

Day 4 – Give us this day our daily bread

Preparing: *Hear my prayer, LORD; let my cry for help come to you.* – Psalm 102:1

Pausing: Enjoy a time of silence in God’s presence.

Reading: Matthew 6:25-34

Reflecting:

Having grounded us in the character of our heavenly Father, in our life as a community, and in what our three greatest desires should be, Jesus now has us pray through our three greatest needs: provision, pardon, and protection. As we consider our need for provision, Jesus uses the words daily and bread. Bread refers not just to a loaf of white, wheat, or rye, but all of what we need tangibly and physically, to exist, extending from food and drink to clothing and shelter. Wonderfully, it means that God cares for our bodies. The healing of a 12-year old girl bears this out. After Jesus had healed her, he instructed those present to give her something to eat! And Jesus not only taught multitudes, he made sure that they got fed (Mk. 5:21-43; 6:30-44; 8:1-10).

But, while Jesus is concerned that we have what we need, he is also concerned about our tendency to hoard a surplus. (Think toilet paper!) “Daily” means enough. It was especially poignant in the days when folks didn’t have large refrigerators and freezers. But, “daily” would have also pointed back to the daily bread, “manna,” that God had provided to sustain his people while traveling in the wilderness enroute to the Promised Land. Each day brought sufficient; when they gathered more than they needed, it spoiled (Ex. 16).

We need to be aware that there is great danger to our souls in living in a surplus position. As the wisdom of the Proverbs highlights: “Give me neither poverty nor riches but give me only my daily bread. Otherwise, I may have too much and disown you and say, ‘Who is the LORD?’” (Pv. 30:9; cf. Deut. 8:12-18). When so much seems like it is being snatched away from us during this pandemic, we are forced to consider: In who or what have I placed my trust? What is the foundation I am building my life upon? Am I feeding on, and seeking to be sustained by, Jesus, the bread of life? Or am I trying to nourish my soul with something far less satisfying or healthy?

The word “us” has highly practical meaning here, particularly in this time of virus-induced, unprecedented unemployment. What are the needs of your family of faith, and of your neighbors? Who might be struggling with food, or other types of provisions? Do you have a surplus? Might Jesus, in calling you to meet such a need as you experience more than your daily needs? As Paul put it to the Christians in Corinth, with God’s daily provision of manna in the background: “At the present time your plenty will supply what they need so that in turn their plenty will supply what you need” (2 Cor. 8:14).

Reflection Questions:

1. Take a moment to read Proverbs 30:7-9. Do you find yourself in a position of surplus, or scarcity in these days?

2. Where do you have a tendency to hoard? How might God be asking you to trust him to provide?

3. On this Maundy Thursday, who are you missing at your table? Bring them to mind and hold them each for a moment in prayer.

4. For what are you grateful today? What made you sad today? (You might consider asking these questions as you sit down to dinner each day...)

5. Who are those around you who might need help with some aspect of their daily bread, either having it provided, or maybe just delivered, or...?

Singing/Listening [One Thing Remains](#) (click to listen)

Praying: Lord Jesus, the One whose love never fails, never gives up, and never runs dry...