

**The Sermon on the Mount  
Give Us Our Daily Bread  
Matthew 6:11**

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In the classic film *Shenandoah*, James Stewart plays a Virginia farmer during the Civil War. He's a recent widower. And on her deathbed, his wife made him promise to raise their seven children as good Christians. He tries his best to honor that request. The movie begins with, really, what is I think an unforgettable scene - the large family seated there at the dinner table and Stewart feels compelled to honor his wife's wishes and so he realizes he needs to pray before the meal. And he begrudgingly prays this prayer: "Lord, we cleared this land, we plowed it, sowed it, harvested it. We cooked the harvest. It wouldn't be here and we wouldn't be eatin' it if we hadn't done it all ourselves. We worked dog-bone hard for every crumb and morsel, but we thank You just the same for this food we're about to eat. Amen."

I think that is an absolutely brilliant portrayal of the unregenerate human heart, because we are, by nature, ungrateful. You remember Paul, in his indictment there in Romans 1, says God gave us this amazing display of His being and character in the creation, but man sees that revelation in nature and he neither glorifies God nor is he thankful. When unbelievers do choose to offer some form of thanks – and they do, we gather for Thanksgiving and unregenerate families across our country express some degree of gratitude. When they do offer some grudging expression of thanks to God, they still find a way to assign much of the credit to their own efforts and their own intelligence and their own ingenuity. On the other hand, the heart of a genuine Christian not only give thanks to God, but eagerly acknowledges beforehand, his utter dependence on God for everything. Every genuine Christian heart acknowledges that dependence.

In the fourth petition of the Lord's Prayer, Jesus teaches us both to develop and to express an attitude of dependence and reliance on Him every single day. Let's look again at the Lord's Prayer. Matthew 6:9. Here's what our Lord said to His disciples that day gathered on a hill on the northern shore of the Sea of Galilee and ultimately to us as well. He says:

Pray, then, in this way: 'Our Father who is in heaven, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.'

Now as we've noted, this magnificent prayer, this model prayer for us, contains three basic parts. There is a preface, six petitions, and a conclusion. The preface, "Our Father who is in heaven," reminds us that when we approach God, we must come before Him with the right attitude. John Piper writes: "Most of us are prone to bluster into the throne room of heaven as in to a hardware store with a broken piece of plumbing, rather than with joyful wonder that we are admitted here only by the blood of Christ, and that we come to the greatest being in the universe." The preface reminds us to stop for a moment and think about what it is we are actually doing. We studied that preface in great detail.

Then come the six petitions. Each of them provides us with a category of prayer. The first three of them remind us that prayer is not primarily about us. Jesus says we are first of all to pray for the glory of God: "Hallowed be Your name." God, set apart and have treated as holy, not only Your person, but everything connected to You. Secondly, He says we're to pray for the kingdom of God: Let your kingdom, your spiritual kingdom, advance. May other hearts fall in submission to the King Jesus. And may those who've already acknowledged Him as King, may their hearts grow in greater submission to their King. Let Your kingdom advance heart by heart, and let it advance in my heart. It's also a prayer that the literal, physical kingdom of Jesus would soon come on this planet. Thirdly, Jesus says pray for the will of God. Pray that we as Christians would accept God's sovereign will in our lives, that we would embrace His sovereign will rather than complain and grumble about the things that He brings, and to obey His revealed will as it's contained in the Scripture.

Now today, we begin to study the final three petitions. And in these three petitions, Jesus teaches us, finally, how to pray about ourselves. He teaches us first of all (notice the fourth petition) to pray, in verse 11, for the needs of life--the physical needs of life: "Give us this day our daily bread." The fifth petition is about the confession of sin, in verse 12: "And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors." The sixth and final petition is for the pursuit of holiness: "And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil."

Now as we begin to think about our needs and our concerns and begin to pray about those things, it's important to remember this doesn't mean that we can suddenly forget about God's glory and God's kingdom and God's will. We must pray these three petitions that have to do with us in light of the three petitions that have to do with God: God, do these things for me, but only as it brings You glory, as it advances Your kingdom, and as Your will is further embraced. These three petitions that end the Lord's Prayer, these petitions about us, are all-inclusive. "Give us this day our daily bread" – that summarizes a request for all of the physical needs of this life. "Forgive us our debts... and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil" – those are about all of the spiritual needs of this life. And so, comprehended in these three petitions, is everything. Lloyd-Jones says our whole life is found in those three petitions because we are two-part beings. We are body and soul. The fourth petition deals with our body and its survival and all that we need for that, and the fifth and sixth petitions with our souls.

Now I want us to consider for a few minutes this morning, this familiar fourth petition. Look at verse 11: “Give us this day our daily bread.” As you would expect, with our Lord, every word here speaks to us with rich meaning and exposes us to the deepest of truths. In these seven English words, eight words in the Greek text, we discover four life-changing spiritual lessons about the physical needs of this life and God’s abundant provision to meet them - four great spiritual lessons about the needs of this life and how God in His goodness meets them. Let’s look at these lessons together.

The first lesson that we learn here is a lesson in grace. We see this lesson in the first word of this petition. Verse 11 begins: “Give...” That simple word reminds us that everything we have comes to us from God. It’s a gift of His grace. Now let me just say at the outset that understanding that everything we have comes from God and is a gracious gift, is not an excuse for personal laziness. The Bible will not countenance laziness. “Whatever your hand finds to do, (*God says*) do it with your might.” In Genesis 3:19, as God pronounces on Adam the curse as a result of his sin, He tells him: “By the sweat of your face you will eat bread...” By the way, work was not the result of the curse. There was work before the curse. In the curse, work became work. We will work in eternity. “By the sweat of your face you will eat bread...” God says, I want you to work hard.

The same thing is true in the New Testament. Paul tells the Thessalonians in 2 Thessalonians 3 – some of them had become so heavenly minded they were no earthly good. Their eschatology had caused them to stop working hard. And here’s what Paul writes to them in 2 Thessalonians 3:10.

. . .when we were with you, we used to give you this order: if anyone is not willing to work, then he is not to eat either. (*that’s pretty straightforward*) For we hear that some among you are leading an undisciplined life, doing no work at all, but acting like busybodies. Now such persons we command and exhort in the Lord Jesus Christ to work in quiet fashion and to eat their own bread.

Listen, the Bible will not excuse laziness and never does. John Calvin writes: “The fields must be cultivated, labor must be bestowed on gathering the fruits of the earth, and every man must submit to the toil of his calling in order to procure food. But all this does not hinder us from being fed by the undeserved kindness of God, without which men might waste their strength to no purpose. We are thus taught that what we seem to have acquired by our own industry is His gift.” To ask God to give us our daily bread is an acknowledgment that He is the One who provides us with all of the physical necessities to sustain life here. And it also acknowledges that He is the One who uses those provisions and resources to sustain our lives. Scripture constantly hammers the truth that God is the source of every good thing. God is the One who gives life itself. Turn to Acts 17. And you find here as Paul preaches to the Athenians and as he unfolds to them the true and living God, the one they worship as an unknown god, notice what he tells them about God in Acts 17:24. “The God who made the world and all things in it (*there’s God as the Creator of everything, He made it all - and He is sovereign over it all*), He is the Lord of heaven

and earth...” By the way, those two things go together. What you make, you have ownership and sovereignty over. What God makes, He has ownership and sovereignty over. That is why evolution is so popular because people resent the sovereignty of God, His right to tell them what to do, but Paul nails both of them here. And he says this God who created all things and who’s sovereign over all things

does not dwell in temples made with hands; *(you can’t put God in a box. There’s nowhere you can contain God. Verse 25)* nor is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, *(do you understand God doesn’t need anything from you? Nothing. There’s nothing God needs from you. Why? The end of verse 25)* since He Himself gives to all people life and breath...

Listen. The reason you were born is because of God’s sovereign purpose. The reason you live today, the reason your heart still beats at this moment is because God has given you life and continues to sustain that life. Notice verse 28: “for in Him we live and move and exist...” But not only does God give us life. He also then gives us everything we need to sustain this life. Look back at the end of verse 25: “since He Himself gives to all people life and breath and *(what?)* all things...”

Turn back a few pages to chapter 14. Paul and Barnabas are in Lystra. You remember the story. There’s a healing and the people begin to worship them as gods. Notice verse 14:

When the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard of it, they tore their robes and rushed out into the crowd, crying out and saying, ‘Men, why are you doing these things? We are also men of the same nature as you, and we preach the gospel to you that you should turn from idols to the living God, the One who created everything. *(Verse 16)* In the generations gone by He permitted all the nations to go their own ways; and yet He did not leave Himself without witness, *(what was God’s witness and continues to be His witness)* in that He did good and He gave you rains from heaven and fruitful seasons, and He satisfied your hearts with food and gladness.

Listen. Every good thing any being on this planet enjoys, is a gift of God. It’s a gift of His grace. That’s why in James 1:17, James writes: “Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights...” There’s nothing in your life that’s good that hasn’t come to you from God. You say, Now wait a minute. I understand that ultimately God is the Creator and all of that, but what about my electronics? What about my computer and my Smartphone and my microwave and what about my car? I mean, those things aren’t from God. Well, think about this for a moment. Even those things that He has not given us directly, He is the One who has provided the natural resources from which everything is made. Psalm 24:1. “The earth is the Lord’s, and the fullness of it *(everything in it)* all it contains,” In Matthew 5, we saw that when our Lord was describing God’s goodness—(I love this expression.) He calls the sun God’s sun. “He makes His sun to shine on the evil and the good.” He sends the rain. And the

same is true for every other resource on this planet - the gas we pump in our cars, the minerals from which all the metal things that we enjoy are made. Everything ultimately comes from the resources God intentionally put on this planet for His creation. God also sustains the laws on which all of our technology and invention rest. The reason there's enough constancy in our world for us to turn on our cell phone and for those signals to be sent through the air is because God sustains all of that. Colossians 1:17. "...in Him all things hold together."

To take this yet another step, God gifts men with specific skills for their own livelihood, but also for the benefit of all mankind. Everybody here this morning – you have skills. Where did those skills come from? Those are an expression of the common grace of God to you and to everyone else so that you can use those skills and gifts, not only for your own good, but for the good of others. Listen to Exodus 31:6. God says, "In the hearts of all who are skillful I have put skill..." In the hearts of all who are skillful, I have put skill. You see, God in His common grace allows men to discover His resources that He put here, and His laws that He holds in place, and to use their God-given skills to harness all of that for mankind's advantage. And so, everything, everything you and I enjoy, that's good, comes to us from God. Those advantages, those technologies can be used for evil and often are, but they can also be used for good. And in that sense, they are an expression of God's common grace.

Let's talk more personally though. Ultimately, God is the One who has providentially granted you whatever degree of financial prosperity you enjoy. Moses makes this very clear to the children of Israel in Deuteronomy 8. Turn to Deuteronomy 8:16. I want you to see this. Moses says, "In the wilderness God fed you (*and in this case, He fed them miraculously with manna. He fed you*) with manna which your fathers did not know, that He might humble you and He might test you, to do good to you in the end." And here's what God doesn't want you saying in your heart. And by the way, most of us would never say this outwardly. That's why it says don't say this in your heart, okay? This is what God doesn't want you to think: My power and the strength of my hand made me this wealth. Verse 18: "But you shall remember the Lord your God, for it is He who is giving you power to make wealth, that He may confirm His covenant which He swore to your fathers, as it is this day." He says to Israel, Listen. Whatever wealth you enjoy is an expression of God's goodness and grace. And the rest of the Scripture makes that clear that it's universally true for all of us. For example, in Proverbs 10:22: "It is the blessing of the Lord that makes rich, and He adds no sorrow to it." Hosea 2:8. God says, "Israel does not know that it was I who gave her the grain and the new wine and the oil. It was I who lavished on her silver and gold..." And then He goes on to say, Israel took those resources I gave her in My generosity and she used them for idol worship for Baal. Let me ask you - do you take any credit for your financial prosperity? As you sit here this morning, as I've told you before, we are blessed by God. Every person in this room is in the top ten percent of the world's wealthiest people. Take the seven billion people on this planet, and every person here is in the top ten percent. Do you think that's because of you? Do you think that's because you're smart, and you're creative, and you've worked hard? Listen. Although you may never breathe a word to anyone else, do you

believe your own hard work, your own intelligence, your own gifts are the real reason behind your success? Listen to Paul in 1 Corinthians 4:7 – “What do you have that you did not receive?” Listen. You came naked into this world with nothing, and you will leave this world naked with nothing, and everything you have in between is an expression of God’s grace. What do you have that you did not receive? You say, boy, you know, I’ve succeeded because of my intelligence. Yeah, and where did you get that? I’ve succeeded, because I’ve worked hard. And who gave you the capacity to physically work hard? And on and on it goes. What do you have that you didn’t receive? And if you did receive it, why do you boast as if you’d not received it? Listen. God is responsible for every success you and I have had. And God is the One who has given us, as a free expression of His grace, whatever good we enjoy. Jesus teaches us to pray, asking God daily to give us as a gift of His grace, what we need. That forces us every day to come face to face with grace: Father, open up Your hand, be gracious to me and give me what I need. So this petition sets before us a lesson in grace.

Secondly, it also teaches us a lesson in love. Look again at verse 11 of Matthew 6: “Give us...” Give us. Like all of the requests about our needs in the Lord’s Prayer, this one is plural. We may pray in private, but we may never pray in isolation. Here our Lord reminds us that when we pray for the needs of this life, we have a responsibility not only to pray that our own needs be met, but also for others. When we pray, “Give us our daily bread,” we are praying not only for ourselves, that God would supply us with the physical needs of this life, but we are also praying for others. We’re praying for our families. This is a biblical responsibility we have. Look at 1 Timothy 5. We quote this verse, but often out of context. 1 Timothy 5:3. Just to introduce it - Paul is dealing with the issue of widows in the church, widows who are truly widows, who meet certain qualifications, and who don’t have anyone from the family to support them. Verse 4: “...but if any widow has children or grandchildren, they (*that is, the children or grandchildren*) must first learn to practice piety in regard to their own family and to make some return to their parents; (*or grandparents*) for this is acceptable in the sight of God.” Verse 8: “But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.” Now listen. We normally quote this as saying we ought to provide for our own immediate families and that’s true. That’s certainly implied here. But in the context, it’s talking about older parents and grandparents who are dependent and can’t care for themselves. We are responsible to be concerned about their needs and to meet those needs, and to fail to do so is to be worse than an unbeliever. So we are to pray “Give us” in the sense not only of ourselves, but in the sense of our families and even dependent parents and grandparents.

We’re also to pray for other believers. Look at Galatians 6:10. Paul writes: “So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, and especially to those who are of the household of faith.” You see this throughout the New Testament. You see believers taking care of other believers. So when we pray, “Give us”, we’re not only praying for ourselves and our own families. We’re also praying for our fellow brothers and sisters in Christ. In addition, we’re praying for all of those in need, even those who aren’t believers. Look again at verse 10: “So

then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all people..." Sometimes not only do we have to pray for their needs to be met. We have to put feet to our prayers and do good to them. You remember the Old Testament and its laws. required for you. If you were reaping your field, you were supposed to leave the corners of that field unharvested. And if wheat dropped as you were harvesting the field, you weren't supposed to make a second pass to sort of clean up your profits. Instead, you were supposed to leave the wheat that had fallen (why?) for the poor. God is concerned about them and we should be as well.

Look at Ephesians 4:28. Paul is dealing with a person who was a thief before they came to Christ and he says: "He who steals must steal no longer; but rather he must labor, (*get a job instead of taking from others*) performing with his own hands what is good, so that (*and what we expect to read is so that he will be able to support himself, but that's not what Paul says. He says, so that*) he will have something to share with the one who has need." Listen. Do you realize that the reason you have a job, the reason God is blessing your employment is not solely so that you can support your family? It's not solely so that you will have. It's so that you can help others as well. Basil, one of the early church fathers, wrote this. He said: "The bread that is spoiling in your house belongs to the hungry. The shoes that are mildewing under your bed belong to those who have none. The clothes that are stored away in your trunk belong to those who are naked." Your stuff doesn't belong to you. Don't become a hoarder. Sadly, we are often so absorbed with our own needs that we in essence pray, Give me my daily bread, and we ignore the physical and financial needs of our family and our brothers and sisters in Christ and even the unregenerate poor around us. Jesus says we're to pray, "Give us..." It's a lesson in love for others.

In this fourth petition, Jesus wanted us to learn a lesson in grace ("Give"), a lesson in love ("Give us"). There's a third lesson in this brief request. It's a lesson in trust. Look again at verse 11: "Give us this day..." *This day* translates a very common Greek word for *today*. Give us today. Luke uses a, a slightly different expression. Of course in a few months from when He preached this Sermon on the Mount, Jesus preached and taught His disciples there in Luke 11 the Lord's Prayer on a separate occasion. There He said, "Give us according to the day" or "day by day" or, as the NAS translates it, "Give us each day..." Be continually giving us according to what's appropriate for the needs of each day. Although there are slight nuances of difference between Matthew and Luke, the point is the same and it's clear. We are to pray in humble dependence and trust, asking God to give us what's appropriate for the needs of that day.

By the way, this complements what Jesus is about to say a few verses later. Look down in Matthew 6:25. He's dealing with materialism. He's dealing with wealth becoming an idol and He says in verse 25: "For this reason I say to you, do not be worried about your life, as to what you will eat or what you shall drink; nor for your body, as to what you will put on. Is not the life more than food, and the body more than clothing?" Look down at verse 34: "So do not worry about tomorrow; for tomorrow will care for itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own." Now we'll explore, when we get here: this does not mean that we shouldn't be wise. It doesn't mean

that we shouldn't save. It doesn't mean that we shouldn't plan. God demands all of those things of us as stewards. What Jesus is saying is that we're not to worry or be anxious about tomorrow or the future. Instead, we are simply to pray for and to trust God to meet each day's needs. Now this is hard for us because of the wealth that we enjoy. I mean after all, why should you and I pray for today's bread when we shop at Costco and our cupboards are filled with enough food to feed our family for five months? Why should we pray that God will take care of our financial needs today when we have weeks, or months, or, in some cases, even years of income locked away in investments? Let me tell you. There are a couple of reasons that you and I had better think this way, that we had better pray this way with a spirit of dependence. Let me give you two reasons why you and I had better do this in spite of what we may have. Reason number one – because only God can enable us to truly benefit from what we have. Turn to Haggai. It's a prophet right near the end of the Old Testament. Haggai prophesied after the children of Israel had returned from Babylonian captivity. God had commanded them to rebuild the temple. That's what they were there to do, but they got distracted from that. And in Haggai 1:4, God identifies this. He says,

Is it time for you yourselves to dwell in your paneled houses while the house of God lies desolate? Now therefore, says the Lord of hosts, 'Consider your ways! *(Now watch what God does to their prosperity)* You have sown much, but harvest little; you eat, but there is not enough to be satisfied; you drink, but there's not enough to become drunk; you put on clothing, but no one is warm enough; and he who earns, earns wages to put into *(I love this)* a purse with holes.'

You know what God says? Listen. You do what I want, you depend on Me, you fulfill My Word, or that on which you depend--I can put holes in it and it'll just drain away. Verse 7

Thus says the Lord of hosts, 'Consider your ways! Go up to the mountains, bring wood and rebuild the temple, that I may be pleased with it and be glorified,' says the Lord. 'You look for much, but behold, it comes to little; when you bring it home, I blow it away.'

Listen. You'd better have a spirit of dependence on God regardless of how much you have accumulated and how many years of income you have in your retirement plan, because God can put holes in it and it'll drain away. That's why every day we must have a spirit of dependence on God.

There's a second reason we'd better have this spirit of dependence in spite of the prosperity we enjoy, and that is because God can take it all away in a moment. The most obvious biblical example of this is, of course, Job. One day, he's one of the ancient world's wealthiest men. And the next day, he has absolutely nothing but a worthless wife. Maybe you've seen this same story of God taking everything away unfold in the life of someone you know or maybe in your own life. One of my good friends in California is Bob. Bob owns a very successful business that



makes plumbing parts, parts that you buy at Home Depot. In fact, you probably have several of his parts in your house or in your yard. Bob is one of the most thoroughly Christian men I have ever known, and he is absolutely meticulous about the kind of product his company produces. I've gone through his plant and watched the operation. I've seen the plans he's designed. But several years ago, in spite of the very careful quality controls that Bob had put in place, one day's fittings came off of the assembly line made with a flawed mixture of ingredients – just one day in his company's many year history. Those weakened parts were distributed across the country and they were installed inside new houses and apartments and businesses. A few months later, he began receiving a literal flood of claims for water damages that had resulted when the parts failed. His liability insurance company exploited a small loophole in the contract and Bob had to pay millions and millions of dollars from his company and from his own personal resources, had to sell his home. There were many months when he thought he was going to have to close the company and spend years working to pay back those who had been hurt.

Understand that like Job and like Bob, no matter how successful you may have become, everything could be gone in a moment. John Calvin writes: "These words remind us that unless God feeds us daily, the largest accumulation of the necessaries of life will be of no avail. Though we may have abundance of corn and wine and everything else, unless they are watered by the secret blessing of God, they will suddenly vanish; or we will be deprived of the use of them, or they will lose their natural power to support us so that we shall famish in the midst of plenty." Jesus said pray that God will give you today what you need. Listen. Do you cultivate a spirit that depends on God, a dependent spirit that says God is the One who I trust, who supplies all things? Or do you daily rely on something other than God? Do you trust your savings? Do you trust your investments? Is your trust in your retirement plan? Is your trust in your insurance? Is it in the stuff you've accumulated around your house or in your cupboard? Or here's one – is your trust of physical health in what a good job you do of caring for your body? Well, I eat right and I exercise and I do all the things I ought to do. God says, put your daily trust for what you need for this life in Me and in Me alone. This is true when it comes to our food. One of my favorite psalms is Psalm 145. In Psalm 145:15, the psalmist says this: "The eyes of all look to You, and You give them (*God*) their food in due time. You open Your hand and satisfy the desire of every living thing." Listen. The reason you have enough food to eat – it's not because of you. It's because of God. What about health? I mentioned that. You know, this is such a pitfall for so many Christians. They put their confidence in: Well, you know, I don't eat this and I don't eat that, and the Bible told the children of Israel not to eat swine, so I'm not going to have any pork. And, you know, it gets out of hand: I'm going to exercise and you know, I'm going to do this and I'm going to do that. And you know, if I eat this and I drink this concoction, it's going to satisfy my health. I'm going to be healthy. Listen. That is an affront to the providence of God. Yes, you ought to be a steward of your body, but do you understand that God is the One who keeps you well? Let me show you this. There's a great passage in 2 Chronicles 16. Again, I'm not saying you shouldn't be a steward. Please understand that. We all have a responsibility, but

you'd better not put your trust in what you're doing to ensure your physical health, and here's a perfect example of it. 2 Chronicles 16:11.

Now the acts of Asa from the first to the last, behold, they are written in the Book of the Kings of Judah and Israel. In the thirty-ninth year of his reign, Asa became diseased in his feet. His disease was severe, yet even in his disease he did not seek the Lord, but (*where did he put his trust? in*) the physicians.”

Listen. God in His common grace has given us medicine and doctors and you ought to use those things, and you ought to be a good steward of your body, but you'd better not ever put your trust for good health in those things. God alone is the One who protects us and preserves our health. When we ask God to give us today what we need, it is an acknowledgment of our utter dependence and trust in Him.

There's one final lesson contained in these words. It's a lesson in contentment. Again, notice verse 11: “Give us today our daily bread.” The Greek word translated *daily* there is an extremely difficult word to really understand what it means, because it's only used twice in the New Testament – here and in Luke 11. And both times, it's used in this petition in the Lord's Prayer. It doesn't occur in the Septuagint at all. In fact, Origen said Matthew and Luke made this word up. There are essentially three possible ways to understand the word, and it all depends on its etymology. There are three options that you will see in study Bibles and commentaries. Option number one is it's saying: Give us today the bread necessary for survival. A second option is: Give us today the bread for the coming day. Of course, if you pray this in the morning, you're praying for today. If you pray this at night, you're praying for tomorrow, the next day. Some translations will even use the word tomorrow. The third option is our daily bread as it is here. When William Tyndale translated this Greek word into English in the first ever English translation made from the original Greek and Hebrew back in 1525, he used the English word *daily* and it stuck. Archaeology has confirmed Tyndale's translation. In 1925, an Egyptian papyrus was discovered in which this word was used, and it's used in the context of an accounting of daily rations of food handed out. So Jesus then is saying, pray, Father, give us today our daily bread.

But what does He mean by bread? Many of the early church fathers couldn't believe that Jesus would transition from such lofty things as God's glory and God's kingdom and God's will to such a mundane issue as literal bread. And so Origen said, It must be the bread of the Word of God. Jerome said, No, it must be the bread of the Lord's Table. The Greek word for *bread* here is used primarily in the New Testament in two ways. It's used of literal bread. In the first century, bread was usually made from the cheaper flour which was barley, sometimes from the more expensive wheat flour. And they would add to that barley flour olive oil and little yeast. And the result would be something like a – think of a pizza without the toppings. It would have been about a half-inch thick and up to twenty inches wide. Then it could be cut into pieces and

given to the family. It was the main staple of their diet just like for many bread, and pasta, and tortillas are today. It's also used of food in general, this word *bread* - not only just of literal bread, but of food in general. For example in Mark 3:20, it says Jesus wasn't even able to eat bread. It means a meal, food. But here, our Lord uses this word *bread* in even a larger sense. It's a figure of speech to include not just our food, but all things that are necessary to our physical life. Martin Luther put it this way. He said: "Bread is a symbol for everything necessary for the preservation of this life - like food, a healthy body, good weather, house and home, wife, children, good government, peace." So asking God to give you your daily bread not only includes the food you need. It includes clothing and shelter, physical health, physical strength, a strong mind, gainful employment – everything necessary to sustain our physical lives.

And notice where Jesus puts the stress: "Give us today our daily bread." Jesus is telling us we not only have to cultivate a spirit of dependence and trust, but we also have to cultivate a spirit of contentment: Lord, all we ask is that You give us what You think we need today. It's the spirit of the proverb in Proverbs 30:8

Give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with the food that is my portion,  
(*that's interesting - feed me with the food that is my portion*) that I may not be full  
and deny You and say, 'Who is the Lord?' Or that I may not be in want and steal,  
and profane the name of my God."

You know what the writer of Proverbs is saying? God, I want you to providentially give me the level of prosperity that I can handle and still stay spiritually strong. And that varies – I know a few very wealthy Christians who prosper spiritually in spite of their wealth. They still have a humble, trusting, dependent spirit. They're not grasping for more. They're generous. This prayer is saying: God, give me the level of prosperity that won't hurt me spiritually. By the way, this runs utterly contrary to the health, wealth and prosperity gospel which says God wants everybody to be healthy and wealthy. This runs contrary to Your Best Life Now. This runs contrary to the large Charismatic church down the street that will tell you that the blessed life comes from giving enough to God. By the way, there's a wonderful object lesson in the need for this kind of contentment. I wish I had time to take you back to Exodus 16 and the story of the manna. You remember? God sent the manna, but He only sent enough for (how much?) each day. He said, Only pick up what you can eat that day. And what happened if you picked up more than you needed that day? It rotted. It was a lesson. God was saying, Listen. I can provide for you today and again tomorrow and again the next day. Trust Me.

Paul deals with this issue of contentment as well. Look at 1Timothy 6:8:

If we have food and covering, with these we shall be content. (*If you have the necessities of life, Paul says, be content. And whatever you do, don't be like*) . . . those who want to get rich (*you know, I am appalled by the number of Christians who get involved in get-rich-quick schemes. If you do that, Paul says, you will*)

fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away (*even*) from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.

But what if God has given you more than you need? And that's true of all of us here. As I said, we're all in the top ten percent of the wealthiest people in the world. How are we supposed to respond to that? Look at verse 17:

Instruct those who are rich in this present world (*that's us*) not to be conceited (*don't you for a moment believe that the reason you have what you have is because you're so smart*) or to fix their hope on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly supplies us with all things to enjoy. Instruct them to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, (*and in so doing*) storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future, (*in other words, invest in eternity*) so that they may take hold of that which is life indeed."

God's promised to meet our needs, but He's told us to ask Him to do it, and He answers in response to that - not always our wants, but what we need.

Give is a lesson in grace. Give us - a lesson in love for others. Give us today – a lesson in trust. Give us today our daily bread – a lesson in contentment. But you know, I don't think any of those is the greatest lesson in this text. I think the greatest lesson in this text is about God. Listen to Lloyd-Jones: "If only we could grasp this fact, that the Almighty Lord of the universe is interested in every part and portion of us! There is not a hair of my head that He is not concerned about, and the smallest and most trivial of details in my little life are known to Him on His everlasting throne. (think about that for a moment) Is not this one of the most wonderful things in the whole of Scripture, that the God who is the Creator and the sustainer of the universe, that such a God should be prepared to consider your little needs and mine down to the minutest details, even when it comes to our daily bread?" "Give us today our daily bread." Let's pray together.

Our Father, we are amazed at Your goodness and grace. Teach us these lessons, O God. Teach us to trust Your grace, to ask You for what we need as our loving Father. We are amazed that You on Your great throne would pay attention to our little needs and our little lives, but that's what You tell us is true. Father, teach us to come to You. Teach us a lesson of trust and dependence. Father, teach us a lesson in contentment. Teach us the lesson in love and concern for others, not merely for our own needs. Father, may this great prayer our Lord has taught us grow in its fullness in our understanding and in our prayers. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.