

SUNDAY, March 23, 2025 Lent 3 "Bread for each day"

Psalm 63 781 VU Matthew 6:9-13

While I was away last week we went to a small town bakery? The smell of fresh bread coming out of the oven wafted down the street. This bakery only makes a certain number of loaves every day and so have you to get there early enough to purchase what you might like. They also make 4 different kinds of cinnamon buns.. Real treats when they are heated and a bit of butter put on top. Now that I have the attention of your taste buds, how much do you like bread and bread products?

As Canadians with various cultural and ethnic backgrounds, it is amazing to walk into any grocery store and look at the variety of bread and bread products. Different companies produce several flavours and various companies have different types. Bread is a staple in most people's pantry when various grains are ground into a variety of flours and along with the flour, yeast, water and salt produce what is deemed important to our diets. It is something that has been consumed since 30,000 BC when evidence of a starch residue was found on ancient grinding stones in Europe. Ancient Egyptians discovered the process of fermentation around 10,000 BC which led to yeast leavened bread. And in 600 BC it was in ancient Greece and Rome that bread became a staple for the people.

But what we take for granted in many lunch meals at work and school and even including today's lunch, was developed in 1765! John Montagu the 4th Earl of Sandwich requested meat to be served between two slices of bread so that he could eat without interrupting his gambling. Thus the invention of the sandwich. But why all this talk about bread? Because Jesus talked about items situations animals anything that was common to the people who wanted to hear what he had to say. So he spoke to those who wanted to listen about sheep and shepherds, vineyards and wine, rocks and sand, and fish and bread. He took the ordinary things of life including bread and made them important in the understanding of who He was as the Son of God and as God's Promised Messiah. He made essential bread to something to ask for, receive and be renewed and nourished. Otto Frederick Rohwedder invented sliced bread in 1928, which changed the way people bought and ate bread. But Jesus brought to the people the importance of bread to eat and bread by which we are spiritually fed for our Lenten journey, and for each and every day.

Our reading from Matthew 6 is Jesus' response to the disciples request to teach them to pray. What Jesus states is now known as the Lord's Prayer. And this prayer which we now sing

as part of our worship experience invited the disciples then and us today to focus on God. But what is the importance of prayer? When one prays the main object is our need for God. That is the need to be in communion with him. Prayer is the beginning of that communion, talking with God, a coming to one with Him and the idea that “ We must ask that we may receive, but also that we should receive what we ask” is also in respect to our needs.

There are two major sections: 1) Father God- His person, program, purpose; “Hallowed be Your Name,” “Your kingdom come,” “Your will be done.” And 2) God’s family—us who have needs for provision, pardon, and protection: “Give us day by day our daily bread,” “Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who is indebted to us,” and “Do not lead us into temptation.”

It is with God’s family who have needs that we focus on what is meant as ‘bread for each day’. When Jesus taught this prayer, He was making the point that we should pray for our daily needs. After all, we cannot really serve His kingdom and do His will if we lack the strength. So we might ask whether it is proper to ask God for a job in order to have money so that we can provide the things we need. God knows our needs, and He is concerned about them. But we must understand that in order to do the work we are called to do, we need to be physically nourished just as Jesus ate with his disciples and with sinners alike. Yet “daily bread” means exactly what it says. The word bread refers to the food that sustains our bodies. In the larger sense, of course, bread refers to all that we must have to live. God concerns Himself with the items on a grocery list as food for our next meal matters to Him.

But why daily? We must think practically! When Moses and the people were wandering the desert for 40 years God provided manna each day sufficient for each day and double for the Sabbath. There was no refrigeration, preservatives were salt only and bread would dry out quickly. So when one prays, “Give us this day our daily bread” it could be a request for sustenance for the day at hand and maybe enough for tomorrow.” The implication is, of course, that God will supply what we need to honor Him and do His will.

God will sustain us, if we pray and walk daily to meet our needs. God calls us to pray for bread—the necessities for life, not the luxuries. Ask for bread, not cake. Ask for the essentials to take us through tomorrow, not the next decade. When we pray these words we are also asking for others in the family as well as ourselves. If we pray this prayer in sincerity, it delivers us from selfishness and hoarding. If we receive two loaves we are not to store it, but share it. This way everyone will eat and be nourished.

As we continue in our Lenten journey focusing on the bread of life- Jesus, He teaches us to pray so that we may be sustained, fed and nurtured each day but are we willing to ask? Are we willing to talk to God about what is needed?

Our Lenten journey sees Jesus as the bread of life-- are we willing to ask for Jesus to sustain us spiritually? God will provide a means of physical nourishment through the generosity of others, but are we willing to know God's love given and shown in Jesus Christ? Or are we keeping separate communion bread which is lifted up for God's blessing and the food which we share? Do they not all originate from the God the Creator?

When Jesus taught- "give us this day our daily bread" there was also the need to grow spiritually. Many of us are aware of the OUR DAILY BREAD devotional ministry. This ministry started in 1938, as a radio program called Detroit Bible Class. Since then, the audience grew from a small group of dedicated radio listeners to millions of people around the world who use their Bible-based resources. Over the years their name has changed to better reflect the variety of resources offered. Most people recognized this group by the well-loved devotional Our Daily Bread which provides a scripture reading, reflection and prayer for daily spiritual sustenance. And it is this spiritual sustenance which we also need each day.

One does not know what will happen each day; all we do know is that we need God's guidance love and strength to help us face whatever may come our way. And knowing that God's love sustains us and strengthens us when we face difficult moments will fill our hearts and minds with hope. This hope is what Jesus was teaching his disciples about when he taught them to pray.

Bread for each day is what is needed in order to live including food and water to sustain us all. But what are we called to do as we walk this Lenten journey? Pray, fast and give. Pray the prayer of Jesus- praise God and pray for others; Fast- as you are able knowing that it is important to eat to be sustained to remain healthy. Give. Receive from God his blessings and share them. Jesus is the bread of life and will sustain and support, lead and guide us each day. We just need to ask. Thanks be to God.

PRAYER God of life and hope, we pray that Jesus' wilderness experience will help us to know Him better. We ask that by our faith in you, we will be sustained, supported, led and guided by Jesus the bread of life each day. Hear our prayers we ask SILENCE Amen. May we each be sustained by the bread of life in Christ. Amen.