



Lord's Prayer- Part 2

An old Jewish man went to a diner every day for lunch. He always ordered the soup of the day. One day the manager asked him how he liked his meal. The old man replied with a strong Jewish accent which I won't try to imitate, "very good but could you give me some more bread."

So the next day the manager told the waitress to give him four slices of bread. "How was your meal, sir?" the manager asked. " very good but could you give me some more bread."

So the next day the manager told the waitress to give him eight slices of bread. "How was your meal today, sir?" the manager asked. "Very good but could you give me some more bread," came the reply.

So the next day the manager told the waitress to give him a whole loaf of bread with his soup. "How was your meal, sir?" the manager asked, when he came to hand him the bill. "Very good but could you give me some more bread", came the reply once again.

The manager was obsessed with seeing this customer say that he is satisfied with his meal, so he went to the bakery, and ordered a six-foot-long loaf of bread. When the man came in as usual the next day, the waitress and the manager cut the loaf in half, buttered the entire length of each half, and laid it out along the counter, right next to his bowl of soup. The old man sat down, and devoured his bowl of soup, and both halves of the six-foot-long loaf of bread.

The manager now thinks he will get the answer he is looking for, and when the old man came up to pay for his meal, the manager asked in the usual way, "How was your meal TODAY, sir?"

The old Jew replied, "It was very good but why are you back to only giving me two slices of bread!"



Today we are looking at the next part of the Lord's Prayer that says:

7. Give us this day our daily bread.

There are two aspects to this request:

- The first thing this part of the prayer teaches us to pray is for our physical needs.

This may sound like a selfish thing. Indeed some Christians seem to teach against us coming to God with a shopping list of needs. It's true that if all we ever do with God is ask him for things then this is not a very healthy attitude. Imagine our children always and only ever asking us for things. May be some children today are becoming a bit like this. In a healthy relationship we hopefully share our love for one another. So parents tell their children how much they love them. And hopefully the children occasionally say in return, 'I love you mummy' or 'I love you daddy'. Again as our children grow up we talk to them and they to us about all sorts of things, not just what they want from us. We should be the same way with our heavenly Father.

We need to remember that he loves us and cares for us deeply. Jesus said:

Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from the will of your Father. And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. So don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows.

Matthew 10:29 – 31 [NIV]

We can see from these how much our heavenly 'Abba'/daddy God loves and cares about us.

Paul writing to the Christians in Philippi says:

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.

Philippians 4:6 [NIV]

So not only should we not be anxious about anything but the implication is that we bring everything to God in prayer. This is in line with the line give us our daily bread.

- The second thing that this teaches us is to pray for our spiritual needs.

Jesus when combating satan in the wilderness quoted words from Deuteronomy that say:

*'Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'*¹

Matthew 4:4 (NIV)

Footnotes:

¹ Deuteronomy 8:3



In John chapter 6 just after Jesus has fed the 5,000 he says this about himself:

Jesus said to them, "I tell you the truth, it is not Moses who has given you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world." "Sir," they said, "from now on give us this bread." Then Jesus declared, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty.

John 6: 32 – 35 (NIV)

So whilst God is concerned for our everyday practical needs they in themselves will not satisfy us completely. No the bread we need is the bread that comes from heaven. And Jesus is the bread of life. He can fill our inner needs. So when we pray this prayer we are also praying that we will grow as Christians as we feed upon the Spiritual bread that God provides in his son Jesus. One of the lovely services we can attend is a communion service where we symbolically feed upon bread itself, but in our hearts through faith we feed upon Jesus who is the bread of life. Another way of ensuring that we are feeding upon the spiritual 'bread' we need is to read the Bible regularly.

8. And forgive us our trespasses,

Some of the older translations used debts instead of trespasses. Most of the modern translations use forgive us our sins. There is an urban legend that goes like this:

The Scots were merchants, and the English were landowners. To sin against a Scot meant that you hadn't paid your debts, so Presbyterians and others within the Reformed tradition prefer "debts" in the Lord's Prayer. On the other hand, the English, being landowners, believed that the chief sin was trespassing on their property-thus their preference for "trespasses" in the Lord's Prayer. It sounds good on the surface but probably isn't worth the paper on which it's printed. After all, it's an urban legend.²

The reason for the difference actually came from the various translations. Cranmer translated the Greek word as 'trespasses', where as KJV of the Bible more accurately translates it as 'debts'. The modern translation using the word sin is all embracing and covers both trespasses and sins.

We are praying that God will forgive us for our sins. This cuts right to the heart of the Christian faith. Because Jesus died on the cross and rose again we have the assurance of the forgiveness of our sins.

² The Lord's Prayer for Today – William J Carl III



The wonderful truth is that because God so loved the world, particularly the people in it, he sent Jesus down to earth to die for the sin of the world. Through his death we are forgiven by God and reconciled to him. That is we are now enjoy his love and friendship. In fact we are his children. Sons & daughters of God.

It is all too easy to loose sight of the cross and the death of Jesus. I personally believe we must keep Jesus, both his life and his death on the cross, very much at the centre of the Christian faith. It is through his death that we are forgiven by God and totally accepted by him. It is a great shame that so many Christians don't seem to have the certainty of God's love and acceptance for them. They go around uncertain of his love. Often they try to earn his love by doing things. But we need to remember it is by grace, that is the free gift of God, that we are accepted, or to use a Biblical term, saved. Remember Paul writes to the Ephesians Christians:

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast. Ephesians 2:8-9 (NIV)

Of course this is the Christian family prayer and when we pray this pray, we are not only praying it for ourselves but praying it as the whole family of God for the whole of the world. We are praying to God that he will forgive the sin of the world. So much of the trouble and conflict we see in the world, is caused by people's sin. So we pray that God will forgive this for Jesus sake and start to bring true peace and reconciliation to the world.

9. As we forgive those that trespass against us.

As Jesus taught his disciples this prayer he linked God's forgiveness of us with our forgiveness of others. After all if God has forgiven us, through the death of his only son Jesus, how much more should we forgive other. Forgiveness flows from the cross. We should be people who allow this forgiveness to flow in our lives.

Remember Jesus told a very powerful parable to this effect. Peter had just asked how many times we should forgive others. Jesus replied 70 times 7. Which in Jewish thought is almost and infinite number of times. Then just to ensure that we see the connection between God forgiving us and us forgiving others he says the following:

"The kingdom of God is like a king who decided to square accounts with his servants. As he got under way, one servant was brought before him who had run up a debt of a hundred thousand dollars. He couldn't pay up, so the king ordered the man, along with his wife, children, and goods, to be auctioned off at the slave market. The poor wretch threw himself at the king's feet and begged, 'Give me a chance and I'll pay it all back.' Touched by his plea, the king let him off, erasing the debt.



The servant was no sooner out of the room when he came upon one of his fellow servants who owed him ten dollars. He seized him by the throat and demanded, 'Pay up. Now!' The poor wretch threw himself down and begged, 'Give me a chance and I'll pay it all back.' But he wouldn't do it. He had him arrested and put in jail until the debt was paid. When the other servants saw this going on, they were outraged and brought a detailed report to the king.

The king summoned the man and said, 'You evil servant! I forgave your entire debt when you begged me for mercy. Shouldn't you be compelled to be merciful to your fellow servant who asked for mercy?' The king was furious and put the screws to the man until he paid back his entire debt. And that's exactly what my Father in heaven is going to do to each one of you who doesn't forgive unconditionally anyone who asks for mercy."³

Often the problem in many people's lives even that of Christians is unforgiveness. If we don't forgive other people, it can lead to real bitterness in our lives. When we forgive people we are allowing God's freedom and life to flow in our lives. But if we fail to forgive others, in the light of God's forgiveness of us, then we are tying ourselves up, within ourselves.

Sue & I are beginning to learn how to offer prayer ministry to people. Prayer Ministry is not counselling. Rather it is listening to people, but at the same time trying to hear what God is saying for them. And then praying for people in the light of what they have shared, but also anything that God has revealed through his Spirit.

One of the areas that so often needs to be dealt with his unforgiveness. There are so many people that we often need to forgive.

Like most parents my parents were not perfect and made mistakes in my childhood and the way they treated me. I suppose because they had not received or learnt from their parents the warm and unconditional love of parenting, they didn't show this to me. So I grew up not knowing that I was fully accepted and loved just because I was their son. When I became a Christian, I found it difficult to accept that God as my heavenly Father, accepted me fully and with out any conditions in Christ.

So one of the things that I had to do, during a prayer ministry session with a couple of other Christians was to forgive my parents. There were also a few other people I had to forgive as well. This was a really healing experience and was one of the major factors in receiving wholeness or healing into my life, in Jesus.

No wonder Jesus stressed the importance of receiving forgiveness and passing on forgiveness to others at the heart of this family prayer we call the Lord's Prayer.⁴

³ Matthew 18:23-35 The Message

⁴ 2205 words – 17.5 to 19 minutes