

Today

Introduction

Why did Jesus teach us to pray: Give us this day our daily bread? Why not just: Give us our daily bread? The word order in the original Greek is: “The bread ours, the daily, give us today. Why, as the original Greek implies, do we pray: “Give us today, our daily bread?” Why not leave out “today”?

First of all, Jesus wants us to ask in faith. We should not pray, just in general, but also specifically for today. We can pray for today’s needs and not expect to wait until tomorrow or next week, or even next year for God’s help. We can count on his help today.

Secondly, Jesus wants us to take one day at a time. I am reminded of a gospel song by Marijohn Wilkin that goes something like this:

One day at a time, dear Jesus, that's all I'm asking from you. Give me the strength to do everyday, what I have to do. Yesterday's gone dear Jesus, and tomorrow may never be mine. Help me today. Show me the way One day at a time.

This fits in beautifully with what Jesus said in his sermon on the mount: **“Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble” (Matthew 6:34).**

Live in the present. Jesus taught us to pray. “Give us our daily bread today,” because he wants us to live in the present.

There are some people that live in the past, and are always talking about the good old times and wishing for days gone by. And yet the bible says: **“Do not say, ‘Why were the former days better than these?’ For you do not inquire wisely concerning this” (Eccl. 7:10).**

There are other people who always live in the future. They are still on vacation and are planning their next one. Or it may be the weekend, and instead of enjoying the weekend, they are already worrying about their next week at work. By always living in the past, or constantly living in the future, we forget about today. We neglect to take time for the kids or for our spouse today, we neglect to take time for the Lord today, we neglect to enjoy the pleasures, beautiful memories, and small joys the Lord sends our way today. In the New Testament (NKJV) the word yesterday occurs only 3 times, the word tomorrow comes up 11 times, but today occurs 29 times. Jesus is the eternal I am. **“Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever” (Hebrews 13:8).**

Pray for today Jesus taught us to pray “Give us our daily bread today”, because he wants to encourage us to pray for today.

We are encouraged to bring today’s needs to the Lord. Have you already asked God to give you strength for this day, for today? God is not only interested in the big things of life, in which you can obtain his guidance. He also wants you to bring the little things of

this day to him in prayer. Some people fret and ask themselves if they would have had the strength the martyrs had in confessing Christ even unto death. Do not worry about that. God gives strength according to the day. When I was in Grade 3, I could not have handled all the homework expected of a Grade 12 student, and if I had worried about the assignments I needed to finish during graduate school, back in Grade 3, that would have been ludicrous. As I mature, I do not even consider that what I find easy today, would have been extremely difficult at an earlier stage in my life. In like manner, God gives the strength for the work ahead, when the time comes.

In Mark 13 Jesus speaks of terrible times ahead for the disciples: **“For in those days there will be tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the creation which God created until this time, nor ever shall be. And unless the Lord had shortened those days, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect’s sake, whom He chose, He shortened the days”** (Mark 13:19-20).

Yet he still tells them not to worry: **“But when they arrest you and deliver you up, do not worry beforehand, or premeditate what you will speak. But whatever is given you in that hour, speak that; for it is not you who speak, but the Holy Spirit”** (Mark 13:11).

Your duty is to live victoriously for the Lord today. What the future holds we do not know, but should times of affliction arise, it is then that the Lord will give us the strength we need in that hour.

People who do not believe in victorious living say it is impossible to live godly in this present age. Yet that is what the Bible tells us to do. We read: **“For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age”** (Titus 2:11–12). And Jesus himself says: **“go and sin no more”** (John 8:11). Can you live without sin for a minute? Sure. Maybe an hour? Could you perhaps live victoriously for one day? Let us focus on today and live the way the Lord wants us to live today, and not worry about the long term. Let God take care of that. Why did the disciples falter? Lets see. In Mark 14 we read:

Peter said to Him, “Even if all are made to stumble, yet I will not be.” Jesus said to him, “Assuredly, I say to you that today, even this night, before the rooster crows twice, you will deny Me three times.” But he spoke more vehemently, “If I have to die with You, I will not deny You!” And they all said likewise (Mark 14:29-31).

Then they came to a place which was named Gethsemane; and He said to His disciples, “Sit here while I pray.” And He took Peter, James, and John with Him, and He began to be troubled and deeply distressed. Then He said to them, “My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death. Stay here and watch.” He went a little farther, and fell on the ground, and prayed that if it were possible, the hour might pass from Him. And He said, “Abba, Father, all things are possible for You. Take this cup away from Me; nevertheless, not what I will, but what You will.” Then He came and found them

sleeping, and said to Peter, “Simon, are you sleeping? Could you not watch one hour? Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak (Mark 14:32-38).

We find Peter and the disciples, were over-confident that they can make it on their own. They did not obtain the strength needed from God. How about us? Do we pray to obtain strength for the day or do we sleep as well?

God’s time is today. Jesus taught us to pray “Our daily bread give us today”, because God’s time is today.

As I have mentioned today is found more than twice as often in the New Testament than the words yesterday and tomorrow combined. God’s time is today.

In Hebrews 3:7-8a we read: **“Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says: ‘Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts.’”**

Respond to the Lord today. When Jesus met Zachaeus in Jericho he said to him: **“Zacchaeus, make haste and come down, for today I must stay at your house” (Luke 19:5)** and **“Today salvation has come to this house” (Luke 19:9).**

You see God’s time is today. Hear the voice of God today. Don’t wait until tomorrow, Christ wants to live in your heart today. Don’t harden your heart. Salvation is here for you today. Simply obey 1 John 1:9 and salvation is yours.

To the penitent thief on the cross, Jesus said: **“Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise (Luke 23:43).** I like the sound of the Greek words here: **“Amen, Amen, lego soi.”** It was not “maybe” you will be with me in Paradise. It was **“Amen, lego soi.”** The thief on the cross knew he was saved and was going to Paradise today. He knew he was saved, even before he got to Paradise. Likewise, even if we still have years to live, we can know today that we are saved. The day of salvation is today. God’s time is today. Are you saved today? To say: “I was saved yesterday”, or “I want to be saved tomorrow” is not good enough. You need to be certain of salvation today. Not yet, and too late are ploys of the devil. God says neither not yet, nor too late, he says **today** is the day of salvation.

If you are not saved, think of the words of Jesus who said in John 3:3 **“Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”** Are you born again? If not, today is the day. The Bible says: **“Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts” (Hebrews 3:7-8).**

Just going to church does not make you a Christian. Just because you are baptized, does not make you a Christian either, because Jesus says: **“Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven (Matthew 7:21)**

Again follow 1 John 1:9 and make sure that today you have the assurance of salvation. It is the will of God for you.

Make use of today

God has given us this moment today. I am reminded of the song by the Gaithers: “*We have this moment to hold in our hand, and to touch as it slips through our fingers like sand; Yesterday's gone and tomorrow may never come, but we have this moment today.*” So let us make use of today. James says:

Come now, you who say, ‘Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, spend a year there, buy and sell, and make a profit’; whereas you do not know what will happen tomorrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away. Instead you ought to say, “If the Lord wills, we shall live and do this or that” (James 4:13-15).

Today there are things which are important, and things which are urgent. Let us not overlook those things which are important by always attending to those things which may seem urgent but are superficial. Lord, give us the wisdom to spend the time you have given us today, wisely.

If God has put something on your heart to do, do not procrastinate. Start today. Remember the saying: Don’t put off until tomorrow that which you can do today. Often, we have good intentions, yet we let opportunities slip by until it is too late. Television and radio ads often tell people to call right now and order. That is because they know if they don’t do it now, they will probably never do it. This also applies to doing good. If you have the chance to do good, use it. Also take time to smell the roses, walk in the snow, spend time with your family. Use the opportunities God gives you today. I know of chances that I missed, and never got around to doing because I procrastinated. God’s time is today. Let that be our time as well. Think of those things that you have been putting off for a long time already. Resolve to start on some of them today.

Summary:

Jesus did not teach us only to pray: “Give us our daily bread,” but “Give us our daily bread today.” He wants us, not merely to ask in general, but to ask in faith for today.

Secondly, he wants us to take one day at a time.

“Do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things” (Matthew 6:34).

Do not live in the past. Do not live in the future. Live in the present.

Don’t forget: Jesus Christ, is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

Pray that God may give you strength for the day, and be assured he will give you sufficient strength for the task at hand.

Today is the day of salvation. Today is God’s time. Make sure you are saved today.

Let us make use of today and not procrastinate on things that are important.

And finally: *“We have this moment to hold in our hand and to touch as it slips through our fingers like sand; Yesterday's gone and tomorrow may never come, but we have this moment today”.*

Let us thank God for today, and ask him to help us use it wisely.

Questions

1. Why does Jesus add the word “today” after “Give us our daily bread” ?
2. What should we ask of God on a daily basis?
3. Why should we not worry about tomorrow?
4. Why does the Bible tell us not to say: “Why were the former times better than these”?
5. What was the reason Peter ended up denying the Lord?
6. When is the day of salvation?
7. Have you experienced the promise of 1 John 1:9?
8. “We have this moment to hold in our hands and to touch as it slips through our fingers like sand.” What do these words mean to you?
9. What is the difference between something urgent and something important?
10. How can you make better use of today?