

## Sunday July 24<sup>th</sup> 2011 – Daily Bread. Matthew 6:11

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### **Give us this day our daily bread. (NSAB)**

Beloved in Christ,

In teaching His disciples to pray, Jesus taught them to rely on God every single day. There used to be a popular philosophy that basically taught that God created the world and then left it to its own devices. The idea was that God wound it up like a watch and then has left it to run down. This philosophy is contradictory to the Word of God. The first part is absolutely correct – God created the world; but the second part of this teaching is false.

Here, in teaching The Lord's prayer, Jesus is teaching His disciples to trust God daily. **"Give us this day our daily bread."**

Then He also taught: ***"So do not worry about tomorrow; for tomorrow will care for itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own."*** (Mt.6:34).

We need to rely on God, on a day by day basis. We should surrender our lives to Him on a day to day basis. As we begin each day and throughout the day we should seek His guidance and wisdom.

In Proverbs 8:32-35 we read:

***<sup>32</sup> "Now therefore, O sons, listen to me, For blessed are they who keep my ways. <sup>33</sup> "Heed instruction and be wise, And do not neglect it. <sup>34</sup> "Blessed is the man who listens to me, Watching daily at my gates, Waiting at my doorposts. <sup>35</sup> "For he who finds me finds life And obtains favour from the LORD.***

The verse to emphasise here is verse 34, where it says **"Watching daily at my gates..."**

The Bible is our spiritual food. I mentioned last Sunday that God created us with a body, soul and spirit. All three parts are important. We are very proficient at looking after our external part, our body. There would most likely not be many amongst us who do not eat regular meals. We most likely eat every day, unless we are fasting. The fact is that our body is very quick to tell us when it is hungry or thirsty or tired.

The sad truth is that many people neglect their soul and spirit. Many expose themselves to that which is not good and wholesome. Speaking to the children of Israel through the prophet Isaiah, God said to them : ***<sup>1</sup> "Ho! Everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; And you who have no money come, buy and eat. Come, buy wine and milk Without money and without cost.***

***<sup>2</sup> "Why do you spend money for what is not bread, And your wages for what does not satisfy?"***

***Listen carefully to Me, and eat what is good, And delight yourself in abundance.***

***<sup>3</sup> "Incline your ear and come to Me. Listen, that you may live; And I will make an everlasting covenant with you, According to the faithful mercies shown to David."***

***(Is.55:1-3)***

God is challenging us to assess and question our behaviour. He is asking why we spend so much time and effort on things that are not good. So many of us watch, read and think about worthless things, and in comparison have very little real wholesome food, namely God's Word.

I read in the paper a week ago that the average person watches about 2.5 hours of TV a day. That made me think and wonder if those 2.5 hours a day were replaced with Bible reading, prayer and worship, what a difference that would make. Even if one hour was traded, there would be a massive improvement.

I do not know about you, but I am really trying to improve my health. I try to eat fruit and vegetables every day, I take a few vitamin supplements, and try to exercise most days. I do this to try to keep reasonably healthy.

The thing about all the things I mentioned is that they have to be done regularly. There is no point in drinking a week's worth of vitamins in one day, to eat all of my weekly requirements of food in one hour once a week, and to exercise just once a week.

The vitamins, as well as the food, have a limited time in our system, and the key to exercise is regularity. I think that we all understand this. But then somehow we do not have this understanding when it comes to our inner man, our spirit. So many people somehow think that one Church service, once a week is sufficient. They try to live off this one morsel for a week or maybe even longer.

That is just simply not healthy. God wants us to be spiritually healthy and strong. He wants us to grow stronger day by day, that our lives may honour Him, and that we may live with joy and peace in our hearts.

So that this may happen, we need to draw from the well of life on a daily basis. We need to spend time everyday with God, in prayer, in Bible reading, in worship and in stillness in His presence.

The more we do this, the stronger we will grow.

In Psalm 119 we read in the first few verses:

***"<sup>1</sup> How blessed are those whose way is blameless,  
Who walk in the law of the LORD.***

***<sup>2</sup> How blessed are those who observe His testimonies,  
Who seek Him with all their heart.***

**<sup>3</sup> They also do no unrighteousness; They walk in His ways.**

**<sup>4</sup> You have ordained Your precepts, That we should keep them diligently.**

**<sup>5</sup> Oh that my ways may be established To keep Your statutes!**

**<sup>6</sup> Then I shall not be ashamed When I look upon all Your commandments.**

The Psalmist reminds us that blessed are those who are wholeheartedly committed to God and His Word.

As I read these verses I recall a conversation I had with my GP a few years ago. We were discussing Blood Pressure. He emphasised the foods that I should avoid eating, the importance of strict adherence to the medication that he prescribed.

Can we say that we have a strict adherence to God's prescription for our soul and spirit? Do we seek Him with all of our heart? Are we diligently reading and adhering to His Word? I think that if we are honest then there is room for improvement for each one of us.

It is important to form a good habit. Habit is a very powerful force in our lives. If we do the same thing for a certain amount of time on at regular intervals it forms a habit. It is a very blessed thing in our lives if we make daily Bible reading a habit. It is good to set aside a certain time each day and to then stick to it.

We should not be influenced by feelings. Sometimes we have to overcome them to get the reward. Theologian Eugene Peterson wrote in a book that was meant primarily for pastors the following words of wisdom, that are applicable not only to pastors but to all of us:

"There will be times when you don't feel like reading the Bible – do it anyway. There will be times when you don't feel like praying – do it anyway." He pointed out that in the days of the old sailing ships, the safest place in a storm was to leash oneself to the mast. Then as the winds and waves lashed the boat you would not get swept overboard. The mast is God's Word. Even when we do not feel like reading and meditating upon God's Word we should do it anyway. There is no better place in the storms of life than to be leashed to God and His Word.

Back to my medication. I take the tablets every day, not because I feel like it, but because the doctor has prescribed them and I trust him.

God is our creator and he has given us a prescription for a healthy life. We should be diligent in adhering to it. What we will find is that as we develop the habit of daily Bible reading, it will so become a part of our lives that if we do not do it, we will feel that we are not functioning properly.

Psalm 42 puts it in a beautiful way:

**<sup>1</sup> As the deer pants for the water brooks, So my soul pants for You, O God.**

**<sup>2</sup> My soul thirsts for God, for the living God; When shall I come and appear before God?"**

When you have truly spent time with the living Lord and His word then you thirst for Him. When you have eaten good wholesome food for a while, then take away just doesn't cut it anymore.

I close with the words of Psalm 34 verses 8 and 9:

***O taste and see that the LORD is good;  
How blessed is the man who takes refuge in Him!***

***O fear the LORD, you His saints;  
For to those who fear Him there is no want.***

***Amen***

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All Bible quotations taken from New American Standard Bible.