

2nd Sunday of Lent 2013 - Rev'd Steve Johnson

Throughout Lent this year we are focusing in the Lord's Prayer - Breaking it down into the different petitions.

Our first petition

Our Father in Heaven – points to the relationship we have with God, through Jesus

The second petition

“Your kingdom come, your will be done, as it is no earth as in heaven” – the fact, that God acts through us, we do his will here on earth – it is never our will

This week we concentrate of the petition

“Give us this day, our daily bread”

I am not sure which of the glossy magazines you read – perhaps it is the Sunday daily or whatever – but you cannot simply be impressed by the must have luxurious items that are for sale – at special never to be repeated prices. The expensive perfume, the Burberry clothes, the diamond encrusted Rolex watch. Indeed the one I was reading a few weeks ago in the local supermarket, had many typical items for sale, and yet on the other side of the page was a picture of a family starving, a mother, a father – and three desperate children – facing an difficult future – uncertainty – the contrast is startling, and in the west, with food sources that are plentiful – do we really know what it is really like?

The prayer for daily bread is an invitation not to lose sight of the small pleasures in life. The word bread is a translation from the Hebrew which means all that is necessary for life – food, clothing and shelter. And if you stripped away all that was excess, and went back to basics these three things are what you would need to survive.

Today, we seem to need so much –If you went out today – for example in Grimsby – their food bank has the logo – Give us today our daily bread – for some people it is a reality every day

We need to retain a sense of wonder and appreciation when we are faced with a bird singing, a rose in bloom, or a child's first step. Remain truly appreciative of the little things of life, we cultivate a generous spirit that allows us to be thankful and encouraging towards other people.

But when we pray “Give us this day, our daily bread” we are also thinking about “Tomorrow's bread” – the bread of world that is to come. The bread of God's Kingdom – the bread of the promised land.

In the Bible bread is a recurrent theme

- In Exodus, the Israelites find themselves in a difficult situation, on the road to the promised land, they are starving, there was trouble, and the people were criticizing Moses/Aaron and indirectly God. Food falls or manna from heaven – directly from God – tomorrow’s bread to give them strength and courage on their pilgrimage. Remember Manna cannot be stored
- Jesus in the wilderness – tempted for 40 days. Tempter tries to drive a wedge between Jesus and God. “Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.” – he is not claiming that you cannot get by without bread – he is saying trust in God is what really matters, since God is the source of all that we need both materially and spiritually.
- Then there is the story of the large crowd, and Jesus feeds them with the five loaves of bread - but Jesus explains – “work not for perishable food, but for that which lasts to eternal life, which the son of man will give you”. He is the true manna – the true bread of life – as we say in our communion service – unless you eat the flesh, and drink his blood – you will not have life in you.

In all three texts bread is something to eat – but it also points to God as the source of our life.

Interesting that in these passages, the gift of bread always occurs in an inhabited place, in the desert if you like, when human beings welcome the gifts from God.

When we are comfortable – we are more likely to pass by what is essential - we can be come divorced from what is essential

This is why the Beatitudes have a certain logic to them, “Happy are you who are hungry (for justice) you will be filled” - being hungry is not good, far from it – but through Christ, this place of deprivation, this place where our need is most, becomes the point at which God enters the world.

When we pray “Give us this day, our daily bread” – we are asking God to sustain us during our pilgrimage with Christ, so we may bring God’s living water, God’s light, God’s love into the deserts of this world.

The food that will help us live as God’s witnesses in that world

The Bible – prayer – mutual love between Christians – the Eucharist.

In short, it is Christ Jesus himself, the living bread who nourishes and sustains us by giving us here on earth, a foretaste of heaven