

Praying to Our Father for Daily Bread

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We turn in scripture to 1 Timothy chapter 6. The Apostle Paul is giving Timothy instruction regarding how the church is to behave itself. In the first chapters of this letter, Paul gives Timothy instruction regarding the callings of men and women in the worship service, qualifications for elder and deacon, how to care for widows, and here more practical instruction concerning the life of the church. We read this in connection with Lord's Day 50 of the Catechism regarding the petition for daily bread. It's 1 Timothy 6.

1 Let as many servants as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honour, that the name of God and his doctrine be not blasphemed. 2 And they that have believing masters, let them not despise them, because they are brethren; but rather do them service, because they are faithful and beloved, partakers of the benefit. These things teach and exhort. 3 If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; 4 He is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, 5 Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself. 6 But godliness with contentment is great gain. 7 For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. 8 And having food and raiment [clothing] let us be therewith content. 9 But they that will [they that desire to] be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. 10 For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. 11 But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness. 12 Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses. 13 I give thee charge in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things, and before Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession; 14 That thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ: 15 Which in his times he shall shew, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of

kings, and Lord of lords; 16 Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen. 17 Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; 18 That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; 19 Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life. 20 O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called: 21 Which some professing have erred concerning the faith. Grace be with thee. Amen.

So far we read God's holy and infallible word.

It's on the basis of this passage of scripture and on the basis of many passages of scripture that we have the teaching of Lord's Day 50 of the Heidelberg Catechism found on page 26 in the back of the Psalter. Lord's Day 50,

Q. 125. Which is the fourth petition?

A. Give us this day our daily bread; that is, be pleased to provide us with all things necessary for the body, that we may thereby acknowledge Thee to be the only fountain of all good, and that neither our care nor industry, nor even Thy gifts, can profit us without Thy blessing; and therefore that we may withdraw our trust from all creatures and place it alone in Thee.

Beloved congregation of our Lord Jesus Christ, this morning we come to what we can refer to as the second section of the Lord's Prayer. Remember, when we started looking at the Lord's Prayer, at least the first petition, we saw that there were two sections and the first section, which includes the first three petitions, focuses especially on God. It teaches us that when we enter into prayer, fellowshiping with God, our focus must first be on him, "Hallowed be thy name, Thy kingdom come, thy will be done." This is how we approach him. This is how we are taught to approach him. This is why the Lord's Prayer is a model prayer. It's teaching us how to pray. When we enter prayer, prayer is not just a way for us to bring our requests before God, what we need, our earthly material needs, but prayer is, first of all, fellowship and praise and worship and thanksgiving. And in a sense, it's only after dwelling on God and God's name and his kingdom and his will that we are ready spiritually for also bringing these other petitions that we have concerning us; praying those petitions helps, gives us the posture and disposition for praying these next petitions.

Well, as we turn now to the second section of the Lord's Prayer, we focus a bit more specifically on those things that directly concern us, the earthly needs that we have. We have, first of all, petition for our daily bread; second, a petition for the forgiveness of sins; and then third, a petition for deliverance from evil and growth in holiness. This

morning, we're going to focus just on the fourth petition in which we are taught to pray for our daily bread. We take as our theme, "Praying to Our Father for Daily Bread," and we look at that theme under three points. First, we see that this is an astonishing prayer. We're going to look at what we are praying for here. This is an astonishing prayer. Second, we see that this is a difficult, and because it's difficult, it's also an important prayer. And then third, this is a comforting prayer.

The fourth petition, "give us this day our daily bread." That is an astonishing prayer and it's an astonishing prayer because it's such a short petition and yet it captures so perfectly what our relationship to God ought to look like when it comes to our earthly and physical and material needs. It expresses so perfectly our complete dependence upon God. We depend upon him for all our earthly needs. It expresses so perfectly our trust in God regarding these earthly things we need. We're looking to him. And it expresses the perfect contentment that ought to characterize the child of God regarding what God's will is for him regarding his earthly needs. It's an astonishing prayer just in the fact that we're talking here about bread. Bread. And we are bringing our request for bread to the throne of the King of kings and Lord of lords, the exalted one who rules over all the earth.

Beloved, just recognize and just appreciate for a moment what this fourth petition looks like. "Heavenly Father, thou art the omnipotent one. Thou art the one who, in the span of six days, just by the mere word of thy power, power of thy word, spoke everything into existence, the heavens and the earth and the sea, and all the life and all the abundance that characterizes these, the heavens and the earth and the sea. Thou art the God who has exalted thy own name through thy Son Jesus Christ." So there's not only creation, he's God of creation, but he's the God of salvation. "Sending thy Son Jesus Christ into the earth, thyself becoming flesh to make a full covering for all our sins, and then rising again the third day as the victor, conquering the kingdom of darkness and evil. Thou art the King who exalts, who rules over all thy creatures. Thou dost do as thou dost see fit. Thou art the one who has established thy throne of grace in our hearts. Adopted us as thy children so that we call thee Father for Christ's sake. Thou art the awesome God of heaven and earth. And now here we are in prayer, and what do we ask of thee? Thou who hast all resources at thy disposal, thou the one unto whom belongeth the cattle on a thousand hills, so that the gold is thine and the silver is thine, what do we ask of thee? Bread. We ask of thee bread."

Isn't that astonishing? In a sense, we ask for so little here from the God who can turn stones into bread, who can rain bread from heaven, and who's the God who can do anything. He has everything at his disposal and we ask just for bread and that's what God teaches us to ask for, only for bread. And honestly, I don't know if this is your experience, this has been my experience, it almost seems inappropriate at times to pray this petition because our tables and our homes are filled with so much more than just bread. We have salad, we have dessert, we have pies and cake and ice cream, and here we are asking God for bread. Makes you question how you pray this petition.

Well, to help us understand what we are praying for, we need to make sure we understand what the word bread is actually referring to. Children, you need to understand the word

bread here is not just referring to physical loaves of bread that your parents might buy in the grocery store. The word bread here doesn't even simply mean, it's not just simply referring to our food and drink, what we need to eat to survive, but the word bread here is referring to all our daily earthly material needs, the needs of our physical bodies. As the Catechism puts it, be pleased to provide us with all things necessary for the body. So in a sense, when we ask God for daily bread, although we're asking just for bread, we're still asking for a lot, because we're asking for everything that we need physically. We're asking not just for our needs concerning food and drink, but we're also asking for our needs concerning the homes that we live in, and our clothing that we need, regarding things at work, regarding our health and our medication needs. It concerns all the support for our physical bodies and yet, at the same time, this is all we're asking for. Bread. That's what the word bread refers to. The basic needs we have in life.

So, for example, if I have a headache or I have a migraine and I'm praying to God, "Lord, help me and give me maybe what I need to be relieved of this, if it be thy will," or maybe I have a broken bone or back pain and I feel the need for medication, that's covered under this fourth petition. Jesus is teaching you to pray for these things right here in this fourth petition. Maybe I see just how expensive the medication is or the treatment is, Jesus says, pray for it here. This is the petition that covers all these needs in your life, the fourth petition. Maybe your car is broken down and you need to get to work, right here in the fourth petition, Jesus is teaching you this is where you pray for it, for your daily bread. Maybe I see the cost of school tuition for my child for another year, and I wonder about the kind of sacrifices I might have to make. Jesus says, I taught you to pray the fourth petition. This is where you pray for these things. In a sense, all the mundane earthly things that we might be inclined to think are not even worthy of God's divine attention, Jesus teaches us to pray for these things here in this fourth petition. And that's astonishing and at the same time, it's very comforting. Your daily bread, beloved, your daily needs, bread, has God's attention. God wants you, he teaches you to pray concerning all these earthly, mundane needs, as we might be inclined to judge them.

Just think of this. Think of a child who comes home from school in the afternoon, gets off the bus, runs into the house, and he immediately asks, "Mother, may I have something to eat, for I am hungry?" And that child makes no ceremony of it. He doesn't question his mother's love for him or her willingness to provide for his needs. Nor does he try to seek for his needs somewhere else. He doesn't go to the neighbor next door thinking that he might find something better there. He simply goes home to his mother, casts himself upon her love and concern for him or her, and boldly and simply asks to have this need supplied. "Mother, may I have something to eat for I am hungry?" Well, that's what we do and that's how we treat our heavenly Father when we pray this fourth petition, and just as parents are happy with how their children trust in them and confide in them, so too, that's a reflection of how our heavenly Father is happy when his children trust and confide in him for all these little needs that we have.

Or think of a child who maybe isn't hungry, but he's a child who needs another pencil or glue stick for school, and he comes home or she comes home and she asks mother for another pencil. She took care of that first pencil her mother gave her, but she went

through that first pencil and so now she needs another one. That's what she needs. A pencil is part of a student's daily bread and that student's parents understand that and they gladly make sure that their children have a pencil for school. Just so it is with us and our physical needs, day by day, God wants us to go to him with our earthly mundane needs and look to him to provide those needs. That's what a father does. A father cares for the physical needs of his children, and a father delights in it when his children come to him and lay their needs before him, looking to him and looking to mother to provide those needs, and God is your Father in heaven.

Well, not only is the fourth petition a prayer for bread, all the necessities of life, but the fourth petition is a prayer for daily bread. I think a helpful way of thinking about that word daily is to think not really about a certain amount of time, but to think about a certain quantity of bread. This is daily bread. This is bread for a day. Not so much bread for this day, that's covered in the petition as well. Jesus says, "give us this day," so the word this refers to this day, here and now, but then the word daily refers to bread for a day. A certain quantity of bread. A day's worth of bread. The point is, I'm only asking for a daily portion. I'm not praying, "Lord, give me this day a whole storehouse of bread and abundance so that I don't have to pray this petition for the next two weeks and I'm good and I'm secure in the next two weeks for my needs so I can take my ease and stop looking to God for my needs." No, I'm asking just for what I need for a day. This day, give me what I need for a day.

Or another way to understand the word daily is like this, kind of combined with that idea is this, "Give me what is suitable for me in this moment and in this day. Give me that bread that is convenient for me, that is suitable for me, good for me, for the calling that you are giving me right here and right now. Give me that daily provision of strength and health and food and drink, day by day." And again, that makes this an astonishing prayer because in the way that this petition is worded, it implies that I'm not worried about tomorrow. My focus is just on a day's worth of what I need. And the Lord teaches us to pray that way because we need to remember every day again to live this way with the Lord, to live in this personal relationship with God dependent on him. Each day again, I'm looking to heavenly Father. That's how he wants me to live with him as his child. Oh yes, even right now, I might have a lot of food in my cupboards at home, and this week, I might try to be a good steward of my time and my resources so that I go to Costco and I try to shop for the next two weeks so I don't have to go to Costco every day, but the point is, I'm not worried about the future and neither is my trust rooted in what I can provide for myself for the future. My trust is in the Lord. It's not in these barns that I've torn down and built bigger that I have my trust in. I keep looking to the Lord and day by day, I ask the Lord to give me what I need to be a steward, a faithful steward, and to be faithful in this calling he has given me here in these circumstances. Tomorrow will have its own circumstances. Tomorrow I will have different needs than I have today. Let me just pray to God about today. God hasn't given me tomorrow yet anyway.

It's also an astonishing prayer, this fourth petition, because of what is implied is this, this is what I want. I am happy with my daily bread. After all, this is what I'm asking for, right? I'm not just going through the motions. This is what's in my heart. I am asking for

bread. This is what I want. I am content with daily bread. To go back to that example of a child coming home from school, that child runs into the house and asks his mother for a snack. What's going to be the issue in that situation? The issue is not going to be whether the mother will provide a snack for her child. The mother is glad to provide a snack for her child. The issue is this, whether the child will be happy with the snack that mother sets out. "Oh, it's not a chocolate bar. It's not a brownie covered with ice cream but it's carrot sticks and it's a slice of raisin bread, and it's a cup of milk and not a can of pop?" And maybe the child is inclined to whine and complain about the snacks that are in the house. And the issue is so often this, mother gives carrot sticks and raisin bread because mother knows that that's better and that's healthier for a growing child. But the child doesn't think about that and the child only complains. And that's also when a parent's joy begins to wane as well, isn't it? And mother takes no joy in setting out snacks for the children when the children only complain about what mother is giving them. And in this fourth petition, what Jesus is teaching us all is this, you can expect your heavenly Father to give you your daily bread. You must ask for your daily bread. You must ask for it even as a child asks for a snack with perfect confidence and expectation that God will supply it, but then also recognize this, what you need to ask for is daily bread. You must not ask for more. You must not ask for more than what you need and you must be content and happy with the daily bread that God is pleased to give you. You must not ask for luxuries. You must not ask for bread and butter, for a chocolate bar or a brownie with ice cream. You must not ask for an expensive vehicle to drive every day. After all, when your car is broken down and you can't get to work, you're not praying for a fancy new car at that time, are you? You're simply praying for the means to get to work. That's your need. That's what you're praying for. That's your daily bread. If the Lord is pleased to give us some luxuries, well then we humbly receive those luxuries from his hand and we make proper use of these good gifts and use them to the honor of our heavenly Father. There's nothing wrong if your heavenly Father has seen fit to give you these things, but what you must not do is set your heart on these luxuries and ask God for them or look to other people for these luxuries. Ask God for what you need and for what is good for you. Ask him for it and trust that he will give you what is good for you. Make sure you ask. You must ask and then also this, be content. Pray from the heart, "Give me bread. I want bread." And the way the Catechism explains it is like this, ultimately, I don't want things. Ultimately, what I want is God's blessing.

Let's read over answer 125 once again. "Which is the fourth petition? Give us this day our daily bread; that is, be pleased to provide us with all things necessary for the body, that we may thereby acknowledge Thee to be the only fountain of all good, and that neither our care nor industry, nor even Thy gifts, can profit us without Thy blessing." You see, that's what I'm concerned about. That's at the heart of this petition. That's why I'm praying for bread, because my interest isn't even in things. I need bread. Yeah, my interest is in these things. But first, ultimately, my interest is in God's blessing. "Lord, I have needs for the body. You know, food and drink and shelter. I have needs for my daily calling and station. Lord, provide what I need but above all, what I want is thy blessing. I don't even want food or drink or shelter if it doesn't have thy blessing upon it. I want to receive everything that thou dost give me, not just from thy hand, but from thy fatherly hand and through Jesus Christ."

Well, here, of course, is where we need to make a distinction between gifts on the one hand and blessings on the other hand. I make this distinction every time in the Catechism class when we look at this Lord's Day, and it's good to visit this in the preaching as well. Notice how the Catechism itself makes this distinction. Our Reformed fathers over 400 years ago appreciated this difference between gifts and blessings, "neither our care nor industry, nor even Thy gifts, can profit us without Thy blessing." Gifts and blessings are not the same thing. Not necessarily. Gifts are simply those earthly and physical things that God gives to his creatures and God gives many good gifts to both the elect and reprobate. He gives sunshine. He gives work for our hands. He gives healthy bodies. He gives bread. He gives luxuries. But the child of God is not just interested in gifts, above all, what the child of God is interested in is God's blessing on those gifts. And what is a blessing? A blessing is God's word of favor that accompanies the gift that he gives. A blessing is that attitude of God that stands behind his act of giving.

All men receive good gifts of God, but not all men receive God's blessing exactly because not all men receive these good things from God with his love and favor accompanying it. The reprobate wicked receive rain and sunshine and all kinds of good things from the Lord, but not with his blessing, but with his curse accompanying those gifts. And in the end, there are only two attitudes that God has, either an attitude of love and favor with which he blesses, or an attitude of hatred with which he curses. God is not neutral to anyone and with all the gifts that he gives, either God gives those gifts with his blessing or with his curse accompanying them. God gives gifts either in his love or in his hatred. It's one or the other. There is either grace attending it or there is hatred. Those who find grace in the eyes of the Lord are, of course, those who are hidden in Jesus Christ and who are clothed with his righteousness and who believe on him and call on his name.

According to the Catechism when we pray, "Give us this day our daily bread," we are praying that we don't just want things from God, but only those earthly and material things that have God's blessing upon them, that come from God with God's favor upon them, only those things that God gives us for our spiritual profit and not our destruction. We are asking for only those things that God will give us through his Son Jesus Christ. And this is very practical. If God sees fit to give me an autoimmune disease and there is no medication to treat it, "Then, Father, give it to me. But give it to me not with a curse attending it, but with a blessing, if this is what is good for me as thy child." If God sees fit that my car is broken and it doesn't start this morning and I need to call someone else to bring me into work because I can't afford to buy a car right now, "Then, Father, do it. But do it not with a curse attending it, but with a blessing." And if God sees fit to make me a very wealthy person, "Then, Lord, do it. But do it not with a curse attending all these riches, but with a blessing." And children, even when you pray, "Lord, bless this food and drink, forgive my many sins for Jesus' sake, even this food at lunchtime or at supper or at breakfast. Bless this food and drink, O Lord, that I might even receive this food with thy favor attending it and not thy curse attending it, that this food and drink might be received by me given by thee in love. Give me what is good for me. Give me this day my daily bread."

In this way, this fourth petition is emphasizing our complete dependence upon God, not just for earthly things, but for God's blessing upon those earthly things. The fourth petition is also emphasizing then our contentment, that attitude of contentment that is indispensable for praying this petition. And this fourth petition is also emphasizing that we must trust God, that what he gives us is good and he will give us what we need as we ask him for what we need. Don't expect it if you're not asking for it. And so this is a very astonishing prayer. Every word is significant. And the attitude that stands behind it is very deep. But this is also where this astonishing prayer also is a very difficult prayer. It's a very difficult prayer for a number of reasons. I have three reasons. The first reason this prayer is difficult is perhaps obvious, by nature, we refuse to stand in this kind of relationship with God. In the old man of sin that I have, I hate acknowledging that I'm dependent upon God. And by nature, I will not trust him for the support of my earthly life. And by nature, I am then worrisome and anxious and covetous and not content.

And the difficulty of this prayer is captured very well in the portion of scripture that we read this morning, 1 Timothy 6. 1 Timothy 6 expresses, first of all, the kind of attitude that we ought to have with regard to earthly and material things. Verses 7 and 8, "For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment let us be therewith content." Even the context itself is very significant, but just those verses. Just think about it, when you were born, your parents could tell you, when you were born, you were completely naked. When you were born, you were completely naked and everything that you received from the moment you were born, you received it. Everything you've had, you've received it. All the clothes you've worn as a child, your parents gave you everything, and the point is, when you get to the end of life and you die, it will be the exact same. You'll have to leave it all behind again. Your bank balance left behind, your jewelry left behind, whatever is in your pocket, all left behind. And so just recognize we should be content with food and clothing. After all, all these things are just earthly things. They will be left behind.

But you see, here's the difficulty: by nature, we are covetous and covetousness is a very destructive sin. Verse 9 goes on to say, "But they that will be rich," that word "will" means desire. Those who want to be rich, those who want to be rich "fall into temptation and a snare and into many foolish and hurtful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition." And then verse 10 says, "For the love of money is the root of all evil." It doesn't say money is the root of all evil, it says the love of money is the root of all evil, "which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith and pierced themselves through with many sorrows." And you can look at your own life, people that you've crossed paths with, and you can probably think of someone about whom this happened, they've pierced themselves through with many sorrows because they loved money.

Verse 11 says, "But thou, O man of God, flee these things." And the point is, this is who we are by nature. We are covetous. We're always looking for what we can buy next or what someone else has that we don't have and it makes this petition difficult to pray. But that's also what makes this petition so important for us to pray, because a good antidote to covetousness is praying this petition. "Give bread, heavenly Father. I want bread. I don't

want riches. I don't ask for riches. And even when I have this sumptuous meal set before me, Lord, we receive it with thanksgiving. All we ask for is bread and now with this bounty, Lord, give us the grace and the strength to handle it faithfully. If thou art pleased to give me riches as my daily bread, as the bread that's suitable for me, then fine. But I only ask for bread and above all, I ask for thy blessing to rest upon all these things, that I receive these things with thy favor, not to hurt me and my family but to bless us." To pray that kind of a prayer every day, "Give me bread," is going to help God's people immensely, especially should God be pleased to give his people material prosperity, as he has done with many of us.

Not only are we covetous, what also makes this prayer difficult is the fact that God uses means to supply us with daily bread, and we know that God uses our work, God uses our care and our industry as means to supply us our daily bread. God says, "Work. And as you work, I will ordinarily use your work as a means by which I give you your daily bread." And yet that very reality so often proves to be a snare to us because as we work for our bread day by day, two things happen. First, we're inclined to look to ourselves as the ones who are supplying this daily bread and we forget that it's actually God using these means and he is the one supplying my bread, so that we are inclined to trust in our own work and our industry and our intellectual savvy more and more and trust God less and less. And second, we are inclined to feel entitled to our daily bread, as if God somehow owes me my daily bread because of my hard work and industry. I worked hard. So I have this attitude of entitlement. In addition, through the very time and effort we invest in our work, just through the the work that we've done, we're inclined to grow attached to these earthly and material things that we're working for, because we know we have that perspective. And even there we struggle, don't we? It's not that I work to God and trust him to supply my needs, but I'm working for this. This is what I'm working for. I'm working for this vacation. I'm working for this boat. I'm working for this house. Instead of serving God and then letting him give me what is suitable for me in life. It makes us challenge how we think. Am I thinking about things the right way? What am I working for? Is it covetousness that lies at the bottom of it? Or is it love for God?

Not only are we covetous, what also makes this prayer difficult is that he uses work to supply their daily bread, but that's also why it's so important to pray this fourth petition because we need to remember, God is the one who supplies my daily bread, not me. Truly, I don't even deserve daily bread. I don't deserve daily bread, and in addition, without God's blessing, all my care, all my industry will profit me nothing. And so every day we remember God is to be thanked, God is to be praised as the fountain of all good. I acknowledge that all this comes from him, and he is the one who's caring for me. What a Father! Every day his care is unchanging.

So praying for our daily bread not only has a positive effect on how we view the things God has given us, it also helps us to view our work and what we're doing in the work day. And third, what makes this a difficult prayer is the fact that this prayer teaches us to be mindful of one another and think of one another when it comes to our earthly material things. Notice how Jesus puts the fourth petition, give us. not give me my daily bread, give us our daily bread. We don't pray to God as individuals just to ask things for

ourselves, although we do that, but we also pray for the body, we pray for the church as a whole. This, too, is emphasized in scripture in the passage we read, 1 Timothy 6, verses 17 and 18, "Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate." And I say that that makes this prayer difficult because it tells us that we must not be interested just in our own needs, but the needs of others, praying for them and their earthly circumstances just as much as for ourselves, and then having that disposition of being ready to give to the poor. Give, help others. And that's hard to do. But again, that's why making this prayer is so important. By praying this petition, praying as we are taught to pray, we are reminded, I'm not just thinking about myself. We're not just concerned about our own earthly well-being. I have the concerns of God's church and all his people in view at the beginning of the day, when I go to God in prayer and I set out to be faithful in the calling that he gives me today.

Well, not only is this an astonishing prayer, not only is this a difficult prayer, but important for that very reason, it's also a comforting prayer and it's a comforting prayer in this way, God teaches us that he cares for our bodies in this petition. God cares to provide you with bread. We are such small creatures of the dust. You take a plane ride and you look from 30,000 feet, you look down and you're reminded just how small we really are, and you think of who God is as the one who created time and space. He's the eternal God who stands above all the universe and still he has his eye on us and he's caring for our daily slice of bread that we need. He will provide for our bodies. He loves our earthly lives. He loves how we use his material creation for his glory, so that we're the salt of the earth, using, pressing the things of this earth into the service of his glory. He loves the work that we do and he also loves to care for our bodies and there is nothing too small in our lives that we cannot bring it to God in prayer.

He cares even for our daily bread and that makes sense because God has purchased us, not just our souls, but also our bodies through the death of his Son, Jesus Christ. God made the body. God himself, through his Son Jesus Christ, came into human flesh, Jesus Christ took upon himself a body just like ours, and Jesus in his earthly body cared for his body. He ate when he needed to. He slept when he was tired. He cared about the physical well-being of others as well. He shows that in the miracles he performs. He shows that in his death on the cross, suffering not only in his soul, but also in his body to redeem our bodies, and as the promise of scripture is, someday Jesus will also raise up our bodies and make them just like his own glorious body. He cares for our bodies and now God gives us this fourth petition, he commands us to pray for our daily needs because he cares for our bodies. And not only will he give us our daily needs, he will give them with his blessing upon them exactly because we are members of Jesus Christ and we are making this prayer and we are making this prayer through the name of Jesus Christ alone. Even this food and drink, "Lord bless this food and drink for Jesus' sake." It's on the basis of Jesus' shed blood on the cross that his blessing accompanies the daily bread he gives us. In Christ alone, we enjoy the blessings of God.

Well, what a Father we have, beloved. When we rest in this day, think of that too, when you go home from church this morning. He's the God who cares for all our earthly physical needs. Sometimes it's a struggle for us. We have that old man that we battle against, that's covetousness. We have an attachment to earthly things. We are so earthy. But God cares for us even so much that he's teaching us how to pray and how to think about our earthly needs. He calls us to bring our earthly needs to him, and he will provide us with everything we need. Amen.

Let us pray.

Our Father, we thank thee for teaching us how to pray. Teach us more and more, Lord. We love the Lord's Prayer, and it's so rich and deep. Help us to pray it sincerely, from the heart, as the petitions that truly shape and form our deepest desires. Lord, we pray, give us this day our daily bread that we might do thy will as faithfully and cheerfully as the angels in heaven, and renounce our own wills with the daily bread that thou dost give us we might be ruled more and more by thy word and spirit, and thy church might be preserved and increased even through the giving of daily bread, and that above all, thy name might be hallowed, that we might know thee better as the God who cares and provides, and as the God who is worthy of every crumb of bread being pressed into the service of thy glory. For Jesus' sake, hear us and bless us. Amen.