

## **“Our Daily Bread and So Much More”**

Matthew 6:11, February 16, 2020; 10:00 am

Congregational UCC, Buena Vista, CO

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### **PRAYER**

*God of wisdom and insight,*

*May the words that I speak, and the ways they are received by each of our hearts and minds, help us continue to grow into the people, and the church, that you have dreamed us to be. Amen.*

### **THE LORD’S PRAYER (MATTHEW 6:9-13)**

Matthew 6:9-13 Names of God Bible (NOG)

<sup>9</sup>“This is how you should pray:

Our Father in heaven,

let your name be kept holy.

<sup>10</sup> Let your kingdom come.

Let your will be done on earth

as it is done in heaven.

<sup>11</sup> Give us our daily bread today.

<sup>12</sup> Forgive us as we forgive others.

<sup>13</sup> Don’t allow us to be tempted.

Instead, rescue us from the evil one.<sup>[a]</sup>

### **I. WHAT DOES IT MEAN?**

“Give us this day, our daily bread.”

Dialogue—What comes to mind when you pray this?

What does it mean, coming out of Jesus’ mouth?

What if I said: Everything we need to feed the world is already here? Everything we need to fund the ministry and mission of this church and all churches is already here?

### **II. GREEK TO ME!**

“The bread of us the daily (*epiousian*) give to us today.” (Mt 6:11)

Doesn’t appear anywhere else! Not in the Bible or in other literature of that day.

(EH—pee—OOH—see—ohs)

“The coming day, sufficient for the day.”

“Enough for today, but also with assurance of the same for tomorrow. It is a request that “our daily bread” be never again exceptional or conditional as in the past, but always normal and unconditional in the present and the future....*enough bread for today, and tomorrow, and every day to come.*”

(Crossan, GP p. 138)

Sustenance! But not just survival level rations. God’s provision for us—physical, emotional, spiritual, is for our sustaining, thriving, nourishing today, tomorrow and forever!

“Give us each day our bread for tomorrow (Levine)

Hymn of Promise--in the bulb there is a flower

In the seed an apple tree.....

### **III. MORE THAN ENOUGH**

One way many scholars have understood this word, since they *epiousios*, since they didn't have much to go on with it only being used so sparsely, is to parcel it into its base words, literally means "super-essential" or "necessary for life."

So, with that in mind, Jesus is saying, pray this way... Give us today, our super-essential, life-sustaining bread. This takes us a much deeper and broader meaning.

As one pastor put it: "Now, we're not just asking God for a ham-n-cheese sandwich so we can make it till dinner-time, but we're asking our Loving Father for literally everything we need in this life; food, clothing, shelter, oxygen, loving relationships, good health, adequate provision, etc., so that we cannot only survive down here but thrive. Jesus of Nazareth isn't just interested in saving souls, but caring for the complete person—body, mind, soul, and spirit.

It's never enough for the Master to teach a great sermon that addresses the poverty of our souls, then walk away, ignoring our poverty in earthly provisions. For Jesus, all of these earthly poverties must be addressed if He is to completely fulfill the perfect will of the Father."

Did you catch that? It's okay to pray for ALL our needs. All of them—not just food every day, but all the poverties that we experience. Spiritual hungers. Relationship voids.

It's okay for us to ask for our needs to be met. Today, tomorrow, and the next day. It's not okay to ask God to take care of us and keep us comfy but NOT do the same for our neighbor. And that means *all* of our neighbors—not just the ones who look and believe like us!

### **IV. LOAVES & FISHES TO UNDERSTAND**

To understand this part of the Lord's Prayer, we have to get "behind the story," and take ourselves to a hillside above the sea in Galilee. Jesus was teaching on that hillside for many hours, and it grew late. The people were hungry and would face a long walk in the dark before they were able to get home. (They didn't have a "Love Our Favorite Food Potluck" planned for after church!)

Jesus was concerned that they would "faint along the way," so he turned to his Disciples Fellowship Committee to come up with a plan. What were they to do?

Disciples' Solution: "Send them away!"

Jesus' Solution: "*You* give them something to eat!"

Jesus's solution won. The Multiplying Divine Spirit stepped in and worked with the disciples to provide

more than enough for all the hungry people—with 12 baskets left over!

How do *we* do the work of multiplying loaves and fishes so that God's children do not “faint along the road?”

## **V. ENOUGH FOR ALL**

Parable of Loaves & Fishes tells us: “There is more than enough food already present upon our earth when it passes through the hands of divine justice; when it is taken, blessed, broken, and given out; when food is seen as God's consecrated gift. The now present kingdom of God is about the equitable distribution of our earth for all. Jesus simply enacts that parable of God as Householder of the World.” (Crossan, p. 130) “It is always about God's food in God's world for God's people.” This phrase in the Lord's Prayer is a *challenge* to God's people—us! Do all have enough? The Lord's Prayer proclaims, “No! And change is necessary.”

To pray this prayer with real intent and conviction is to sign-on to being on the team with God and working for “Enoughism!” A term even better than egalitarianism.

Again, it's A-okay to pray for ALL our needs.

But, NOT just for us. No NIMBY here! Only looking out for me and mine. We have to care for others too. Otherwise our prayer is bunk and we're deep into the “false prophecy” of prosperity gospel thinking.

When we pray this prayer, we make a commitment to jump-in with Jesus and give ALL bread.

Jesus is talking about *distribution*. About there being enough *already here* for all. We don't have a world hunger problem due to lack of food. We have a hunger problem—both physical and spiritual—due to lack of *distributive justice*.

“A just and equal sharing” of creation's resources, as one hymn puts it. Or, as an old commercial for Cracker Jacks used to say: “What's the secret to life (and caramel corn?) “*SHAY—RING!*”

“Having “my” daily bread is not enough, but it is important that we ask for and seek “our” daily bread. There was no space for “I” in the Lord's community, but only for “we” that brings shared experience. Maybe in the Lord's community, there cannot be one person who is stuffed and the other starving.” (Craig Koester, Narrative Common Lectionary)

## **VI. ABUNDANCE or SCARCITY**

The choice is yours! The choice is ours!

We can pray for abundance! As long as it's not just ours but for everyone. “Give us this day and tomorrow and the next day, *our* daily bread.”

Our Church Family Windows are great example of the abundance that surrounds us. And the choices before us. We can choose the kind of window pane we want to look out. To choose to look at life and faith and our future together through clear and bright, hopeful and honest lenses.

Remember the old windows? They were dirty, cloudy, filled with cobwebs, incredibly hard to clean (Ron Erickson had to take a nap after he cleaned them all one day.) I don't know if Janet took a nap, but she sure got inspired to change the world after that day!

Those old windows blocked our vision and seeing things clearly. They kept us from fully seeing the sun, and beautiful blue sky and the people around us in the community. Oh, and they let in the cold something fierce and hurt our budget, too!

So, we chose to look at ourselves and our situation through the eyes of abundance. I knew, when we started talking about the idea, from my conversations with folks in the community, that there were many people out there who deeply love this church and want to support it well into the future. It took 3 weeks!

Windows story—we started exploring and talking to people beyond the church's inner circle—folks we knew deeply loved the church and had loved ones to honor. Thinking beyond, bigger, of abundance—beyond our “daily bread” our usual contributors and supporters.

Some folks kept asking *me* when they could donate to a window! They were eager to get going with this!

#### MAGIC PENNY

Love is something if you give it away,  
Give it away, give it away.  
Love is something if you give it away,  
You end up having more.

It's just like a magic penny,  
Hold it tight and you won't have any.  
Lend it, spend it, and you'll have so many  
They'll roll all over the floor.

We have a choice in every day as individuals and as a community. A church makes the choice, year in and year out, to turn more inward or reach and extend our vision more outward. We can reduce hours, close the doors more often. Cling, grasp tightly to what we have, like a penny clenched in a fist, or open our hands wider and wider.

Looking out and not just at the beauty of creation and more efficiency to save money on the heating bill, and easier for cleaning. But looking out, beyond ourselves, to God's World. God's community and Light of Christ in the world, sun, energy flowing out from us to where it is needed.

With the saints looking on—look at your insert!

Guarding and guiding us out into the bright, brave new world that awaits us in God's future for us.

We can choose to thrive! Not just survive!! Ask enough for tomorrow! And the next day! Not just physical food, but all our hungers and needs—spiritual, relational, emotional, mental—everything!

Don't be afraid to ask!

## **VII. IT'S A WRAP!**

Our Daily Bread and so.much.more!!

**Prayer:** Give us, all of us on this earth, our daily bread. Our Super-essential, life sustaining Bread of Life. For today, tomorrow, the next day and forever. Give us a heart like your, oh God, that's as big as the universe, full as a breadbasket, and endlessly spilling over—with food, shelter, compassion, mercy, provision; extravagant love and abundant relationship in community. Amen.