

# "Our Daily Bread"

## Fourth Petition of the Lord's Prayer

### Matthew 6:25-34

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**by C.W. Powell**

It is the greatest thing to live a life of thankfulness. Most people do not do so, I do not think. It takes a number of things to be truly thankful for everything, as the Scripture commands. It takes knowledge. Of course a person can be thankful when the blessings are material and abundant, although there are a great many spoiled children in our day who have abundance and still are not thankful. I heard a man say one time that the plastic angels that he had on the dash of his car had saved his life in an accident. This is misplaced thankfulness, and it is frightfully offensive to God when you give thanks to idols. Such people are without knowledge; knowledge of the true nature of things, of God, and of themselves. Abraham's true inheritance was the promise of the Spirit; which is another way of saying that his treasures were in heaven, and his affections were in heaven. Very often the people of God have filled their lives with many things, but with trouble and distress along with the things, because they did not understand the true nature of their inheritance. God did not give you life so you could eat and drink; and He didn't give you a body, so you would have someplace to hang clothes. The specific knowledge that we must have to be thankful is the knowledge of the nature of God and the knowledge of the true nature of His promises, and the true nature of ourselves as the images of God.

But besides knowledge, it also takes trust. Trust is the work of the Holy Spirit which enables me to have peace in my heart in spite of all the storms and trials of life. But this is not the peace of stoicism, which refuses to recognize the difference between good things and bad things. As Christians we know the difference between good and bad things. We know that it is better not to be sick; not to be without life's necessities; not to be despised and slandered. But faith teaches us to trust our heavenly Father in all things, and to carry out the tasks faithfully that He gives us day by day.

These are the two components of true faith: knowledge and trust, as it says in the HC:

Q21: What is true faith?

A21: True faith is not only a sure knowledge, whereby I hold for truth all that God has revealed to us in His Word,[1] but also a hearty trust,[2] which the Holy Ghost [3] works in me by the Gospel,[4] that not only to others, but to me also, forgiveness of sins,

everlasting righteousness, and salvation are freely given by God,[5] merely of grace, only for the sake of Christ's merits.[6]

Someone has said that the true nobility of life is not found in great things or great deeds, but in the ordinary and small things. Is this what Jesus meant when He said that even a cup of cold water given in His name would not lose its rewards? Who are the great Christians of the world? Who are they that truly take to heart the teachings of our Lord and His commandments? Let the apostle Paul answer

26 For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called:

27 But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty;

28 And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are:

29 That no flesh should glory in his presence. —I Cor. 1:26-29

That brings is to the Scripture that we read a few moments ago.

25 Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?

26 Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?

27 Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature?

28 And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin:

29 And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

30 Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?

31 Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?

32 (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.

33 But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

34 Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.

There are several important things in this passage.

I. Faith is to rule our hearts in our daily labor for life's necessities. Even in such things we are to remember the kingdom of God which is not of this earth.

a. We do not labor for our life, nor for our body, because God is perfectly aware of what we need.

b. We are better than the fowls of the air and the beasts of the field. God cares for the grass, which flourished for a day, and then was used for fuel in the bake-ovens.

c. There is doctrine—very important doctrine.

i. You are important to God. Value yourself as God values you.

ii. Fowls, grass, beasts—people are more important than they are.

iii. You have been called to toil and spin, but this does not mean that these things are the cause of your prosperity. Many have toiled and spun and have not prospered. There are thieves and robbers; there are moths and rust; there are many things in a fallen world that can eat of the labor of man.

iv. You are to be driven by a different purpose than the unbelievers. Vs. 32. Is your work not distinguished from them. Do you march by the same drummer; seek the same things, live by the same rules?

v. Worry and fretting and care are not to be part of the life of the believer. There are three passages that illustrate this truth:

1. 1 Pet. 5:1-7

1 The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed:

2 Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind;

3 Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock.

4 And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.

5 Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.

6 Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time:

7 Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.

2.Phil. 4:6,7

6 Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.

7 And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

3.Col. 3:13-15

13 Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.

14 And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness.

15 And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful.

II. Faith teaches us that the Kingdom of God is to be the chief purpose of our labor. "Seek ye first."

a. The spiritual trumps the material. This is illustrated in all the lives of the great men of faith. For instance in Hebrews 11.

- i. Abel, though a shepherd by trade, bore witness of the Promise.
- ii. Enoch, was a preaching of righteousness to the wicked generation before the flood.
- iii. Noah, moved with fear and made an ark.
- iv. Abraham, left Ur, became a stranger in the land of Canaan.
- v. All these confessed they were strangers and pilgrims in the world.
- vi. Jacob blessed his sons, leaning on his staff.
- vii. Moses, refused the pleasures of Egypt. Cast his lot with the people of God.
- viii. Rahab, turned her back on Jericho
- ix. We have received a kingdom which cannot be moved. It consists of the promises and the perfections of God Himself. "I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward." Gen. 15:1.

b. This is the reason that Sabbath observance is always so closely connected with faith. We must labor, but we must not forget the spiritual. "Six days shalt thou labor. What a blessing it is to know that we can trust the Lord, and not have to plug along seven days a week! We can and must stop on the Sabbath Day from our hustle and bustle, draw apart with God's people to praise the Lord, observe the sacraments, and rest our bodies and minds. Yes—that means you don't think about your work, and your cares, and your worries. Your life should not be a frantic. The peace of God rules your mind here in the church—if you cannot have peace in church you will find it nowhere else. Leave your lusts and your cares and your strife and your wars and keep Sabbath as it must be kept—with complete trust and faith in Christ for your daily bread for your body, and for the food for your soul. You need it; your family needs it; your church needs it; your nation needs it. That's why the catechism puts it so clearly, as I preached before Christmas:

HC Q103: What does God require in the fourth Commandment?

A103: In the first place, God wills that the ministry of the Gospel and schools be maintained,[1] and that I, especially on the day of rest, diligently attend church [2] to learn the Word of God,[3] to use the holy sacraments,[4] to call publicly upon the Lord,[5] and to give Christian alms.[6] In the second place, that all the days of my life I rest from my evil works, allow the Lord to work in me by His Spirit, and thus begin in this life the everlasting sabbath.[7]

c. Note the order of the petitions: Hallowing the Name of God; The Coming of the Kingdom of God; The sanctifying of the will of God, that it be done on earth as it is in heaven. Then we come to our daily bread. A very important part of life and good sense is keeping priorities straight. You not only must do the right thing but you must do it at the proper time, both clock time and logical time. Some things are to be done before other things. You don't sow the seed before you plow—plowing comes first, I would think. There is an order to be done to things. The spiritual has priority over the material. Our souls must be fed—that is a greater priority than the body, which comes to the grave, but the soul lives forever.

III. And so we come to thankfulness. From a heart of thankfulness and praise, we can pray to God for our daily bread, firmly assured that our Heavenly Father hears us. We put aside care and distress,

knowing that we are greatly beloved of God, who is the source of all good things.