

RTO™ School of Prayer

A Prayer of Provision

“Give us this day our daily bread”. **Matthew 6:11**

“Two things I ask of you; deny them not to me before I die: Remove far from me falsehood and lying; give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with the food that is needful for me,

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.” **Proverbs 30:7-9**

by Dave Mozdin

As we review this model of prayer which our Lord Jesus Christ so simply and brilliantly prescribes for us in Matthew 6:9-13, what we have to this point is addressing God corporately, “*Our*”, intimately, “*Father*”, reverently, “*in heaven, hallowed be Your Name*”, honoring and desiring His Kingdom and His will, “*Your kingdom come Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven*”.

After this worship and honor that is due the Father has been acknowledged, we arrive at the first petition directly addressed to us, “*Give us this day our daily bread*”. In the time when Christ walked the earth, people had to work daily to secure enough food. Unlike our world today, they did not have the farming technology to mass produce food, the technology and methods to process, preserve, refrigerate and distribute it, and supermarkets to make it readily available, thus the request for our *daily bread*.

At first glance, this request would appear to be straightforward, referring to our physical need for food to sustain us, and that is true, however, throughout the Bible there are implications that there is a spiritual part to this request which encompasses so much more concerning our life, our eternal life with God.

In the creation account of Genesis 1, man and woman were created in God’s image (Genesis 1:27-28) as both physical and spiritual beings, even though quite often many people are unaware of this fact.

According to Genesis, God simultaneously created the physical and the spiritual, Genesis 2:7(KJV): “And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.” As Barnes’ Notes on the Bible says: “The ‘breath of life’ is special to this passage. It expresses the spiritual and principal element in man, which is not formed, but breathed by

the Creator into the physical form of man. This rational part is that in which he bears the image of God and is suited to be his vicegerent on earth. As the earth was prepared to be the dwelling, so was the body to be the organ of that breath of life which is his essence, himself.” Gill’s Exposition, “and man became a living soul; or a living man, not only capable of performing the functions of the animal life, of eating, drinking, walking, but of thinking, reasoning, and discoursing as a rational creature.” The physical body was to be the vessel for man and woman to love and serve God according to His directive Genesis 1:28 “And God blessed them. And God said to them, ‘Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.’”

After this, God then provides the food, the physical nourishment they will need to perform the work He has commanded, v.29, “And God said, ‘Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit. You shall have them for food.’” Then in 2:16-17, **16**”And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, ‘You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, **17**but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.’”

And as we all know, in the very next chapter, 3:1-7, they disobeyed God’s command, the woman was deceived by the serpent, ate the forbidden fruit, gave it to the man and he ate, and the world was plunged into sin, as it is until this day. God, in His love, grace and mercy, did not allow them to die on that very day that they ate, but His punishment included a severe challenge to the availability of their food supply and the great effort and frustration in obtaining it. 3:17-19, **17**”And to Adam he said, ‘Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, ‘You shall not eat of it,’ cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life; **18**thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. **19**By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread,’”. This can also be seen as a major reason for dependence upon God for daily bread because man’s sin made it so much more difficult to raise food from the ground.

After this, one of the earliest known correlations of the spiritual and the physical concerning food occurs in Genesis 4:3-8, where Cain and Abel brought worship offerings to God relative to their occupations. Cain, a worker of the ground (farmer), who brought “an offering of the fruit of the ground”, and Abel, a keeper of sheep brought “the firstborn of the flock and their fat portions”. Sadly, the spiritual element for Cain turns to sin, as God showed favor towards Abel’s offering, but none to Cain’s. As a result,

despite God's exhortation to Cain to take righteous action, Cain rises up and kills his brother, committing the first murder in the Bible.

The next illustration of this occurs in Genesis 14, specifically vv. 17-18, after Abram (soon to be renamed Abraham) returned from the victorious battle against Chedorlaomer and from rescuing Lot who had been taken captive. He is met by the king of Sodom and a priest named Melchizedek, whose name means righteous king. It is also noted in v. 18 that "He was priest of God most High", a priest being one who intercedes, that is, comes between God and man on man's behalf, and was worshiping and serving the same one true God as Abram. He then gives them bread and wine, mostly to refresh them after being in battle. This action will come to have significant spiritual value concerning Christ and His calling as intercessor for us. and we will discuss this later in this lesson.

The next highly visible example, and a key event that God references throughout the remainder of Scripture is in Exodus 16, the story of the manna, the God sent bread from heaven. To set the context, this happens shortly after the God ordained miracle of the parting of the Red Sea so Moses and the Israelites can escape the Egyptians who pursued them and by Pharaoh's orders, intended to destroy them. As we know, after they have safely crossed, God causes the Egyptian chariots to become stuck in the seabed, allows the waters to return to their normal levels and drowns all of them. After this, they sang a song of victory and praise in Exodus 15, known as The Song of Moses, and began the journey into the wilderness of Shur. Shortly thereafter, God provides another miracle, turning the bitter water into sweet after their grumbling to Moses about having no water for three days. Here God provides an example of provision that connects the spiritual to the physical.

"Then they came to Elim, where there were twelve springs of water and seventy palm trees, and they encamped there by the water." (v. 27). After staying at Elim for a little over two weeks, they journeyed into the wilderness of Sin, and began to suffer hunger from a lack of food in this barren land. The people grumbled against Moses, saying "Would that we had died by the hand of the LORD in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the meat pots and ate bread to the full, for you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger." (Exodus 16:3). "Then the LORD said to Moses, 'Behold, I am about to rain bread from heaven for you, and the people shall go out and gather a day's portion every day, that I may test them, whether they will walk in my law or not.'" (v. 4). Here the Lord God Himself makes a direct connection of the physical to the spiritual, providing the daily need for their food, declaring heaven as the source and His spiritual reason for providing it.

Throughout the remainder of Exodus 16, God decrees additional requirements and restrictions concerning the manna (including retaining some in a jar as a remembrance for future generations, v. 33) to further His decree to see if the people will be obedient to His law. God remained faithful with this distribution, “The people of Israel ate the manna forty years, till they came to a habitable land. They ate the manna till they came to the border of the land of Canaan.” (v. 35).

In the Book of Deuteronomy, chapter 8, just before his death and Israel’s long-awaited entrance into the Promised Land, Moses makes reference to the manna in a spiritual way in vv. 2-3, **2**”And you shall remember the whole way that the LORD your God has led you these forty years in the wilderness, that he might humble you, testing you to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep his commandments or not. **3**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.”

In Matthew 4, our Lord Jesus Christ quoted this same verse during His forty days in the desert at the beginning of His earthly ministry. He had been fasting for the forty days and was quite hungry (v. 2), and this was the first of three major temptations from Satan to test Him. Could He have turned the stones into bread (v. 3)? Of course, being God, He can do all things. Did He? No, and by using God’s word in rejecting the temptation (v.4), He valued the spiritual above the physical. As John MacArthur writes, “A more important source of sustenance than food, it (God’s word) nurtures our spiritual needs in a way that benefits us eternally, rather than merely providing temporal relief from physical hunger.” Additional references to manna can be found in the books of Numbers, Joshua, Nehemiah, Psalms, the gospel according to John, Hebrews and Revelation.

Christ’s most direct reference to manna is in John 6, in what is often referred to as The Bread of Life Discourse. To set the scene, in chapter 6, Jesus performs the miracle of feeding the 5000, and afterwards, retreated by Himself to the mountain because He correctly sensed the crowd’s wrong reaction to this miracle, as apparently, they were about to “take Him by force to make Him king.” (v. 15). The crowd continues to search for Him and the next day they found Him on the other side of the sea where the miracle had occurred. Upon seeing the crowd, He goes right to the heart of the matter, and the most important priority. **26**”Jesus answered them, ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, you are seeking me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves. **27**Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you.’” (vv.26-27). They mistake His reference to “work for the food” as needing to work for salvation, asking “What

must we do, to be doing the works of God?" (v. 28). Here Jesus expands on the theme of the spiritual over the physical as He begins to plainly, then emphatically states (and repeats throughout the rest of chapter 6) that *belief in Him* is the necessary element of salvation.

Despite the miracle feeding of the 5000, they still cannot or will not understand what Jesus is saying and ask for yet another sign for Him to prove that He is the Messiah, recalling the miracle of the manna in Exodus. **31**"Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.'" **32**"Jesus then said to them, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but my Father gives you the true bread from heaven. **33**For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.'" **34**'They said to him, 'Sir, give us this bread always.'" (vv. 31-34). They still associate bread with the physical as Jesus begins to point to Himself as the bread who comes down from heaven to give life. Then, **35**"Jesus said to them, 'I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst. **36**But I said to you that you have seen me and yet do not believe.'" (vv. 35-36).

They proceed to grumble in disbelief about Him, doubting that He truly came from heaven, and He additionally declares the sovereign work of the Father in drawing all believers to Him (vv. 41-46). Yet He does not refrain from emphasizing the requirement of belief in Him as the Son of God to belong to God's kingdom, and the spiritual nature of this discourse. **47**"Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes has eternal life. **48**I am the bread of life. **49**Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. **50**This is the bread that comes down from heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die. **51**I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. And the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh." (vv. 47-51). Please note that the references to Christ's flesh being the bread for the life of the world means, according to Barnes, "...his body would be offered as a sacrifice for sin".

The grumbling continues as they now incredulously believe He is saying that they need to eat His flesh to be saved. Jesus remains steadfast in His truth that He is the bread of life, **55**"For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink. **56**Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him. **57**As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so whoever feeds on me, he also will live because of me. **58**This is the bread that came down from heaven, not like the bread the fathers ate, and died. Whoever feeds on this bread will live forever." (vv. 55-58). We will expound upon the true spiritual meaning of this shortly, but first.....

What is important for us to know from all this is the undisputed truth that Jesus Christ is the bread of life come down from heaven, that He alone is the Lord and Savior, and you must believe in Him to be saved. You must commit to repent, to change your ways, confess your sins to Him, embrace Him by faith for the forgiveness of your sins, to be spared from God's justifiable wrath in eternal hell and welcomed into the joys of heaven forever. He died to save you, and God raised Him from the dead and God's resurrection power is available to you to be able to live for Him. If you have not yet made this decision, please do so today, as tomorrow may be too late. "And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment". (Hebrews 9:27). "If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved." (Romans 10:9).

Earlier we mentioned the events of Genesis 14:17-18, where a priest named Melchizedek gives Abram, who had just returned victorious from battle, bread and wine to refresh him. On the night before His crucifixion, Christ draws from this to start an ordinance, a rite associated in this case, with the tangible elements of bread and wine being used to illustrate a spiritual truth. They were observing the Passover meal, and **26**"Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, 'Take, eat; this is my body.'" **27**And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, 'Drink of it, all of you, **28**for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.'" (Matthew 26:26-28). He also commanded them "Do this in remembrance of Me." (Luke 22:19). In churches today, the elements are most often some small pieces of unleavened bread and a small quantity of juice, though some churches use real bread and wine. While this has virtually no nutritional value when consumed, the spiritual truth is as important as ever. We feed on Christ by reading, studying and meditating upon His word, and being obedient to it. As Christ Himself has said, "The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life." (John 6:63). He also said, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God. (Matthew 4:4)". As Job has said, "I have treasured the words of His mouth more than my portion of food." (Job 23:12). The apostle Paul tells us, "For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes." (1Corinthians 11:26).

The final mention of manna is in the last book of the Bible, Revelation, chapter 2, verse 17, "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who conquers I will give some of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, with a new name written on the stone that no one knows except the one who receives it." According to the Meyer New Testament Commentary, "...as the victor (the one who has conquered) has approved himself especially in resisting the temptation to eat of

what is sacrificed to idols, so he receives a corresponding reward when the Lord offers him heavenly, divine food, viz., *manna*, the bread of heaven,[1188]—such fruit as, like the fruit of the tree of life, Revelation 2:7, will nourish the heavenly, blessed life. Once more, a physical connection to the spiritual. This manna is *hidden*, because it will be manifest only in future glory when it will be enjoyed;” God will sovereignly nourish us in heaven.

Before we conclude this lesson, we’ll take a look at the other key verse listed at the beginning, Proverbs 30:7-9, described by some pastors as “The Middle Class Prayer”, 7”Two things I ask of you; deny them not to me before I die: 8Remove far from me falsehood and lying; give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with the food that is needful for me, 9lest 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.” There is a spiritual and physical connection here, as the first request, to be cleansed from falsehood and lying speaks of an internal right standing with God, a desire to please Him, “Behold, You delight in truth in the inward being”. (Psalm 51:6). The second request is for a right standing physically, to have the proper amount of food each day to prevent a sinful reaction to either extreme, violating the right inward standing with God. Christ neatly, simply, and magnificently summarizes this by saying “Give us this day our daily bread.”

A common tradition among Christians is to pray just before beginning to eat a meal, especially as a family or a group, to thank God as the true source for our food. This is good and pleasing to God, who commands us to be “giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ”. (Ephesians 5:20). As an application going forward, before you eat your next meal to give thanks for the satisfaction of your physical hunger, whether you are alone or with others, remember your spiritual hunger. Remember how the Lord Jesus helps us to understand and fill our deeper hunger for God, that He blesses those who hunger and thirst for righteousness (Matthew 5:6), that He is the bread of life, the living bread come down from heaven, that whoever comes to Him shall not hunger, and believes in Him shall not thirst. Give thanks *to* Him and *for* Him as your bread of eternal life, that as the fulfillment of a perfect relationship with God in unending worship, you will always be nourished both physically and especially spiritually, now and forever. Amen and Alleluia!

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