

Fourth Midweek-Lord's Prayer and the Lord's Passion
Fourth Petition; Give us today our daily bread
St. John 19:25-29
Rev. George Ferch

Dear Friends in Christ,

When Jesus taught his disciples how to pray, our Savior did not omit material necessities. From the time our first parents disobeyed God's command, all people have needed food, clothing, shelter and other things. Martin Luther used a figure of speech called a metonymy, part for the whole. **"Daily bread includes everything we need for our bodily welfare."** God had given all these good things to Adam and Eve in Creation. They appreciated those things but did not need them. Now, we need them and truly can appreciate them only when we realize their Source, and receive them with thanksgiving.

You may not have considered the material needs aspects surrounding our blessed Savior's Passion. On close examination we do see them. We see them in connection with Mary, Jesus' mother, as Jesus called on the disciple he loved to take care of Mary in the future. "Dear woman, here is your son," and to the disciple, "Here is your mother." Jesus had a need in order to regain his strength after suffering the eternal pains of hell in the world's place, "I am thirsty."

In addition to showing clearly Jesus' genuine humanity, his words on the cross about material, bodily needs make the connection with the Fourth Petition of the Lord's Prayer. The Lord's Passion accomplished all the blessings for our eternal souls we pray for in the other petitions. His Passion no less grants us Our Father's yes to our request for daily bread today; daily bread we need for our bodily welfare.

There were several Marys at the foot of Jesus' cross. Mary is the Greek equivalent of Miriam, Moses' sister. Miriam was a popular name for girls among God's people. We are concerned about Mary, the mother of God, Jesus' mother. From the cross Jesus called Mary, "Dear woman." This was not disrespectful. Jesus meant their earthly relationship was coming to an end. He was lifted up on the cross as her God and Savior. And yet, in a final act of obedience to the Fourth Commandment, this good son provided for his mother's daily bread in the future. The apostle John would take care of her.

Jesus' perfect obedience to the commandments, and his innocent suffering and death make him our only Lord and Savior. He is God who is the Giver of every good and perfect gift. These come down to us, James wrote, from the "father of the heavenly lights." [1:17] Because of our Lord's Passion we call him **"Our Father in heaven."** Because of the Father's great mercy to us in Christ, he opens his hands and satisfies the desires of every living thing with all we need to sustain our bodies and lives. We petition our Father in Jesus' name trusting him to provide us with **"food and drink... house and home...money and goods...godly and faithful leaders, good government, good weather, peace and order...faithful neighbors"** and everything in between Luther mentions.

It is interesting the daily bread we ask God for, daily bread **"God gives...without our asking even to all the wicked,"** are things Adam and Eve had in perfection in the Garden of Eden. Adam and Eve knew who gave them all those blessings and they were thankful. They enjoyed those things but did not need them. Now, we need them. Now, because of our native misguided belief that we are the ones who provide daily bread for ourselves and our loved ones, and our lack of gratitude to God due to that misunderstanding, Jesus had to teach us to pray for daily bread. Now we know to ask God **"that he would lead us to realize this and to receive our daily bread with thanksgiving."**

Bread is the staff of life. As a part for the whole, bread stands for all necessities according to God's provision. Because bread is the staff of life, we may call it is a "daily" need; something we need over and over again. God tells us to ask for enough of this staff of life we need over and over just for today, one day at a time. We think of the manna from heaven. God gave Israel daily manna enough for one day to sustain them on their journey through the desert on the way to Canaan. We might say Israel lived from paycheck to paycheck-enough for today, and then tomorrow enough for today again, and so forth.

Our Savior needed daily bread on the cross. Jesus had gone more than 15 hours with no water. His body had been under tremendous strain from the torture. Jesus had refused the first drink the Roman soldiers offered him on the cross because it was mixed with a drug to serve as a sedative. Our Savior wanted to be in his full faculties as he endured our punishment for sin. After that, Jesus suffered the three hours, from noon to three, of

eternal suffering in hell even as his body remained on the cross. His God forsook him but then his Father received him back.

Jesus had fulfilled everything his Father had demanded as the full payment for our sins. Jesus had fulfilled every Word the Old Testament Scripture has said about that work and how he would accomplish it. He had completed his work and was ready to offer up his life into death. Nothing would take that life from him including dying of thirst. Jesus cried out, "I thirst."

Jesus wanted something to drink to sustain his body and life in order to be strong at the end. Now, a soldier offered Jesus some cheap wine from his kit. Jesus accepted this gift. A hyssop plant served as a holder for the wine soaked sponge. This indicates that Jesus was only two or three feet off the ground since they could easily reach his mouth. It is quite likely Mary would have been able to hug Jesus' legs.

Jesus used the daily bread of this wine to strengthen his true human body. This strength enabled Jesus to offer up his life into death in service to us. Jesus would speak his last words, "It is finished," and, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit," not with a barely audible last gasp, but with a loud voice.

So we use God's gift of our daily bread to strengthen our bodies and give energy to our lives so that we might go and serve God with our obedience in love for him and in love for others. God does not give us all we need for our bodily welfare so that we are free to live as we want. God gives us all these things to use to his glory.

The difference between us and unbelievers is not that we receive daily bread and they do not. The difference is we recognize its source and receive it with thanksgiving. Receiving with thanksgiving means use it the way the giver intended for us to use it. That is how God's Son used the humanity, and the passion that humanity suffered- just as God the Father gave it to him to use.

Our Father in heaven, gracious grant me the necessities I need every day one day at a time and enable me to receive them with recognition and thanksgiving. Amen. <SDG>