

God Is Our Provider

January 6, 2012 am

Matthew 6:11

Sermon 1008

By Dr. Richard Lee Montgomery

Read Text: 9“Pray, then, in this way: ‘Our Father who is in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. 10‘Your kingdom come. Your will be done, On earth as it is in heaven. 11‘Give us this day our daily bread. 12‘And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. 13‘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.’

When you woke up this morning – none of you had the slightest doubt that you would be able to eat today. Most of the time – our major concern is what we will eat – not whether we will eat. Are we going to eat chicken or beef? Are we going to eat fish or pork? Are we going to eat potatoes or pasta? These are the major problems that most of us face concerning food.

We have a very hard time relating to those who really have no idea where they will find their next meal. It’s hard for us to even conceive that there are such people. Occasionally we get a glimpse of them on the nightly news. We might bump into a homeless person on the street city. Even then we have a difficult time identifying with the day-to-day existence of such people.

Because of this – we tend to miss the true significance of a petition that Jesus gave in our text, "Give us this day our daily bread." Most of us have enough bread for weeks or months – if not years. We certainly have the resources to get enough.

This – however – was not the case with many of those listening to Jesus on the mountain-side that day. Some truly did live one day at a time. They understood full well what Jesus meant.

But I still believe this message is not lost for us. For there is more that we need on a daily basis. Here Jesus is teaching us how to pray for what we need. If you would you like to know how to pray in such a way – that all of your needs were provided – well – this prayer holds the key.

A. The Provision.

It’s interesting that the first real petition in this model prayer comes after we have begun in praise – after we have affirmed the priority of the Kingdom and the rule of God in our lives. For we must see and understand that we can only pray effectively for ourselves – after we have gained the right perspective of the Kingdom of God. That rightful perspective brings us into the worship of a Providential God who knows us – who created us. Then – and only then – can we ask for what we need.

Now we come to the first petition, "Give us this day our daily bread." Our need is for bread. As I have already pointed out – most of us do not worry about our daily bread. But the fact remains that we all still need our daily bread.

Bread certainly refers to the physical food that we all need. But it is also symbolic of all the needs that we have. Each day we need provision for that day. This is how we live – one day at a time. It is impossible for us to live in the future. We may attempt to provide for the future – but there is no guarantee that there will be a future for any one of us. All that we know we have – is now. This does not mean that we should not plan. We should. But it means that we have no guarantee that our plan will be sufficient to take care of the needs we will face – even if we have a future.

Point is – our lives must be replenished daily with fresh provision in so many areas. Food is an excellent example of this. We do not simply eat our fill of food – and never have to eat again. We eat everyday. You can certainly skip a meal. You can even skip an entire day. Some of us could skip a number of days. But the healthiest way to live – is to eat several meals a day every single day.

So it is with so many things in our lives. We need fresh provision for each day. When God provided for the Israelites in the desert – they were commanded to gather enough food for each day. If they gathered more than they needed – it would spoil over night. God was teaching them the lesson – that He and He alone could be trusted to provide for their needs every day.

B. Our Provider Is God.

In this model prayer – you notice that the prayer is to the Father. God is our Provider. In the Scriptures – God is referred to as Jehovah-Jireh (ji-rah) . This is a compound name which means "the Lord will provide."

This name comes from the story in Genesis 22 of Abraham's obedience to offer Isaac to the Lord. There – God commanded Abraham to offer Isaac as a burnt offering. Deciding to obey the Lord – Abraham took Isaac and set out to the place where God had chosen. He bound his son and laid him on the altar. As he was about to slay his son – God stopped him. God commended him for his willingness to obey and called his attention to a ram that he had provided for Abraham to offer. As Abraham offered the ram as a burnt offering to God – Abraham called the name of that place Jehovah-Jireh. Abraham had experienced the provision of God. Abraham had come to experience first-hand the reality that God could provide.

As a earthly father provides for his own children – so God provides for His children. James 1:17 says, "Every good thing bestowed and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights." Philippians 4:19 says, "And my God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus."

God gives us what we really need – not simply what we think we need. And much of what God gives us – you simply cannot buy with money. Sadly – what can often take place in a person – is to be overwhelmed in this life – they buy a bottle. But when you sober up – the problem is still there. What they need is supernatural peace in the midst of the problem. What they need is the ability to deal with the situation. Only God can give you that. And for that matter – no matter what kind of situation you may be confronted with – only God can bring true help.

C. The Principles.

Jesus makes very clear in this model prayer that we are to pray to God for our daily provision. But there are also principles – that we can learn from God's Word and apply to our lives – that will put us into a position to have our prayers answered. There are three essential principles for receiving from God.

First principle – obedience. If you want to receive from God – then you must be in God's will. This was the whole idea or the whole understanding of affirming the priority of the Kingdom and the rule of Christ in our lives. Now – I'm just going to tell you – if we are not obedient in at least four things in your walk with God – then you will take yourselves out of a position to receive from God.

1 – our relationship with Jesus must be maintained if we are going to be in a position to pray for and receive what we need. In fact – Jesus said – in John 15:7, "If you abide in Me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish and it shall be done for you." And it is that simple. It should be clear that if we neglect our relationship with Christ we will forfeit our position in prayer. The power to pray and receive answers to those prayers is found in our relationship with Jesus. This is our first priority. Maintain that love relationship with Jesus Christ.

2 – If we neglect our fellowship with one another then we will find ourselves out of the will of God. God's Word teaches that we are to be involved in and submitted to a local church. In Hebrews 13:17 we read, "Obey your leaders, and submit to them; for they keep watch over your souls, as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you." Unless you are related to – and identified with a local Body of Believers – you will not be able to fulfill this command. We read in Hebrews 10:24-25, "And let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more, as you see the day drawing near." If you want to be in the will of God – you must be in right relationship to one another in a local church where we can serve God.

3 – Obedience requires diligent work habits. Paul emphasizes the importance of work in writing to the church. In 1 Thessalonians 4:11-12 he says, "Make it your ambition to lead a quiet life and attend to your own business and work with your hands, just as we commanded you; so that you may behave properly toward outsiders and not be in any need." Paul goes so far as to say in 2 Thessalonians 3:10, "For even when we were with you, we used to give you this order: If anyone will not work, neither let him eat." Now here is the point – in God's economy – there is no welfare roll – for those who refuse to do what they can do. If we refuse to be diligent about our work habits – then we take ourselves out of a position to receive from God.

4 – Obedience in giving. So many people take themselves out of a position where they can receive from God because they will not be obedient in this vital matter. Listen to what 1 Timothy 6:10 says, "For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many a pang." At the root of a stinginess towards giving to God is the love of money. If you refuse to break the bondage of greed in your life by being obedient to God in this matter of giving – you are setting yourself up to be pierced through with many troubles.

So we must be obedient to God...

- in terms of our fellowship with Jesus Christ and with His church.
- in terms of developing diligent work habits.
- and in terms of our giving.

Now – back to these essential principles for receiving from God.

Second principle – faith. Hebrews 11:6 says, "And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to Him must believe that He exists and that He rewards those who earnestly seek him." In other words – we must not only believe that God exists – we must believe that God will indeed bless us and provide for us. This is the principle of faith. Everything we receive from God is by faith.

Third principle – diligence. We must be tenacious or determined or diligent if we are going to be in a position to receive from God. The story Jesus told in Luke 18 of the Widow and the Unjust Judge is all about the necessity to be diligent in prayer before God. The widow kept coming until she got what she wanted. And so we must keep coming until God answers our prayers. Unless we have been told no by God – we are to continue to come until we receive an answer. So – here we are – pray then – in this way, "Our Father who is in heaven, Hallowed be Your name." – "Give us this day our daily bread."

Jesus taught us to come to our Provider for our provision. If we practice the principles we find in God's Word – we will always have our daily needs met.