

THURSDAY 12 May 2022 "Daily Bread?" (Matt. 6:11)

Hello my 'Walking with Jesus' friends, scattered all around the world.

Many of you know I had the great privilege of growing up in the 1950's and early 60's in one of the poorest places in the western hemisphere. 20 years later, my wife and I felt led by God to return to that impoverished nation as adult missionaries. Twenty years is a whole generation, and you would have thought that by the 80's and 90's things would be much better, *but alas, in that particular place it was in fact much worse.* This little phrase from what we call 'the Lord's Prayer' was a daily reality for many, many people where we lived: **"Give us this day our daily bread."** (Matt. 6:11)

My father was born in 1927, his parents born in 1899 and 1900. My father's mind is still very sharp and clear at age 95, and I welcome times when he sits with me to remember his past, and tell me the stories of what life was like when and where he grew up in a small town in the upper Midwest of America, in the 1930's. If you know much of American history, then these words will immediately bring graphic pictures to your mind: **"The Great Depression"**. For my father, and millions of people who lived through those days of nationwide poverty, **"Give us this day our daily bread"** was their daily, sometimes desperate cry to God!

These days I'm very much enjoying walking through a long message Matthew the disciple records for us which Jesus spoke one day on a hillside overlooking Lake Galilee, near the town of Capernaum. If you visit Israel these days, you can sit on the hillside they believe is the place this great message was delivered. *We've come to that section of this message in which Jesus was teaching people about the powerful privilege of speaking to God!* Yes, friends, Jesus Himself opened the throne room to us human beings, so we can be welcomed there any time of day or night, from anywhere on this planet, in any language known to mankind... *all because of what Jesus accomplished on that Easter weekend by His death and resurrection.* Hebrews 10 assures us we are welcome there, **because Jesus paid our right of entry!**

But it's an intimidating thought isn't it...going into the very throne room of God? What do we say? How do we act? What do we bring as a gift for the Sovereign of the Universe? How could whatever is going on in one little human life be worthy of taking up a few minutes of time with the God who is holding the entire universe together and sustaining the lives of nearly 8 billion humans, plus keeping track of all that is happening here on planet earth? So today we've come to that central phrase of the prayer: **"Give us this day our daily bread."** May I ask... what does that little line mean to you or the people of your city, or your country? What does it mean in North Korea today; or the cities of the Ukraine being decimated in this mindless war; or the people living in some parts of Africa where it hasn't rained in several years and they are barely surviving famine; or the tents and cardboard shacks of millions of homeless people in major cities around the world; or the children orphaned by war or gang violence or drug deaths or simply abandoned?

Ultimately, where will the food you eat today come from? I don't mean the market where you buy your food, nor do I mean the farm where it is grown or raised, nor the ocean or river where it is caught. *What is the ultimate source of everything you and I will eat and drink today, and tomorrow, and for the rest of our lives?* In a world of fast-food and carry out restaurants blanketing cities around the world; in a world of order almost anything online and have it delivered to your door; in a world of microwave hot food ready in moments... *have billions of people forgotten where every bite we eat ultimately comes from?* And if Ukraine was one of the major crop producers in Europe, and the desert continues to rapidly spread south in Africa, and the droughts continue to spread around the world. . . *where will sufficient food come from for 8 billion people?*

For the people to whom Jesus was speaking that day on the hillside in Galilee, and everyone else in the first century, daily meals were quite a project! Nothing was easy or fast. It wasn't so much a matter of money, it was the entire process of preparing a meal, cooked outside over a wood fire. Nothing came in a package 'ready to cook'. No refrigerators, no freezers, no markets with foods having long shelf lives. Meals were a DAILY project requiring most of the day in preparation. Not because they were fancy, multicourse meals... oh no, rather it was all the work needed to fetch the water, go out and harvest or kill or buy the ingredients, and then the long cooking or baking process! People then, and in under-developed places today, really understand **"Give us this day our daily bread."** because it doesn't take very much to disrupt the supply chain, the harvest cycle, the availability of food.

But Jesus almost always meant more than what the words implied, and here Jesus wasn't talking just about bread or meals. Jesus was calling the people then, and thanks to Matthew's record of what Jesus said, these words have called every person who has ever heard them, down through the centuries, **to consider that EVERYTHING comes ultimately from God, everything!** I invite you to do something right now... get up from where you are and look out the windows. *Everything you see... absolutely everything... either God has made, is right now growing, or it was fabricated by man from something God made! Isn't that true of everything you see?*

The Apostle Paul wrote it this way: **"The Son of God [JESUS] is the image of the invisible God, the first-born over-all creation. For in Him all things were created; things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible...all things have been created by Him and for Him. He is before all things and in Him all things hold together."** (Colossians 1:15-17) *Do you see the clear statement that God is the Creator AND Sustainer of all that He has created! Nothing exists apart from what God has created! Nothing!!*

While mankind can develop and fabricate, we cannot 'create something from nothing', only God can do that! While we can put seed in the ground, we can water & fertilize etc. only God can turn a seed into a plant & a harvest! While we can create fish reproducing ponds or hatcheries for chickens or farms and ranches for animals... only God conceives and nurtures unborn animals INCLUDING humans!

God creates life, and God sustains life! *We are consumers and without God's production of that which we need to sustain life, we'd be dead, all of us!* As you watch cities grow rapidly, do you ever wonder how much water it takes to keep those millions of people alive, and where all that water originally comes from? And what if God simply stopped the rain, plugged up the springs spewing fresh water... how long before your town would run out of water?

So, my good friends who journey with me daily on this "Walking with Jesus" pilgrimage... what do those words really mean to you, in May of 2022: **"Give us this day our DAILY bread."** *How do you thank God daily for all He provides to sustain your life?* How have you taught your kids and grandkids to understand that it ALL comes ultimately from God, ALL of it, EVERY bit of it... whatever IT is that sustains your life!

You know I love to ask us questions, so here's my closing question for today: **WHY?** *Why should God keep providing ALL that is needed to sustain the lives of 8 billion people every day, every hour, every moment, when the vast majority of our human race have no interest in God, and many are living their lives today in mockery of God, rejection of God's truth, and opposition to God's involvement in our world!*

Seems to me that phrase **"Give us this day our daily bread."** needs to be preceded and followed by boundless praise to God and thanksgiving for ALL He has done, is doing right now, and we believe will do to sustain our universe, our planet and our lives. The shortest Psalm in the Bible expresses so well what I am feeling right now: **"Praise the LORD, all you nations; extol Him, all you peoples of the world. For great is God's love toward us, and the faithfulness of the LORD endures forever. Praise the LORD!!"** (Psalm 117)

Oh my friends, is your heart overflowing with thanks to God right now, like mine is? Thank Him friends, *Praise God my friends... don't ask Him for one more thing until you first praise and thank Him for all He is, all He has done, for His love for our broken world, and most of all thank Jesus for Easter!!* And here's a song to help you worship in your thanksgiving and praise, right now...

Today's Scripture is Matthew 6:11.