

Give Us This Day – Increased Dependency, Increased Expectancy
Christ Community Church

January 12, 2014

Journey in the Lord toward increased awareness of our utter dependence on God – can be uncomfortable

Increased capacity to trust and believe all that the Lord has spoken to us

First Fruits as found in OT (Leviticus 23) to be received on January 26, 2014 (two weeks from now) to be invested in the General Fund of Christ Community Church

Israel was an agrarian society – they survived on what the fields produced

If the harvest was poor, they and their livestock would struggle to survive

They were absolutely dependent upon the Lord to provide rain and sunshine in proper amounts and at the proper times to produce a bountiful harvest

They were both utterly dependent, and totally expectant

The waving of the first fruits was a declaration and demonstration of their faith and their expectancy that God would provide an abundant harvest for them

Jesus was crucified on Passover, and resurrected on the Feast of First Fruits – the Bible refers to Him as the “First Fruits of them that sleep” (**I Cor 15:20**), in other words He is the first to be resurrected and given a glorified resurrected body, which He still inhabits at the right hand of the Father. We celebrate Him as the First Fruits, believing that we, too, will be resurrected on the last day, and that we, too, will receive a glorified resurrection body just like His that we will inhabit for all eternity!

12 Days of Prayer – Praying the Lord’s Prayer day by day (Pastor Beth Kempf)

Matthew 6:9-13 HCSB

Therefore, you should pray like this: Our Father in heaven, Your name be honored as holy. Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. **Give us today our daily bread.** And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And do not bring us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

Give – not “pay”, we are not employees. We have not earned God’s provision, nor His faithfulness.

God’s provision is not payment, but a gift given because of His love and goodness. As a loving Father, He provides for His children. That is His nature. We are secure, because He is faithful to Himself and His nature, which is to keep covenant and show mercy. (“I am the Lord; I change not.” **Malachi 3:6**)

Manna in the wilderness

Could not create it, could only gather it
Could not hoard it. Had to receive it daily.

We are like those who journey through the wilderness

Our lives are not self-generated or self-sustaining
Life relies on what we **receive** from the giver; we can only steward it as a gift

Dependency: Jesus' temptation to change a stone to bread – refuses to make bread for Himself. He chose dependency over self-sufficiency.

(**Matthew 4:1-4** Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. And after He had fasted forty days and forty nights, He then became hungry. And the tempter came and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread." But He answered and said, "It is written, 'MAN SHALL NOT LIVE ON BREAD ALONE, BUT ON EVERY WORD THAT PROCEEDS OUT OF THE MOUTH OF GOD.'")

Us – not “me” – throughout this prayer, it is clear that we are praying as a living community of faith. Jesus is showing us not only how we are to pray, but how we are to live. When I pray, I am praying on behalf of the entire community of faith, including my brothers and sisters around the world, many of whom are suffering severe persecution because of their faithfulness to Jesus Christ. We are members one of another. The covenant that brings me into eternal relationship with Jesus Christ also brings me into eternal relationship with all those who are joined to Him.

Today - daily

The word translated *today* or *daily* is never used in Greek literature or anywhere else in Scripture except with this request in the Lord's Prayer. Translators have had to guess at its meaning. The term appears in only one papyrus from Upper Egypt about 400 A.D. in a list in an account book. Next to some items is what appears as an abbreviation for the Greek word *epiousious* which apparently meant “enough for the day.” That is “the daily ration.”

Matthew 6:25 "For this reason I say to you, do not be worried about your life, as to what you will eat or what you will drink..."

Matthew 6:33-34 "But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. So do not worry about tomorrow; for tomorrow will care for itself."

Friends in Liberia

Getting enough to eat is a genuine concern
Having food on any given day is not taken for granted

Our Daily Bread

“Our” re-emphasizes the reality that our provision is not simply personal and individual, but it is primarily communal. God's provision for us is found within the community of faith, not in isolation from it.

Why does Jesus use bread and not something more unique or exotic?

Bread is viewed in most cultures as a staple – everyone is familiar with it. Both rich and poor consume it. Especially in the Middle East, it would have been a significant part of every meal.

Jesus identifies Himself clearly as The Bread

John 6:22-69 HCSB "The next day, the crowd that had stayed on the other side of the sea knew there had been only one boat. They also knew that Jesus had not boarded the boat with His disciples, but that His disciples had gone off alone. 23 Some boats from Tiberias came near the place where they ate the bread after the Lord gave thanks. 24 When the crowd saw that neither Jesus nor His disciples were there, they got into the boats and went to Capernaum looking for Jesus. 25 When they found Him on the other side of the sea, they said to Him, "Rabbi, when did You get here? " 26 Jesus answered, "I assure you: You are looking for Me, not because you saw the signs, but because you ate the loaves and were filled. 27 **Don't work for the food that perishes but for the food that lasts for eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you**, because God the Father has set His seal of approval on Him." 28 "What can we do to perform the works of God? " they asked. 29 Jesus replied, "This is the work of God — **that you believe in the One He has sent.**" 30 "What sign then are You going to do so we may see and believe You? " they asked. "What are You going to perform? 31 Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, just as it is written: He gave them bread from heaven to eat." 32 Jesus said to them, "I assure you: Moses didn't give you the bread from heaven, but **My Father gives you the real bread from heaven.** 33 **For the bread of God is the One who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.**" 34 Then they said, "Sir, give us this bread always! " 35 **"I am the bread of life,"** Jesus told them. "No one who comes to Me will ever be hungry, and no one who believes in Me will ever be thirsty again. 36 But as I told you, you've seen Me, and yet you do not believe. 37 Everyone the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will never cast out. 38 For I have come down from heaven, not to do My will, but the will of Him who sent Me. 39 This is the will of Him who sent Me: that I should lose none of those He has given Me but should raise them up on the last day. 40 **For this is the will of My Father: that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.**" 41 Therefore the Jews started complaining about Him because He said, "I am the bread that came down from heaven." 42 They were saying, "Isn't this Jesus the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How can He now say, 'I have come down from heaven'?" 43 Jesus answered them, "Stop complaining among yourselves. 44 No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him, and I will raise him up on the last day. 45 It is written in the Prophets: And they will all be taught by God. Everyone who has listened to and learned from the Father comes to Me — 46 not that anyone has seen the Father except the One who is from God. He has seen the Father. 47 "I assure you: Anyone who believes has eternal life. 48 **I am the bread of life.** 49 Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. 50 **This is the bread that comes down from heaven so that anyone may eat of it and not die. 51 I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread he will live forever. The bread that I will give for the life of the world is My flesh.**" 52 At that, the Jews argued among themselves, "How can this man give us His flesh to eat? " 53 So Jesus said to them, "I assure you: **Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you do not have life in yourselves. 54 Anyone who eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day, 55 because My flesh is real food and My blood is real drink. 56 The one who eats My flesh and drinks My blood lives in Me, and I in him. 57 Just as the living Father sent Me and I live because of the Father, so the one who feeds on Me will live because of Me. 58 This is the bread that came down from heaven; it is not like the manna your fathers ate — and they died. The one who eats this bread will live forever.**" 59

He said these things while teaching in the synagogue in Capernaum. 60 Therefore, when many of His disciples heard this, they said, "This teaching is hard! Who can accept it?" 61 Jesus, knowing in Himself that His disciples were complaining about this, asked them, "Does this offend you? 62 Then what if you were to observe the Son of Man ascending to where He was before? 63 The Spirit is the One who gives life. The flesh doesn't help at all. **The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life.** 64 But there are some among you who don't believe." (For Jesus knew from the beginning those who would not believe and the one who would betray Him.) 65 He said, "This is why I told you that no one can come to Me unless it is granted to him by the Father." 66 From that moment many of His disciples turned back and no longer accompanied Him. 67 Therefore Jesus said to the Twelve, "You don't want to go away too, do you? " 68 Simon Peter answered, "Lord, who will we go to? You have the words of eternal life. 69 We have come to believe and know that You are the Holy One of God!"

Communion servers are invited to prepare to serve the congregation.

The following was shared with me by my good friend, Dr. Matthew Hunter:

In the book *Christianity Rediscovered*, Fr. Vincent Donovan, a Spiritan Father who was one of the first men to leave the mission compound and take the gospel **to** the Masai in Tanzania, shares about what he learned from his interaction with the tribal leaders.

In one moving scene, Donovan describes a Masai elder's complaint about the word Donovan and his Masai translator had chosen for "faith."

"To believe" like that', the elder said, 'was similar to a white hunter shooting an animal with his gun from a great distance. Only his eyes and his fingers took part in the act. We should find another word'. He continued: 'for a man really to believe is like a lion going after its prey. His nose and eyes and ears pick up on the prey. His legs give him the speed to catch it. All the power of his body is involved in the terrible death leap and single blow to the neck with the front paw, the blow that actually kills. And as the animal goes down the lion envelops it in his arms (Africans refer to the front legs of an animal as its arms) pulls it to itself, and makes it part of himself. This is the way a lion kills. This is the way a man believes. This is what faith is'.

But the Masai elder went on. *'We did not search you out, Padri ... We did not even want you to come to us. You searched us out. You followed us away from your house into the bush, into the plains, into the steppes where our cattle are, into the hills where we take our cattle for water, into our villages, into our homes. You told us of the High God, how we must search for him, even leave our land and our people to find him. But we have not done this. We have not left our land. We have not searched for him. He has searched for us. He has searched us out and found us. All the time we think we are the lion. In the end, the lion is God'.*

He is right on both counts. Jesus is that kind of Lion-God who seeks US out and finds us. But God knows that we think we are the Lion. We will not willingly surrender ourselves to be consumed by him, to be taken up into who he is. And so our Lion-God-King Jesus seeks us out **to BE CONSUMED by US**. To literally take his human life at the cross and to take his divine life into ourselves, among other ways, in the Eucharist. It is an ancient Christian affirmation that God-in-Jesus Christ **fully** took on our humanity, so that we can **fully** participate in His divine life.

The same dynamic is described by Paul as follows:

Philippians 3:12 "Not that I have already obtained, or am already made perfect: but I press on, if so be that **I may apprehend** that for which also **I was apprehended** by Christ Jesus."

HCSB "...but I make every effort to take hold of it because I also have been taken hold of by Christ Jesus."

The Message "...But I am well on my way, reaching out for Christ, who has so wondrously reached out for me."

NLT "But I press on to possess that perfection for which Christ Jesus first possessed me."

Let's ready our hearts to receive Him.

Communion

Hebrews 12:22-24

Instead, you have come to Mount Zion, to the city of the living God (the heavenly Jerusalem), to myriads of angels in festive gathering, to the assembly of the firstborn whose names have been written in heaven, to God who is the Judge of all, to the spirits of righteous people made perfect, to Jesus (mediator of a new covenant), and to the sprinkled blood, which says better things than the blood of Abel.

John 6:54-58

Anyone who eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day, because My flesh is real food and My blood is real drink. The one who eats My flesh and drinks My blood lives in Me, and I in him. Just as the living Father sent Me and I live because of the Father, so the one who feeds on Me will live because of Me. This is the bread that came down from heaven; it is not like the manna your fathers ate – and they died. The one who eats this bread will live forever.