

Thursday 2nd April 2020.

Matthew 6.11 - Give us today our daily bread

How many of you remember the song 'The Bare Necessities' in the movie 'The Jungle Book'? Baloo, the bear, was not completely wrong. He may have used the idea to justify him being lazy but it strikes a right note though when one has to consider what they really need in life. What are my real needs in life?



I would like to propose that our needs are basically of two natures, one material and the other spiritual. I also would like to point out that considering one and disregarding the other would go against what Jesus is teaching us here in The Lord's Prayer. After all God created us as physical human beings that are alive because he breathed in us His breath of life. We are both material and spiritual. As such our needs on both sides go hand in hand.



On the material side you could say that you need food, water, clothing, shelter. Some would promptly add health, education and companionship. I know that it is an arbitrary list. I am also trying to keep it down to the bare necessities (pun intended!).

Otherwise we will start hearing some ridiculous claims like a brand new car (why not a pre-owned?) or the latest most advanced resourceful smart phone. We can live without them can't we?

On the spiritual side we are aware of how we need God. Jesus Christ in one occasion would refer to His flesh as true food and His blood as true drink (John 6.55). He once again would use that imagery when having supper with his disciples for the last time before he died. The bread would represent his body and the wine would represent his blood. He would then tell them to eat and drink in remembrance of him. He was definitely speaking of spiritual things that supply our needs as spiritual beings. We need to be nourished by Jesus' presence and word. As for the word, remember what he said about priorities in life in Matthew 4.4 that 'man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God'.



Since that is the case, when praying 'give us today our daily bread' try to remember that. It gives us the queue to explore our true necessities and the necessities of others in prayer. It allows us to consider life under God's care, understanding that even the supply of our most basic needs comes through and from Him. It also allows us to explore how much I need Jesus and his gospel in my life. How I need to feed daily on Him in order to serve, love and praise Him better as well as to find strength to fight or endure the daily troubles (Matthew 6.25-34). When praying for the daily bread we are fighting anxiety expressing our trust in our Father as our provider - provider of food, care, salvation and good news that leads us into a new way of life.

Finally, let us consider how this petition like the whole of The Lord's Prayer is to be made in the context of the church. It says 'give us', not 'give me'. We are encouraged to pray as God's family, aware of each others' standing in His presence as 'our' Father. There is an invitation to share with one another what we pray for and receive from God. Cooperation and generosity are expected. That's how God-centred prayers are.

Prayer:

O God, our Father. Thank you for creating us in your image. Thank you for the planet you formed for us to live in, for all the resources to maintain life. We confess that sometimes we are too self-centred in the way we make use of your good gifts. Please forgive us. And now, instead of battling on our own with our anxieties, we come to you. Please provide for the needs of the poorest of your children in the world. Help us see how we can be part of your answer. Help us be always generous, eager to share what first came from your bountiful hands. Let there always be a supply for our real material needs and, if not, may the presence of Christ in us, the Word of Christ in His gospel be a constant source for the nourishment of our lives in Your presence. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Suggestions for prayer:

1. Give thanks for each other and the contact we are still able to have.
2. For Alberto and Ciarán as they prepare the Sunday services.
3. For children and teenagers missing contact with friends.
4. For the poor and those struggling economically during this crisis.
5. For East Africa and parts of Asia where enormous swarms of locusts have destroyed many crops and now they face a coronavirus pandemic.



Rhododendrons and azalias flowering at Glendoick gardens in springtime.