

Lent Midweek 4—March 6, 2024
Text: The Lord's Prayer
Theme: The Windows of the Nave – 4th Petition



We continue our series on the Lord's Prayer tonight as we look at the window on the south side of the nave. Tonight, we look at the fourth petition. Turn in your hymnals to page 324 and read the fourth petition with me.

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.

An easier list would be what daily bread does not include. The answer is evil. Daily bread is never anything evil. Daily bread is

everything good that God provides for us. Everything we have that is good is a gift from God. And not only us, everything anyone on this earth has that is good is a gift from God. Whether you are a Bible thumping Christian in the USA or a Koran preaching Iman in Saudi Arabia, God has provided everything good in your life. Nothing belongs to you. We talk about "our" money and "our" life and "our" children. But we are just the managers of the many gifts God gives to us from the air we breathe to the food we eat and the clothes we wear.

God provides both for the righteous and for the unrighteous. In the window on the south side of the sanctuary, which is lit up but you can also see it reproduced on the front of the bulletin, you see seven stalks of rich wheat bound together. Wheat is the basic component of bread which throughout the Bible is the symbol of everything we need for life on earth. Although Moses reminds us in Deuteronomy 8,

"And he humbled you and let you hunger and fed you with manna, which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that he might make you know that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD." Moses wanted to be certain that the people remembered that the manna came from God and without God, they would have starved.

So, while bread is the symbol of sustenance for all life on earth, we remember that bread too comes from God. There are seven stalks because seven is a number symbolizing completion. The artist of the window is showing us that absolutely everything we need in this life and in the life to come is provided by God.

The petition is also careful to add the words "this day" and "daily," reminding us that God does not provide for anything beyond today. You can have your savings accounts and insurance policies but always remember that these are just tools God uses in our world to provide what you need today. So, if your bank goes bust and your insurance policy lapses, don't be afraid. God will take care of you today. Tomorrow, God will be there again. And the day after that, God will still be there. The more we learn to live day by day, the more joyful we will be because much of the anxiety that we experience is built around the idea that we can control the future if we just plan well. That is a lie straight from Hell. We control nothing and if you have not seen that yet in your own lives, you will sooner or later.

Our only plan for tomorrow is to serve God in whatever we do and let Him provide whatever we need to do that. Of course, God gave us a brain and expects us to use it. So, we might well have some ideas of what direction we would like to take tomorrow and

that is good and proper, but beware. God will lead you in whatever direction is best for you and to His glory regardless of the direction you have planned to travel. It may not be your preference to travel on the path on which He places you. But, when we pray for daily bread, we are asking for His daily bread not ours. Ours may look wonderful but we can be sure that it is not nearly as wonderful as we think and certainly not better than His. What we are called to do is to serve Him today. He will feed us and empower us today and He will likewise take care of tomorrow.