



**DATE:** August 30, 2020 (Easter Sunday)  
**SCRIPTURE:** Luke 11:1-4  
**TITLE:** The bread we need for today.

The Lord's Prayer (LP) is found in both the Gospel of Matthew and Luke. Last week we looked at Matthew's version. This week we see that Luke's prayer is shorter, more concise, and gets to the heart of four distinct requests. Luke's LP does not begin with "Our," does not include "your will be done on earth as it is in heaven," or the phrase "but deliver us from the evil one."

An important facet they share however, is the call for God to give us our daily bread. Our daily bread, or as the Common English Bible puts it, "The bread we need for today," is an important theme in the entire Gospel of Luke. Jesus was preaching about the coming of a new Kingdom of God, and he often did it while eating, feeding, or telling stories about eating

Who do we mean when we say "Our daily bread"? Do we mean our church—those who have gathered together? To take this prayer seriously we must challenge our notions of "Our" and "Us." We must expand our "Our."

In Jesus' time "Daily Bread" was provided by Rome. In the cities, the Emperor would often withhold bread to consolidate power, control supply to manipulate prices, and distribute bread to satisfy the masses. It was common for Roman Emperors to identify with Ceres, the Goddess of bread and grain. To control the supply of bread was to control the people. Controlling the bread was an important way that the Emperor and his Governors made sure the Empire was in working order. In this prayer, Jesus is recognizing that it is God, not the Emperor, who provides. In this one short sentence Jesus is reminding his followers that the Kingdom of God stands as an alternative to the exploitative Kingdom of Rome.

Lutheran scholar and pastor Craig Neesan suggests however, that we should stop saying this line in the Lord's Prayer. He suggests that we—especially those who are relatively comfortable and well-off within the global community—fast from praying "Give us this day our daily bread." He suggests this because he wonders if anyone who is a stranger to hunger can actually say this prayer and mean it.

He challenges us to focus on three parts of this phrase in the LP: God, our, and daily.

1. God—Do we really think that God provides our daily bread or do we buy into the myth of the self-made man? The Christian should acknowledge that all things come from God, but we who have plenty often think that we earned everything we have. We value work, education, and the ability to be "bread winners," or "earn a living." As long as we think these things, we need to work on acknowledging that God

is the source of all things, including the privileges we often take for granted.

2. Our—Who do we mean when we say "Our daily bread"? Do we mean our church—those who have gathered together? Do we mean our family—those for whom we are most responsible? Or do we mean something even more myopic even if we would never admit it. To take this prayer seriously we must challenge our notions of "Our" and "Us." We must expand our Our to include people who do not look like us, act like us, or worship like us.

3. Daily—This prayer is a request for our provision and sustenance, but it is also a preventive measure against hoarding and saving more than you need. Many of us, if we were honest, may admit that we are truly praying for not just today's bread, but tomorrow's and more. As long as our daily bread is never really in question, perhaps we should consider fasting from asking for it.

Instead, we should hear the cry "Give us this day our daily bread" as a cry from those who are hungry. Next time you hear this request, hear it not from your voice, but from those who are truly in need. As you ponder the privilege of asking for daily bread with a cupboard already full, move onto the next line, and ask God to forgive us our debts...