

Worry means we've forgotten or do not believe God's promise that he has unlimited resources for us at his disposal. "Give us today, our daily bread."

Folks, bread represents the basic necessities of life. Everything we need — our sustenance, what it takes to keep us going through-out the day. He can and will provide all that we need, every day, if we believe and ask!

I cannot sufficiently emphasize that God is concerned about all of our needs. Phil 4:19 says, "And my God will meet all your needs according to His glorious riches in Christ Jesus."

What does "all" include? Everything — all that we need! Yes, all! Listen, if this verse is really true, then what do we have to worry about? Absolutely nothing! All anxiety and worrying is useless and worthless if God really can and will supply all our needs.

The key word here is "need". Scripture doesn't say, "my God shall supply all of our greed." There is a big difference. He doesn't supply all we want, He supplies all we need!

And you know as well as I do that we're not very good judges of what we need most, but you know what? God knows!

God gives us what we need, not what we want, because He is a loving and caring Father. He is "Our Father, who is in Heaven".

One might ask, "Why doesn't God give us everything we want?" Why, He knows that we have a sinful nature and will misuse most of our wants. In a sense, He is protecting us from ourselves. Why, because he loves us! Amen?

And Phil. 4:19 says that God is going to supply it out of "His glorious riches." God's ability to provide is greater than your anxiety. Whatever you are uptight about; God has more ability than your anxiety. So come to God, ask for His assistance and remember His resources.

In Matthew 6 and verse 27, Jesus says, "Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life?"

Then He says, in verse 31, "So do not worry, saying, 'what shall we eat?' or 'what shall we drink?' or 'what shall we wear?'" For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things."

Now brothers and sisters, I beg you to listen to this truth very carefully! A constant state of worry means that your faith in our Almighty God has faltered and you have ceased to fully believe in His promises!!

Friends, it is a sad thing that many people verbalize the Lord's Prayer on a regular basis, expecting God to answer the third request — "Give me today my daily bread", while ignoring the second petition of this prayer, "Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

God says, "put my priorities first, put me first in your life and then you can ask for your needs. And I will provide them."

Asking God to fulfill your needs without first putting Him first in your life just doesn't cut it! Remember, this promise is not for everybody. It's a promise for those who put God first.

Put Him first and pray for His will in your life and then you can expect God to honor his guarantee to meet your needs.

The apostle Paul wrote in Romans 8:31, "Since God did not spare even his own son for us but gave him up for us all, won't he also surely give us everything else?"

If God loved us enough to give His own Son; to sacrifice him, to die on the cross for us, don't you think we can trust him to "Give us today, our daily bread?" and meet all of our needs?

If God loved me enough to send Jesus to the cross, certainly he loves me enough to keep shoes on my feet and clothes on my back. Why, because I have put him first in my life. He is waiting for me to ask and he is anxious to give. So, instead of being anxious and worrisome about the problem, ask God for his assistance and put your full faith and trust in Him!

Again, Matt 6:43 says, "Each day has enough trouble of its own!"

You can plan for the future but you must live for today. As much as you try, you can't live in the past or in the tomorrow — you must live in the present.

You see that worry is an attempt to control both the past and the future and it doesn't do a thing for you. You worry about the past you can't change and you worry about the future that you can't alter.

Worry doesn't change the past and it doesn't change the future, it just messes us up today. It makes us miserable, today.

But what can we do then to not worry?

The answer is pray and live one day at a time. Psalm 68:19 tells us to, "Praise the Lord who daily bears our burdens." Notice that the Lord bears our burdens, daily — everyday. That's why Jesus tells us to pray, "Give me today, my daily bread!"

When we really make God the source of our lives and look to Him to provide all our needs; we become more at peace. Circumstances just don't bother us anymore.

We look beyond the circumstance to the one who is ultimately in control and we just don't sweat it anymore. We look to "Jehovah - Shalom, our God who is peace" for the strength to deal with whatever situation comes upon us!

And we must look to Jesus, who said in John 6:48-51: "I am the bread of life. Your forefathers ate the manna in the desert, yet they died. But here is the bread that comes down from heaven, which a man may eat and not die. I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."

So when we say, "Give us today, my daily bread", we are, in reality, saying "Give us today, our Jesus!" Amen?

Once we learn how to deal with the anxieties of life, we can confidently proclaim the words of the great philosopher and theologian, Alfred E. Neuman, of Mad Magazine, who said, "What me worry?"

My brothers and sisters you too, can have that same attitude when you rely on our Lord and Savior's instruction to pray, "Give me today my daily bread!"

Now is a great time for an amen!