



His Word Is Truth!

This article is written by Pastor Tom Eckstein of Concordia Lutheran Church in Jamestown. "His Word is Truth" will appear in this paper every 3rd Monday.



Today I continue my series on The Lord's Prayer as found in Matthew 6:9-13 and Luke 11:2-4. This article will focus on the fourth petition, which reads: **"Give us this day our daily bread."** In his Small Catechism Martin Luther gives a wonderful explanation of what this means for us. Luther writes: **"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 employees and employers, devout and faithful rulers, good government, good weather, peace, health, self-control, good reputation, good friends, faithful neighbors, and the like." Martin Luther makes several important points in this explanation of the fourth petition. First, Martin Luther rightly stresses that God doesn't need our prayers in order to provide for our needs. In Matthew 6:8 Jesus says: **"...your Father knows what you need before you ask him."** Also, in Matthew 6:31-32 Jesus says: **"So do not worry, saying 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' ... your heavenly Father knows that you need them."** So, why do we pray for God to provide for our

needs if He already knows what we need before we ask Him? The answer is that WE need to pray "Give us this day our daily bread" so that we will recognize that all we need comes from God and learn to give Him daily thanks for His merciful provision. Martin Luther rightly points out that God also provides for the needs of unbelievers. Sadly, unbelievers don't believe that God provides for their needs and so they can't thank Him. Therefore, the purpose of prayer is to strengthen our faith in God!

Another good point Martin Luther makes in his explanation of the fourth petition is that he defines "daily bread" as the various needs that we have in life. Not only can we thank God for giving us food, drink and clothing. We must also thank Him for things like shelter, land, pets, electricity, indoor plumbing, good health, medical care, a spouse, children, friends, rest, recreation, cars, good weather, and the list goes on. We tend to take all these things for granted. Worse yet, we

wrongly think that we provide some of these things for ourselves. But the fourth petition of the Lord's Prayer reminds us that we would have NOTHING if God did not give it to us.

In fact, praying the fourth petition of the Lord's Prayer helps us to not take so many things for granted. A sinful problem we have is that we assume that God owes us one and that He ought to provide for us. We often fail to thank Him for the magnitude of His provision. However, the moment we do without or go through a hard time, then we are tempted to complain and ask God: *"Why me?"*

We often forget how often God gives us our "daily bread" even though we rarely ask Him for it. For example, add up the days of your life when you had food, clothing, shelter and good health. Then add up the days of your life when you were starving, naked, homeless and sick. I'm confident that most of you reading this article would have to admit that the days you had food, clothing, shelter and good health would far out number the days you were

starving, naked, homeless and sick. The point is that God is faithful to us and He provides for our needs in abundance – *even though we don't deserve it!* Every day we have numerous signs of God's love for us as He gives us our "daily bread."

However, what about the times when God does NOT give us our "daily bread?" What about the people of this world who are starving, naked, homeless and deathly ill? What about the times God does NOT spare you various trials and losses in this life? Has He abandoned you during such times? No! **The truth is that God will sometimes allow us to do without so that we will learn to trust His promises to us in Christ all the more.** (See 1st Peter 1:3-9) **Also, God may allow us to do without so that we can be a witness to others of the hope we have in Christ.** (See 2nd Corinthians 1:3-11 and 1st Peter 3:15) **You see, even if we are starving, naked, homeless and near death, we still have hope if we trust in Christ. Through**

faith in Christ our sins are forgiven and we can look forward to the resurrection of the body and eternal life with God in the New Creation. (See Romans 8:28-39) So, continue to pray the fourth petition of the Lord's Prayer every day and trust that God will provide for you as He sees best!



Please read the next "His Word is Truth" on Monday, July 21st! Pastor Eckstein will continue his series on The Lord's Prayer with the fifth petition: "Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us."

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