

***The Marks of a True Believer***  
***Message Five***  
***“Give Us This Day Our Daily Bread”***  
***Matt 6:5-15***

- 5 And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.
- 6 But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.
- 7 But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking.
- 8 Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him.
- 9 After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.
- 10 Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.
- 11 Give us this day our daily bread.
- 12 And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.
- 13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.
- 14 For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you:
- 15 But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

**Introduction:**

Having opened our prayer by acknowledging God as our Father in heaven, having worshiped deeply and profoundly before His altar, smitten with the sense of His glory and majesty, having committed ourselves to His Kingdom and His Will without reservation, we turn to an appeal for our needs. This is an important part of the pattern of prayer to remember. He who brings himself into the audience of the Eternal God *must* come with a profound sense of Who It Is to Whom he is speaking. That sense must be profound enough that it moves him to bow himself, all that he is and all that he wills, before the Will of the Great One Who sits on the throne of glory. Failure to properly honor God will ensure that our prayers are not brought before His attention by the Advocate, our Lawyer, His Son, nor by the Agent Who carries our prayers to heaven, God the Holy Spirit.

If you think that God's grace reaches so far as to turn His ear to the one who refuses to respect and honor Him as God, you have misunderstood the entire issue of Redemption. There is not one promise in scripture to the arrogant and prideful soul who will not truly bow to the Majesty and Glory of God except for the promise of certain and eternal judgment except he repent. We acknowledge that no one ever perfectly and flawlessly 'gets it right' in his approach to God, but the repentant soul does always give earnest effort and God honors that effort and pardons what is

lacking. Not so for the one who is so self consumed that he will not even bother or trouble himself with giving the honor to the Father that He is due nor surrendering and committing himself to the Will of the Living God. He is yet a rebel against God in need of repentance and pardon, not a saint to whom God turns His listening ear.

Jesus was careful to map our approach to God and place before our minds that our place as both a *creature* and a *redeemed creature* must be fully acknowledged before we proceeded to our needs.

The first of the needs He mentioned was *“our daily bread”* and many casual readers have seen that as a petition for one of the most common and necessary elements of daily life, food.

## **I. Bread was a very important food to the ancient world.**

The importance of bread in the formation of early human societies cannot be overstated. From the western half of Asia, where wheat was domesticated, cultivation spread north and west, to Europe and North Africa, and enabled humans to become farmers rather than hunters and foragers. This in turn led to the formation of towns, as opposed to the nomadic lifestyle, and gave rise to more and more sophisticated forms of societal organization. Similar developments occurred in eastern Asia, centered on rice, and in the Americas with maize. (Wikipedia)

Bread, in one form or another, has been one of the principal forms of food for man from earliest times. The trade of the baker, then, is one of the oldest crafts in the world. Loaves and rolls have been found in ancient Egyptian tombs. In the British Museum's Egyptian galleries you can see actual loaves which were made and baked over 5,000 (?) years ago. Also on display are grains of wheat which ripened in those ancient summers under the Pharaohs. Wheat has been found in pits where human settlements flourished 8,000 (?) years ago. Bread, both leavened and unleavened, is mentioned in the Bible many times. The ancient Greeks and Romans knew bread for a staple food even in those days people argued whether white or brown bread was best.

There are many references to bread in the scriptures and, in the majority, they are talking about actual bread, baked from ground grain. The point is that it was an important food and, as such, a significant part of daily life.

## **II. But, it is undeniable that bread was often used in scripture as an allegory.**

### **A word about allegories:**

Often in scripture the speaker is attempting to describe something that is indescribable, something for which there is no real comparison in our world.

What is it like, for example, to be included by God in the Great Work of Redemption that Jesus accomplished on the cross?

Well, we might say that it is like being born anew, from above, of the Spirit of God,

Or, we might say, it is like being tried in court and found ‘not guilty’ when one actually is,

Or, we could describe it as being made righteous in the eyes of God, the righteousness of Jesus Christ being given to us as a robe to wear,

Or, it is like dying to this life and being resurrected to a whole new life.

All of those things are true descriptions, allegories if you will. but none of them is sufficient in and of themselves to describe the thing because it is other-worldly, a work and an experience for which there is no true comparison in this life. So, we are left to describe it in bits and pieces of things that are somewhat, but not altogether similar to it. This method of describing an unknown thing by comparing to a thing we do know is sometimes called ‘allegory.’

In a sense a picture is an allegory. It is similar to the real thing and it shows some of the qualities of the real thing but it cannot show the reality. We all have pictures of loved ones and we are especially fond of those of loved ones who have passed away and we do not have them with us any more. The picture is better than nothing but we would gather up all of the pictures and give them gladly away if that were the price of actually *having* our loved one back again for a while. ***The Reality always far exceeds the allegory*** and we must always remember that.

Now, let us ask the question, “***What is it like to actually have a relationship with Jesus Christ?***” The truth is that it is an indescribable thing for which there is no comparison. But, in a very real sense, it is like having something to eat and drink when one is starving. It is having the essence and reality of His Person inside of us as if we had actually eaten His flesh and drunk His blood. It is like having food miraculously provided in a desert when our food supply is gone and there is absolutely no way that we are going to get any more. And yet, these allegories fall far short of the actual reality of being *in Christ* and experiencing *Communion* with Him.

Many in the early church missed the allegory contained in the Lord’s Table and began to think that the bread must actually become the Lord’s body and the wine must actually become His blood. And, so, they were led astray from the wonderful reality described in the allegory to a corrupted and false understanding of what it means to be in relationship with Him.

Because of the importance of bread to life, it became early on a poetic and linguistic image of food and, by extensions, a symbol of nourishment of any kind. Because of its’ importance, it became an emblem of friendship.

***Deut 23:3-4***

3 An Ammonite or Moabite shall not enter into the congregation of the LORD; even to their tenth generation shall they not enter into the congregation of the LORD for ever:

4 Because they met you not with bread and with water in the way, when ye came forth out of Egypt; and because they hired against thee Balaam the son of Beor of Pethor of Mesopotamia, to curse thee. KJV

Because the Ammonites and Moabites, kindred tribes to Israel, descended from Lot, did not offer friendship to Israel in the wilderness journey, they were eternally forbidden from the rites and ceremonies of the Jews.

On the flip side, the lack of bread, famine, became a symbol, a mental image, of having a lack of something needed and necessary, like the Words of God.

***Amos 8:11-12***

- 11 Behold, the days come, saith the Lord GOD, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the LORD:
- 12 And they shall wander from sea to sea, and from the north even to the east, they shall run to and fro to seek the word of the LORD, and shall not find it. KJV

Also, it was used as a symbol for having in abundance something that one did ***not want***.

***Ps 80:4-7***

- 4 O LORD God of hosts, how long wilt thou be angry against the prayer of thy people?
- 5 Thou feedest them with the bread of tears; and givest them tears to drink in great measure.
- 6 Thou makest us a strife unto our neighbours: and our enemies laugh among themselves.
- 7 Turn us again, O God of hosts, and cause thy face to shine; and we shall be saved.

Bread was used in one of Israel's most important celebrations to remind them of the fact that they were delivered from bondage in Egypt and had to leave in a hurry. Unleavened bread was traveling bread since dough needs to be still to rise.

***Ex 12:14-20***

- 14 And this day shall be unto you for a memorial; and ye shall keep it a feast to the LORD throughout your generations; ye shall keep it a feast by an ordinance for ever.
- 15 Seven days shall ye eat unleavened bread; even the first day ye shall put away leaven out of your houses: for whosoever eateth leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day, that soul shall be cut off from Israel.
- 16 And in the first day there shall be an holy convocation, and in the seventh day there shall be an holy convocation to you; no manner of work shall be done in them, save that which every man must eat, that only may be done of you.
- 17 And ye shall observe the feast of unleavened bread; for in this selfsame day have I brought your armies out of the land of Egypt: therefore shall ye observe this day in your generations by an ordinance for ever.
- 18 In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month at even, ye shall eat unleavened bread, until the one and twentieth day of the month at even.
- 19 Seven days shall there be no leaven found in your houses: for whosoever eateth that which is leavened, even that soul shall be cut off from the congregation of Israel, whether he be a stranger, or born in the land.
- 20 Ye shall eat nothing leavened; in all your habitations shall ye eat unleavened bread.

The symbolism here was so important that Jesus borrowed the unleavened bread from a Passover meal to use in instituting one of the most important symbols of the Christian faith, Communion.

### **III. So, was Jesus using the word as an allegory in the Lord's Prayer or was He talking about actual bread?**

Not long after the Sermon on the Mount, while still ministering in Galilee, Jesus gave that great message of John 6 which used bread as imagery and said some very difficult things. After seeing how He dealt with the subject, it is difficult to think that He was speaking of mere bread in the Model Prayer as if one were merely praying for his daily physical food.

Let us explore together the way Jesus used imagery on this topic in the setting of John 6.

The whole story was set up around the importance of Jesus' provisions of His Presence and His grace.

First, He gave a crowd of over five thousand food to prevent them from being hungry, vs. 1-14. Then, later that night, He rescued His disciples on the Lake from a storm and even delivered them from having to row the entire way, 15-21.

Then, the story was paused for Jesus to make the point that there is a way to be interested in Him and to seek Him that does not lead to salvation, vs 22-27. There is a bit of mixing of metaphors here, something that grammar experts teach us not to do, but this was the Lord. Jesus rejected their false seeking of Him as they challenged Him for a sign similar to the manna that Moses had (supposedly) given them. Jesus reminded them that the manna came down from *heaven*, that Moses was not the source of it.

Bear in mind that these people had just seen Him miraculously provide food and then had miraculously transported Himself across the Lake, v.25.

In vs. 26,27 there was a topic shift and Jesus began to talk about meat and bread, generally 'food' and use it as an allegory of the provision of God that brings eternal life to man.

The pretended interest, this false seeking, had two elements to it: 'what works shall we do,' and 'what is the spectacle that you will produce?'

The 'work,' He said, v.29, is to believe on Him which, He is going to say, vs. 44, 65, cannot happen unless the Father grants that ability.

The 'spectacle,' the great 'sign' they were asking for, was standing right in front of them, vs 32-35.

And, He is 'the Bread of God,' the Bread of Life, specifically that Bread which they had already rejected by seeking lesser things, miracles and signs and physical food.

This 'gift' that God gives of coming to Him, believing on Him, in such a way as to possess

eternal life, is such a profound entering in this work that even the allegories cannot handle the reality of it.

For example, to call Him ‘The Bread of Life’ is to speak of God’s provision of spiritual life to those who come to Him in genuine faith. Calling Him ‘bread’ compares receiving Him to one eating a piece of physical bread. But this is a crude expression, a dim and somewhat distorted picture of the reality.

That which is being pictured is so much more profound than eating a piece of bread that the imagery fails. But, then, how can one picture the reality of a human being literally taking into himself the Very Life Essence of the Person of the Son of God? What poetic and grammatical device would be sufficient? What words? How can we use human language to speak of such a thing?

It is an other-worldly experience for which this world has developed no language to describe, nor can it.

Think of the expressions the scriptures use to describe the uniting of human and Divine in Redemption:

Baptized into Him,  
Filled with Him,  
We dwell with Him and He in us,  
We say that Christ *lives* in us,  
That we are born from above,  
translated out of the Kingdom of Darkness and into the Kingdom of His Dear Son.

But all of the images taken together still fail to tell even a fraction of the story.

***The Living God has taken us into Himself and enabled us to take Him into ourselves.***

And, Jesus said, vs. 53-56, unless this is literally true, as true as if we had actually consumed His body, we are still dead in our sins.

The dynamics of the process work for us in the same way that they did in Jesus, v.57.

One of the saddest realities of our world is that there are millions of people who are convinced they have a hope of eternal life who have no idea as to what these words of Jesus are saying. For them, it is a difficult concept, a ‘hard saying,’ as it was to those disciples of Jesus, v.60. Since they don’t ‘get it’ they think that no one else does either. “Who can understand that?”

But this that Jesus was talking about, using ‘bread’ and ‘flesh’ and ‘blood’ as allegories, is an entirely spiritual thing known only to those to whom the Father grants understanding, v.65.

And, it goes without saying, no person could experience what Jesus was talking about without also experiencing a ***massive*** and ***profound*** change.

2 Cor 5:17

17 Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new KJV

The so-called 'Christian Church' of our day has fleeced millions into believing that this is *not* true, that a person can, by a simple act of his own will, become a disciple of Jesus Christ and be eternally safe and secure. But is this not what those people of John 6 had done, v.60,64,66? How did that work out for them?

Here is the summary of Jesus' teaching on 'bread' in John 6.

“Unless you enter into a profound relationship with God the Son - through His drawing you and gifting you with the capacity to come - a relationship so intense that it can be pictured legitimately as eating His flesh and drinking His blood... you are as dead spiritually as those Jews are physically who ate the manna in the wilderness.”

John 6:49

49 Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. KJV

#### **IV. Now back to the Model Prayer.**

I have no doubt but that Jesus was speaking of something more than actual bread when He taught us to pray, “give us this day our daily bread.” This profound relationship of being in Christ and He in us, this provision of the spiritual essence of His Person through intimate contact is available as a daily experience. But it is not dispensed in multiples, only day by day, one day at a time, just as the manna in the wilderness could not be hoarded. It would rot, except for that gathered on Friday, which would last over the Sabbath.

God would have His people draw near to Him, drink from Him, consume spiritual bread from Him, on a daily basis. Jesus was teaching us to seek Him for spiritual provision *and receive it* daily. Anything less should be viewed as less than desirable, a sub-standard experience of the Christian life. And, if it goes on indefinitely, one should seriously question whether he knows the Lord at all.

John 6:50-58

50 This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die.

51 I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.

52 The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, How can this man give us his flesh to eat?

53 Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.

54 Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day.

- 55 For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed.  
56 He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him.  
57 As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me,  
even he shall live by me.  
58 This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat  
manna, and are dead:  
he that eateth of this  
bread shall live for  
ever. KJV

Seek Christ daily.

Seek communion with Him.

Refuse to be satisfied with anything less.

Do not become presumptuous.

Many will be revealed in the Last Day to have no part in Him who thought they were safe.

***Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread...***