



## WEEK 4: A DECLARATION OF DEPENDENCE

**TEXT: MATTHEW 6:5-13**

### **Introduction:**

The first part of the Lord's Prayer focuses on the nature and character of God, which we have looked at over the last 3 weeks.

The second part of the prayer focuses on our human needs.

The simple acronym/axiom, "ACTS", can help us in praying biblically: A= Adoration, C = Confession, T = Thanksgiving, S = Supplication.

This week's message zones in on supplication (requests) with an attitude of thanksgiving.

### 1. PRAYERS OF SUPPLICATION ARE MADE TO A GOD WHO IS A SUPPLIER OF GRACIOUS GIFTS

*"Give us this day our daily bread..." Matthew 6:11*

Giving is a one-way transaction, where one gives and the other receives. When we ask God to provide for our needs, we recognise that we cannot provide them for ourselves and that we are utterly dependent on him. Some of us wrongly believe that we are completely capable of providing for ourselves. But every part of our personality and intellect, as well as our unique gifts and talents come from God alone. Where we were born, the families into which we were born, and the opportunities we were afforded through these circumstances are also gifts from God. Not one of us had the ability to choose these things, nor do any of us inherently deserve them. Therefore, we cannot boast about who we are, what we have achieved or anything that we have. We may be responsible for using the gifts we have been given to the best of our abilities, but without these gifts, we would all be nowhere. So, whether we are desperate for our next meal, or we are in need of God's provision for the next huge business deal, both of these needs (as well as all the needs in between) are met by God's provision alone. Asking for these daily gifts reminds us of our powerlessness and of God's incredible graciousness, knowing that he delights to give us good gifts (James 1:17).

- ❖ Q: When you pray in the morning, do you consciously think about that fact that your "to-do-list" can only be done because of God's provision? Why/why not?
- ❖ Q: Why is it so hard for people in wealthy, educated environments to recognize their need for dependence on God?
- ❖ Q: Why is it true that our hard work and responsible efforts are not enough to make us successful and self-reliant?
- ❖ Q: How should this realization impact that way in which we perceive our own successes or others' misfortune in life?

**Walking it out:** Have you ever looked down on someone who is not as well-kept, eloquent, well mannered, educated or successful as your circle and secretly judged them for the way they are? What is so incredibly wrong about this attitude and what would repentance and faith look like in this circumstance?



## E. PRAYERS OF SUPPLICATION ARE PERSONAL AND PLURAL AT THE SAME TIME

***“Give us this day our daily bread...” Matthew 6:11***

Supplication in prayer is not just about asking God to meet our individual needs. It is also about our collective needs. When we pray for provision, we are in fact praying for the systems that are in place that allow provision to come about, such as the economy of our country, justice, mercy and good governance. We are praying against “...wanton exploitation in business, trade and labour, which crushes the poor and deprives them of their daily bread” (Luther). Praying for these things assumes that we ourselves are not contributing in any way to the detriment of our people or our nation, and it also assumes that we will be proactive in seeking the good of others, where we have the means to be conduits of God’s provision of daily “bread” to others. It means earnestly praying for God to move in the broken areas of our country, instead of just complaining about it. Prayer lifts our heads out of the discouragement that we are feeling about our country, and puts our trust back in the hands of God to provide, while we participate by being his hands and feet in practical ways.

- ❖ Q: How often do we (individually and corporately, pray for our collective needs? (E.G. Country, government, economy, schools, justice department, police, church, our local community around us, our Gospel Community etc.?)
- ❖ Q: Why is it important to check that we are not adding to the problem in some way, while praying for our own needs to be met?
- ❖ Q: In what ways do you think Christians, in our context, contribute (willfully or even unaware) to exploitation/abuse in the home or in the workplace? Or even in other environments?

**Walking it out:** In what area is God asking you to repent (not just recognize your wrong, but to make it right before God)?

## E. PRAYERS OF SUPPLICATION ARE DECLARATIONS OF DAILY NEED

***“Give us this day our daily bread...” Matthew 6:11***

In order for us to understand how to pray for our daily bread, we need to look at what that meant to the people in their original context. Back then, bread was not like it is today – packaged, cut and ready to eat, with a week’s shelf-life. It was bought and made daily, as there were no preservatives to keep it fresh. Wages were also paid on a daily basis, so without a day’s wage, one could not buy bread for that day. The concept of praying for daily bread was praying for daily necessities, and not wants and desires.

God is not against our wants and desires, but he is against our pursuit of them that causes discontentment. God promises to provide for all our needs, and when we live in dependence on him, and trust him to supply our needs, we find our contentment and peace in that place.

- ❖ Q: What is the difference between praying for our needs and praying for our wants and desires?
- ❖ Q: Why do you think that anxiousness over provision is an indication of our lack of dependency on, or trust in God?
- ❖ Q: How do you think we can grow into the place where we actively depend on God for our every need?

**Walking it out:** What is one need that you are trying to solve/gain in your own strength, rather than trusting in God for it?

### **GROUP Focus:**

- ❖ Q: What is the one big take-away for you from the message this week? Share it with the group.

### **Bibliography**

Luther, M. (n.d.). *The Large Catechism*. Retrieved 05 08, 2015, from The Book of Concord: Confessions of the Lutheran Church: <http://bookofconcord.org/lc-5-ourfather.php>