

Keynotes from Pastor Tim's am Sermon on 6/11/2020

Mini Series – “Making Disciples -Learning to pray”

Part Six - Matthew 6 v 11-13 “Just ask for what you need”

Luke 11:1-13 Now Jesus was praying in a certain place, and when he finished, one of his disciples said to him, “Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples.”

² And he said to them, “When you pray, say: “Father, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come. ³ Give us each day our daily bread, ⁴ and forgive us our sins, for we ourselves forgive everyone who is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation.”

⁵ And he said to them, “Which of you who has a friend will go to him at midnight and say to him, ‘Friend, lend me three loaves, ⁶ for a friend of mine has arrived on a journey, and I have nothing to set before him’; ⁷ and he will answer from within, ‘Do not bother me; the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed. I cannot get up and give you anything’? ⁸ I tell you, though he will not get up and give him anything because he is his friend, yet because of his impudence he will rise and give him whatever he needs. ⁹ And I tell you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. ¹⁰ For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened. ¹¹ What father among you, if his son asks for a fish, will instead of a fish give him a serpent; ¹² or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? ¹³ If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!”

If you get your world view from the media, largely based on atheistic and evolutionary theories of life, then you would get the impression that we are just physical beings. In a year that has been dominated by Covid 19 and Brexit, everything has focussed on our physical lives, with very little mention of the emotional, relational and spiritual aspects of life. The antidote to this imbalance is to pray the Lord's Prayer, which shows us how to get the right balance of physical, relational and spiritual elements.

The Lord's Prayer begins with what concerns God – his name, his honour, his kingdom and his will.

Then we move to praying about our needs. Jesus teaches us that we are body, soul and spirit. All three have needs that God meets when we come to him in prayer and ask him to **give us, forgive us, and lead us (Matthew 6: 11-13)**:

- **Give us this day our daily bread** - our physical needs (body)
- **Forgive us our debts as we also have forgiven our debtors** - our relational needs, towards God and one another (soul)
- **lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil** - Our spiritual needs in our ongoing relationship with the Lord (spirit)

This week, we are looking at the first of these, finding four applications that this request demands, and showing why we can have confidence to pray this, and why God will answer our prayers.

1. We are to ask God for physical needs to be met

Jesus has been teaching us to begin our prayers with God, our Father in heaven who is so glorious that his name is to be hallowed. His kingdom, the only one to last for eternity, is to be our greatest concern, and, as he is our sovereign God, we are to submit to his perfect will for our lives. In complete contrast, this next request to give us our daily bread seems trivial and unspiritual. Jesus is teaching us that **the physical is important to God**. In the Bible, bread can be a metaphor for the things that are **needful** to support physical life. Bread was vital for survival in Jesus' day, and

God stands ready to provide for our physical needs as well as our spiritual needs.

If we are to function as human beings to the glory of God, then we need food, clothing and shelter. We need seasons to give our year structure, good government for a stable society, human relationships, means of communication and transport.

- God tells us through his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, to come and ask him for these needs to be met.

God has committed himself to provide for us all that we need to glorify him on earth.

2. We are to trust God to supply those physical needs

Before God made Adam and Eve, he created a world that could sustain life.

Everything was set up in just the right way to do this. He gave fruit, plants and animals as food and when it was all set up, he created humanity with a capacity to

populate, so that there could be human friendships. God's promise to humanity is that the seasons will continue and food will be available until Jesus Christ returns.

We are to live in dependence on him, trusting him to provide for us.

- We must not use unlawful ways to get what we want – any form of stealing is wrong. It is a crime against our fellow man and an act of treason against God, since it indicates we don't trust him to provide.
- We must not place our confidence in secondary means – in certain circumstances it may be lawful to borrow money, but we must not put our trust in banks, trusts, or other people to lend what we need. God may choose to use these means but **our confidence has to be in him.**

This prayer constantly teaches us that we live in God's world, under his governance and in total dependence on him.

We are to trust God to give us what we need.

In our affluence, we may feel we have all we need and so see no need to pray **give us this day our daily bread.**

We all need to pray this request because it is not just a request for more. It is also a way of expressing our dependence on God and our acknowledgement that all those good things we have in life came from him. If we have an abundance then, at this point in our praying, we should stop to give thanks to God for his generosity and say that

we will trust him to continue to give us what we need.

3. We are to be content with what God gives us when he gives it

How do we determine what a need is and who determines what our needs are?

Matthew 6:7-8 "And when you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard for their many words. ⁸ Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

Ultimately God determines what we need, and he knows what we need before we even start praying. Our hearts are so fallen that what we think is a need may just be a greed. God alone truly knows:

- What we will be facing tomorrow and therefore what we need today to face it

- Our hearts - whether what we have set our heart on is actually an idol or will be a means to glorify him

You may think that if God already knows my needs, then surely it's unnecessary to pray for them to be met? Jesus didn't think so. Having told us that our Father knows what we need before we ask him, he goes on to say 'Pray then like this... Give us this day our daily bread'.

Jesus says that the fact that God knows your need is precisely the reason why we should come and ask.

One of the most helpful prayers we can pray for our needs to be met is found in Proverbs 30:8-9.

Give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with the food that is needful for me, ⁹ lest I be full and deny you and say, "Who is the LORD?" or lest I be poor and steal and profane the name of my God.

We often worry about what to ask God for when we are facing needs. What is the right thing to ask for, and what if I get it wrong? Jesus frees us from that kind of anxiety. In a sense he is saying:

- God is your Father and wants a relationship with you. He wants you to talk with him, and to hear your voice. You aren't coming to tell him things he doesn't already know.
- You are coming to have fellowship with him. Part of that is to talk to him about what you perceive as a need.
- There is no need to worry about whether you've got it right, because he already knows the answer to that.
- If it is truly a need, he will grant it and if it isn't, then he won't give it.
- If it is a need but you don't need it yet, he will make you wait and give it when you do need it.

Enjoy the relationship you have with your Father in heaven and leave him to take care of the answer to prayer.

The new building is a good example of this. Nothing in the Bible specifically promises us a new building in 2021, but there is a promise that God knows what we need and when. Over the last 10 years, we have continually prayed and asked him to guide and provide.

- We can see that he has provided the right people at the right time and brought the money in when it was needed. Therefore, we have confidence to keep asking that he will give us the rest of the money so that we can be debt free at the end of the project.
- As he has given us the building, we can ask with confidence that he will use it to glorify him on earth, and to grow his kingdom through it, showing us the best way forward as we seek to do his will.

It is often more difficult to accept his answer when he says no, not yet or what you have is what I've given you because that's what I know you need. The way to acceptance is simply to give thanks for what we have, cultivating a thankful heart. Our new building may not please everyone, but as we have prayed consistently and sought his will, we can say that **God has given us the building we need to carry out his work, because he knows our needs best.**

4. We are to use this request to love our neighbours – Give us this day our daily bread.

- Jesus expected that his people would gather together physically to pray, so he gave us a prayer that had **us** and **our** in it so that we could say it together. The physical prayer meeting is absolutely vital for the physical, spiritual and relational health of the church.

When we really love our brothers and sisters, we will want to gather with them to pray with and for them.

- When we pray, we aren't just to be concerned about our own needs. We are to have an eye to the needs of others. We want our heavenly Father to meet our needs and in the same way,

we should want our heavenly Father to meet the needs of our brothers and sisters and the wider world.

If we do not pray for and with others consistently and regularly, then we are sinning against God and against those he has put us in community with.

How can we have confidence that God will give us what we need?

When we are concerned to live fruitful lives for the glory of God, Jesus affirmed constantly that we can have confidence that the Father will give what we ask for if it is his will and we ask in his name.

See overleaf for **Matthew 7:7-11**, **John 15:16** and **John 16:23** as some examples.

The apostle Paul applies this principle in **Romans 8: 31-32** What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? ³² **He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?**

God has given what was most precious to him – his only Son – to redeem us from sin so that we could become his children, and has given his Spirit to assure us that we are his children. Why would he not give us what we need?

As our Father, God has promised to meet all our needs, which includes our physical needs. He knows our needs before we ask him, and Jesus invites us to come to the Father and say:

Father in heaven.... Give us this day our daily bread.

Matthew 7:7-11

“Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. ⁸ For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened. ⁹ Or which one of you, if his son asks him for bread, will give him a stone? ¹⁰ Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a serpent? ¹¹ If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him!

John 15:16

¹⁶ You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you.

John 16:23

Truly, truly, I say to you, whatever you ask of the Father in my name, he will give it to you.