

12 August 2018

Text: John 6:35-51

Grace, mercy, and peace to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

The fourth petition of the Lord's Prayer says the following, "Give us this day, our daily bread." Our daily bread. What does that mean for you and I? The catechism explains, "Daily bread includes everything that has to do with the support and needs of the body, such as food, drink, clothing, shoes, house, home, land, animals, money, goods, a devout husband or wife, devout children, devout workers, devout and faithful rulers, good government, good weather, peace, health, self-control, good reputation, good friends, faithful neighbors, and the like." Wow, that's a lot of stuff that comes with our daily bread. Hearing this definition, it reminds us that when we pray, "Give us this day our daily bread", that we are praying for more than just physical food. Rather, we pray that our Father in heaven, will give us all these things. Things we need to live the Christian life He has called us to live.

But there is another meaning behind the words "daily bread" found here in the Lord's Prayer. The other meaning is a spiritual one. For you see when we pray, "Give us this day our daily bread", we are thanking God that He gives us spiritual food also, that is His Word, that keeps us, preserves us, and sustains us daily, from the cradle to the grave. Both types of "bread" are important to us. But there is an interesting observation to be made.

When Jesus says in the text today that He is "the Bread of Life", then one has to assume that for there to be life, there must be death as well. What does that mean for us? Well, we are born dead. Dead in our sins because that is what the curse of sin does, it sucks the life right out of all that God created. It steals life's beauty. It robs life of her ability to grow. And it takes violently from life any new life that could be created. We see death's curse in the cancer patient. We see the violence of death ripping the unborn from the womb of the mother. And we feel the laughter of death as we mourn and grieve over the loss of a loved one. Death always tries to have the final word and we are too powerless to stop it.

It is because we are too powerless to stop death that we ourselves are dead in sin. And if we are dead, then that means that there is nothing we can do save ourselves. No prayer

we can pray, no steps we can take, no words of confession to make nor absolution to receive. We are dead. Lifeless. Lying there as death does her little dance.

Yet, Jesus says in our text this morning, "Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes has eternal life. I am the bread of life." "Whoever believes in me has eternal life..." Because we are dead, we are unable to believe but just as death is ready to carry us away from the Lord forever, our parents bring us as babies to the font and there, in that water, God's Holy Word of life is spoken. As the water is poured over your head, death begins to die, to vanish, to lose its death grip on you until eventually it's all gone. And in its place, our Lord's Words breathes life into you.

Then as you grow as a child, your parents bring you to church and you hear week in and week out God's Word sung to you, taught to you, preached to you, and that life that God has given you becomes stronger by the work of the Holy Spirit in you. Your faith grows. You grow.

Sometimes in that growth, you grow weary, tired, frustrated, weak, hungry, in need of something. That hunger begins to make you resent those who have hurt and wronged you. In frustration you cry out to God, "Are you there Lord? Do you even care?". What do you do? Where do you go?

You come to Jesus again and again. You come and receive His Words of life for you. You come to His house and you lean on other hungry sinners and saints who have been there, who understand, who will go through it with you. And together, you look to the body of a Savior who came to save you through His death on the cross. There in His Word, "I am the bread of life. Believe in me and you will have eternal life," you are fed again and again.

Jesus is our daily bread. He is the bread of life, for you. He touches your lips to give you the Words of life to speak to your family and friends. He touches your eyes to see His wonders and miracles in your own life and the lives of others. He touches your ears, bringing His voice to ears that need to hear His pure doctrine of Law and Gospel. And He places His bread on your tongue, feeding you His Sacrament of life so that you may not grow weary, that you may not tire, that you may be refreshed and restored.

Let us pray: Gracious Father, You open Your hand and satisfy the desire of every living creature. Teach us to acknowledge You as the Lord who provides for all of our needs in body and soul and so give thanks to You for all Your bountiful gifts; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Now may the peace of God which surpasses all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.