

Sermon preached by Canon Jim Holbeck at the Healing Service in St. Andrew's Cathedral on Wednesday 14th Dec 2005. Reading: Mat 6:11
Title: "Give us each day our daily bread."

Fancy being able to come before a King and say these words from Psalm 145:13, "***Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and your dominion endures through all generations.***" Of course the only King you could say that to would be God Himself. Isn't it amazing that our God, our Heavenly Father is just such a King. Even more amazing is that David goes on in the same Psalm to talk of the king's father-like qualities, **V15-19, "*The eyes of all look to you, and you give them their food at the proper time. You open your hand and satisfy the desires of every living thing. The LORD is righteous in all his ways and loving toward all he has made. The LORD is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth. He fulfils the desires of those who fear him; he hears their cry and saves them.*"**)

Those 2 concepts of the kingly rule of God in His world and of His loving care towards His people are found in the Lord's Prayer the pattern of prayer that Jesus taught His disciples to pray.

i. God is King, and we pray, "*Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.* We pray that His rule may be extended more and more over His world and the peoples of the world. He is King but wants everyone to submit to His rule for their sakes.

ii. But Jesus also encouraged us to pray, "*Give us this day our daily bread.*" That is a prayer based on the faithfulness of God. When we pray the Lord's Prayer, we're asking our loving Heavenly Father to supply our needs for the coming day.

It denotes the recognition that He knows what our needs are, and that He can supply them.

1. GOD KNOWS WHAT OUR REAL NEEDS ARE.

"*Give us this day our daily bread.*" What did Jesus mean by "bread".

i. It meant of course, the food known as bread, such as a loaf of bread. Most of the references in the Bible to "bread" refer to bread of that sort.

ii. It can mean our material needs in general. When we pray "*Give us each day our daily bread*", we're inviting the Lord to meet all the needs He knows we have.

He says in His word that He's willing to supply our need as He sees it. He doesn't promise to supply our greed, nor the things that we think we need, which He knows may not be the best for us.

As Jesus was to say a little later in Mat 6:33, regarding our basic needs in life for food and drink and clothing, "*For the Gentiles seek these things; and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things shall be yours as well.*"

He tells us that we don't need to be anxious about our material needs, if we allow the Lord, to be the King, the Ruler, the Master of our lives.

He promises He will provide them for us, if we set our minds on knowing and doing God's will.

Jesus also said in Mat 7:11, "*If you then who are evil know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will Your Father in heaven give good things to those who ask Him?*" Here is the great contrast between earthly fathers who are normally motivated to give good things, and our Heavenly Father who is even more highly motivated in love, to give us the necessities in life.

iii. "Bread" in the Bible can also mean provision for our spiritual needs. Jesus said in Jn 6:32-33, "*My Father gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world. ... And 6:35, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty."*

God in OT times had provided manna to fall from heaven to meet the physical needs of the Israelites as they journeyed in the wilderness.

Then He gave His Son Jesus to come from heaven to provide satisfaction for our spiritual hunger and thirst as we receive Him into our lives and live for Him in His world.

As we gather together tonight there is one thing that is certain, and that is, God knows your need and wants to meet it. He may not give you what you want, but He longs to give you what He knows you need.

2. GOD PROVIDES SUFFICIENT TO MEET OUR NEED.

"Give us this day, our daily bread."

Jesus didn't encourage us to pray, "Give us right now, enough resources to last for the next 12 months."

Nor did He encourage us to pray that God might fill our lives with all the luxuries imaginable. Rather it was to be prayer asking that the needs of each day might be met each day.

We see that pattern in the Old Testament where God promised them that He would supply His people with manna that would fall from heaven. *Ex 16:4, "Then the LORD said to Moses, 'I will rain down bread from heaven for you. The people are to go out each day and gather **enough for that day**. In this way I will test them and see whether they will follow my instructions'."*

You will notice that what the Lord provided was sufficient for the day. If they gathered too much food on any day, it would go bad by the next morning. God promised to provide, but they had to exercise their faith every day by going out to take hold of God's daily provision for them.

Here was a loving God's provision for the needs of His people.

He is still a loving God. He still cares for the needs of His children. He is able to give us what we need for every day.

There is no need you have for today or for tomorrow which He cannot provide.

He can give you the wisdom you need for every decision.

He can enable you to love by the presence of His Spirit within you.

He has the resources to heal you to do His will for you.

3. GETTING OUR NEEDS INTO PERSPECTIVE.

We can make a lot of mistakes in thinking about our needs.

i. We can think that God is not interested in meeting our needs. They seem so small in comparison with the deep needs of the world. So we fail to ask God to meet our needs. James wrote about that way of thinking in James 4:2,3 ... *You do not have, because you do not ask.*

ii. Or we can make our needs the whole focus of our attention. We can even do that in our prayer life so that praying for our needs or for those of our family, consumes us. When we see no immediate answers to our prayers we get stressed and even resentful and get everything out of proportion.

The writer of Proverbs 30 got things into proportion. His prayer to God was a simple one, *"give me neither poverty nor riches, but give me only my **daily bread**."*

He knew himself. He knew that if he had too much, he might reject God, *"I may have too much and disown You and say 'Who is the Lord?'"* Instead of relying on God, and seeing the provision as coming from the hand of God, he might see himself as a self-made man, and forget about trusting God for every aspect of his life.

Or in not relying on God he might seek his needs in wrong ways, *Or I may become poor and steal, and so dishonour the name of my God.*

The most important thing he saw in life was to maintain his relationship with God. He wanted only sufficient provision to enable him to live life every day in a good relationship to God, of whom he had already written in 30:5, *"Every word of God is flawless, He is a shield to those who take refuge in Him."*

Job in the Old Testament was a model of integrity. He also had the right perspective on life. He said to one of his friends in Job 23:12, *"I have not departed from the commands of His lips; I have treasured the words of His mouth more than my **daily bread**."* He placed the importance in his life on knowing and fulfilling God's words, treasuring them more than the food he needed every day.

As Jesus was to say later, quoting from Deut 8:3, "*Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.*" Physical food is important, but spiritual food, being nourished by God's word is even more important. God is able to supply both our daily physical and spiritual needs.

4. WHAT IS A HEALTHY FOCUS FOR LIVING?

"Give us this day our daily bread." Notice where this phrase comes in the Lord's Prayer.

It comes after we worship Him as the loving Heavenly Father in heaven.

Unless we pray first of all "*Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name, Your kingdom come.*" ("*Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.*") we are not qualified to pray, "Give us each day our daily bread."

Our focus has to be on the Provider, God Himself and not just on what He can provide.

Our focus has to be on the healer, Jesus rather than on our sickness or healing.

Our focus has to be on the faithfulness of God not on how much faith we might muster to receive God's blessings. He can work through mustard seed sized faith to bestow His blessing and healing. Everyone born on this earth, needs to become a child of God through faith in His Son Jesus Christ. Then they can be open to receive all that God has for them as His children.

God has given us free will and He will not impose on us that which we are not ready and willing to receive.

If we don't want to be His children, God will not force Himself on us.

If we don't want to receive His blessings, He will not impose His blessings on us.

Tonight we have an opportunity to get our focus right by doing what Jesus said in Mat 6:33 *But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.*

When we get around to saying *May your kingdom be established in our lives. We submit to You as our Lord, Master and King.*

Then we can say, *give us today our daily bread, (the blessing, the healing, the material things we need to live for you).*

A suggested prayer of commitment.

Dear Lord,

I need Your help. I admit that I have left you out of my life.

I have done things I should not have done.

I have not done things I should have done.

Please forgive my sins against You and against other people.

Lord Jesus, I invite You into my life to be my Saviour from sin.

I want You to be the Lord and Master of every part of my life.

Heavenly Father, may Your Kingdom come in my life and may Your will be done in me and through me.

Please heal me so I can become the person You want me to be, and do the things what you want me to do.

I ask these things in Jesus' name. AMEN