**The Lord’s Prayer**

**4th Petition**

**Give Us This Day Our Daily Bread**

*Mid-week Lent – 03/22/2023*

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

The Fourth Petition Give us this day our daily bread. What does this mean?

God certainly gives daily bread to everyone without our prayers, even to all evil people, but we pray in this petition that God would lead us to realize this and to receive our daily bread with thanksgiving.

What is meant by daily bread?

Daily bread includes everything that has to do with the support and needs of the body, such as food, drink, clothing, shoes, house, home, land, animals, money, goods, a devout husband or wife, devout children, devout workers, devout and faithful rulers, good government, good weather, peace, health, self-control, good reputation, good friends, faithful neighbors, and the like.

I wonder if you noticed, the petition is, “Give us this day our daily bread.” It is not, give me everything that I want. Nor is it, give me everything I need from now till the end of time.

Dear friends, we know that God takes care of us. As we talked about two weeks ago, this petition falls in the realm of God’s Kingdom of Power, His ruling over all creation. We recall Jesus’ declaration that God gives all things necessary to all people – He causes the rain to fall on the just and the unjust. (Mt. 5:45) He cares for all the birds of the air, the lilies of the field, and even has all the hairs of your head numbered.

This past Sunday, we celebrated Laetare. In the Gospel for the day, Jesus feeds five thousand. As we talked about, Jesus is Himself the “Bread of Life.” Jesus cares for the basic needs of the crowd gathered by feeding them bread and fishes, providing for the needs of their body in this life.

God made Man in His image, and that image had flesh, blood, bones, and all the internal organs that go along with it. God then placed man in a garden where He would walk and enjoy, having all his physical needs provided. Of course, you know what happened, right? Sin happened! God’s crowning creations abused God's command for the good use of His gracious gifts.

God's still desires to take care of all things for the care and nurture of those who still bear His image, though fallen. That is why the Lord's prayer is incredibly comprehensive. Truly there is nothing that is left out of it. As we have talked the last few weeks, we know that God’s will is that His name would be made holy in all our life, and speech. And, that His Church would be built and sustained until the last day when His eternal Kingdom would be fully realized, when all the faithful will enjoy it in resurrected and perfectly glorified flesh.

It is important that we remember who is teaching us this prayer. It is none other than God Himself in human flesh, Jesus Christ God's Son, our Savior. In teaching us this prayer, especially including in it this petition, we are shown that this, our mortal flesh and life are important to God.

We should be led to understand by this petition that there is nothing too trivial or too small that we cannot take it to God in prayer. Jesus, having walked in our flesh, knows that the little things often occupy a very high priority in our lives.

Look at the things Jesus concerns himself with as He walks among us. He declared to Satan that man does not live on bread alone but on every word that proceeds from the mouth of God. Everywhere He goes He teaches that salvation is all about Himself.

But he also spends time and no little amount of energy on the concerns and needs of the people. He grants healing to lepers, lame, paralyzed, blind, deaf, and the mute. He talks about water with the woman at the well. He stops to give a dead son back to a grieving widow, bestowing resurrected life. He brings healing to the Canaanite woman’s demon possessed daughter with only the crumbs. And to His disciples weary in their travels with Him, He says, “Come, rest a while.”

The crowds on Sunday enjoyed the feeling of contentment of a full belly, but did they fully understand that the hand which multiplied the loaves and fishes was Himself the Bread of Life? Jesus has to tell them that they missed the whole point of the miracle. They followed Him for another meal of fish and chips, but He has to explain that His flesh is the bread of which one must eat unto eternal life.

How often do people miss the point? It happens quite a bit if you consider it. Have you ever smiled when children see things without a proper understanding of proportion? Children ask for things, claiming they’ll die if they do not receive them. Parents know better, and often only give them what they need – and none of them died because they didn’t get what they wanted.

In the same way, how many things weigh so heavily on our hearts and minds, which truly will not matter in the long run? Maybe some of those things would actually drive us away from God!

This petition helps us to put things into perspective, just as Luther tries to explain. We are to realize that God takes care of all that we need. We should appreciate that He knows what we need better than we do – just like parents know better than their children. We should therefore give Him thanks for His gracious provision, every day!

The Psalmist reminds us that the word of God is a lamp to my feet. (Ps. 119:105) Ever use a flashlight to walk when it is really dark? The beam only lights a certain portion of the path. Even if we point it far ahead a flashlight beam does not reveal everything, it doesn't expose all the dangers that may be lingering there – that which might be other either side of the beam, or just out its reach to illuminate.

In the same way, we don't know what we will find in the future, nor do we know how God will help us resolve those issues we may wrestle with at this particular moment. God knows! This petition should lead us to understand that we need to walk with an everlasting need to trust in the Lord’s provision. We need to cling to Christ whether it be for the little, physical things, or the big, spiritual things.

Jesus is the bread of life! He provides for every single one of our needs, spiritual as well as physical. He is the bread we pray for, the Bread of Life which nourishes us to overcome life in this world – even as we have our hope on an eternal life with Him in His glorious, eternal kingdom.

In this petition we truly come to understand that God gets us! He knows what our daily needs are, and the things we endure in this flesh and life. He has lived in this flesh and life, just like us. He has seen, in our flesh, all that we encounter and endure in our flesh. He takes a simple thing like bread, breaks it up into small daily pieces, and all we need to do is understand that just like dogs, we are fed and nourished whether by hand or even in the crumbs which fall from the Master's table.

In our prayer for daily bread, we are begging for those crumbs! Jesus promises that our Father will provide all that we need! We can cast all our cares upon Him. All of them! Not just the great and lofty concerns but even the small ones, even the ones that seem foolish to us.

All of this of course only makes sense if we understand that God did not spare His own son but gave Him up for us all. If this is true (and it is) will He not give to us all things? (Rom. 8:32) Absolutely!

Because He has given us the greatest of things – His only begotten Son – in whom we have faith, forgiveness, eternal life, salvation, then we can certainly come to Him with the smallest things.

Do so, trusting in the name of Jesus. Amen