

Daily Prayer and Our Daily Provision

by J. Glyn Owen

The sermon emphasizes the importance of praying for material things and living for God's glory, and highlights the need for balance between spiritual and material concerns.

Duration: 36:58

Topics: "Provision"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of recognizing and acknowledging God's goodness in our lives. They encourage the congregation to reflect on the blessings and provisions that God has given them, even amidst the challenges and difficulties they may face. The speaker also highlights the significance of daily prayer and how it should include a request for our daily provisions. They emphasize that our lives should not be divided into separate compartments of secular and sacred, but rather, all aspects of our lives, including our material needs, should be brought before God. The sermon concludes by discussing the place of material things in the life of a child of God and how they should be viewed in relation to our loyalty to God and our spiritual growth.

Transcript

Before we come to our message this morning, may I underline the welcome that has been given to those who are joining us as a family and as a fellowship here in Knox today, particularly with the end and purpose in view of bringing our gratitude and our praises to the Lord for his goodness. I trust that as you look over the past of your life, whatever mysteries there may remain to be solved, and which will only be resolved in eternity, that today as you recount the goodness of the Lord, you have a song in your heart. We all have some dark threads in our lives, and if we haven't them as yet, we shall soon have them.

That is of the order of our earthly pilgrimage. But the fact of clouds must not obliterate the more obvious fact of the sunshine. And today we concentrate upon the privileges of life, the provisions of life, and behind all this, the goodness of the God who so lavishly gives and so graciously cares.

God bless you. It's a joy to see you all this morning, and I trust that the Lord will enable us, as we wait upon him, to learn some lesson from his word that will enable us the better to live a life of thanksgiving and of praise yielding. Now, having been pondering for some time upon the theme that should occupy us this morning, I have felt constrained not to address you directly on the theme of the harvest, though there are plenty of biblical passages that would invite us so to do.

But I have felt constrained this morning to call your attention to a word of scripture found in Matthew chapter six and verse eleven, daily prayer and our daily provisions. Give us this day our daily bread. These words, of course, appear in the patterned prayer, as I like to call it, the pattern which our Lord gave to his disciples, which should, if taken seriously, enable them to pray in a right way before God.

Now, we are not in a going to go into the background of the prayer, but we are simply going to focus, or at least mainly focus, upon the thrust and the significance of this utterance that comes right at the heart of the prayer. You notice, this is the one and only reference to material things that comes in the body of this patterned prayer. The one and only.

It's very significant. In our lives, and I refer to those of us who bear the name of Jesus and who are members of his church all too often, our lives' centre, the beginning and the end and the centre, is the material and the physical. But here in the patterned prayer given by our Lord to his disciples, the centre is God.

God comes at the beginning and God comes at the end, and sandwiched in between our concern for God's glory with which we should begin the day and begin our life, end the day and end our life, comes this one solitary, simple request, and it is this. Give us this day, or day by day, our daily bread. Before we come to the thrust of it, may I just say this one other word, apart from apologizing that if I'm a little husky this morning, you'll forgive me.

Your Canadian winter is beginning to, or autumn, I'm sorry, is beginning to tell me that the winter's on the way. However, we'll do our best. What I wanted to say was this.

I cannot other than be impressed and silenced, as it were, to awesome worship as I see the way in which our Lord so naturally moves from the sublime thoughts of the worship of God to the simple things of every day. You remember how the prayer starts, Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come.

Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. God is everything. And then he comes down so naturally to this.

Give us this day, our daily bread. Now, I mention that, you see, because this is how life ought to be. Life is not divided up into compartments in the absolute sense of secular and sacred.

If we rightly live our lives, then the simple things, the matters that relate to bread and butter are as important in the sight of God as anything else. But, of course, they must take their proper place, as we shall see as we proceed. Now, there are three main things I would like to note, and I'll tell you what they are before we go ahead.

First of all, the place of the material to the privilege of the loyal. Thirdly, the plea of the spiritual. Now, we look, first of all, at the place of the material in the life of a child of God.

The place of the material in the life of a child of God. What is the place of the material? Well, first of all, will you notice that there is a place for material things, for concerns such as that for daily bread. In relation to this, I think we ought to begin by stressing the propriety of praying for material things.

That comes out in my text. Our Lord taught his disciples to pray, give us this day our daily bread. So, we start there.

The propriety of praying to our Heavenly Father for our daily bread. It is right. Now, I stress that because I don't know whether you have this species of Christian here in Canada, but I have met people who appear to think that praying for daily bread is a little bit or a little bit immature.

If you're a Christian, you don't come to these things. You only pray about the great spirituals, as they say. My dear friends, this is all wrong.

It's an indictment of the Creator as much as of the creature, or the Christian. You see, God has made us to depend upon himself. And the heart of all sin is our independence of God, or our attempt to be independent of him.

And it is the purpose of God that every day we should approach him for our needs and receive from his hand, even though it be via our employer. But that we receive from his hands the provisions of life. That we should see beyond and behind secondary causes, the primary.

And failure to acknowledge the propriety of the material has led to all kinds of consequences. I suggest to you that the rise of materialism in our Western world and in other sections of the world, the rise of materialism and the communist philosophy especially, is very largely due to the fact that generations of Christians have minimized the importance of the material. We have lived as if all that matters were the ultimate and the spiritual.

It is not true. Our Lord fed men. He healed men.

And he told his disciples to pray for daily bread. You need daily bread. Pray for it.

Your father is concerned. When the sparrow falls, he notices it. He clothed the grass.

Ah, are you not much more important than the grass that today is and tomorrow is passed into the own? The thing does not make sense, says our Lord. You are more important than the grass and you are more important even than the lily of the field. He meant you to be clothed and to be clothed without getting all excited and anxious about it and spinning.

He meant you to be clothed and he bids you look to him for the necessities of life. Materialism flourishes where we overstress the one aspect of things at the expense of the other. Our Lord's life was that perfect balance and equivalence.

Of course he came to seek our ultimate and eternal salvation. But do not forget that salvation involves the redemption of the body. You forgive me for saying this.

I am not criticizing anyone here as far as I know. But I do not like to hear people talk about the mere salvation of souls. I know what they mean and I have every sympathy with it in one sense.

But you see, our Lord's redemption is a redemption of the whole body and when the trumpet shall sound and the dead shall be raised, we shall receive a new body like unto his and disease and death will be done away with. He is going to redeem the whole man. Now we need to get a new grip of this and we need to live as men who see that God's concern is for the whole of men.

The propriety of praying for material things. But now having said that, to allay any possible criticism and to be true to my text, let us take a good long look at the priority of the spiritual. Look again with me at what precedes this prayer.

See what precedes the plea and the pattern prayer. I can put it to you in three words. The hallowing of God's name.

Hallowed be thy name. The hastening of his kingdom. Thy kingdom come and the honoring of his will.

Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. God's name, God's kingdom, God's will. Now here we are four square in a spiritual realm.

And that comes first. And it is only when you and I have really got there and we place God first that we have a right to pray the prayer of our text this morning. But notice, it's not only what precedes my text, you notice how the Lord's prayer ends.

After this prayer about our daily bread, you remember what comes next? Well, you may look at your Bible if you like. Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. This is a spiritual matter.

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil or from the evil one. This is a spiritual battle. And then it all works up again to God.

For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen. Now do you see the place of the material? It is sandwiched in between the worship of God with which the prayer begins and the work of God with which the prayer continues.

The work of God in our forgiving of one another and receiving forgiveness from him. The work of God in our making war with the devil, the evil one. And the ultimate capstone is again the worship of God.

Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen. Now this is the place of the material.

And in here, you see, if you have any need that you can bring here, then it is legitimate. If you can place it in this context, if it is congruous with these things, if it is consistent with these things, then it is in the will of God. The place of the material in the life of a child of God.

Secondly, the privilege of the loyal. Our Lord is here assuming, and of course assuming rightly in the initial context, that those who had requested him to teach them how to pray were loyal to him. I know, of course, that there was a Judas among them.

And our Lord knew. But he is addressing them generally and he is assuming that they are pledged to be his disciples. He is assuming the loyalty of the petitioner to God in terms of worship and of witness and of work.

He will proceed from prayer for daily bread to assure God of his having forgiven other people. And of that score he is looking to the Lord to be merciful to him. Forgive us as we have already forgiven.

And he is involved in a war. Let me repeat, a war against Satan with a view to further worship of God in conceding him the glory and the power and the dominion forever. Now, the obverse side of the kind of Christian privilege is Christian responsibility.

There are two sides to every kind. The privilege of the Christian is such that we shall take eternity fully to fathom it. But we are aware of many privileges given us by God in Christ in this world.

The privilege of fellowship together, the privilege of prayer, the privilege of having resources that are unending, that apply to all of us in our several needs, wherever we are. And we so differ, do we not? But we are assured that God has resources for each one of us. We are to be worshippers of God's name, and we are to be children of his, and we are to be subject to his kingdom.

These are our privileges. But the other side of privilege is responsibility. And the two sides are always there, always there.

Our Lord is assuming here, and he is assuming a right, that the Christian who desires to pray a right is a Christian who puts God in the first place and who is prepared to live accordingly. Now, let me just say a word about this. If you are not prepared to put God in his proper place, then you can't really pray a right for your material needs.

Now, please don't misunderstand me. I don't mean for one single moment to suggest that God only blesses those who have lived an impeccable, faultless life. If that were so, then none of us would be blessed.

But one thing I want to suggest is this. When you and I are consciously not living for the glory of God, not living according to the will of God, then we haven't got the confidence to ask him to fulfill his promises. Even if we had the right, we haven't got the confidence.

And you see, this is one reason why so many of us have such little faith in praying. We know, of course, that if God were to give us these things, we might misuse them straight away. Because we've misused the things we asked for when we had them before, we've misused them many and many a time.

And this is our common habit. We are sinners. And perhaps we want certain things not for God's glory, but for our own good and our own pleasure.

We are so full of ourselves, we want things that really don't come into the category of need, but of luxuries. But when I know that I am in the will of God, and when in communing with my own heart I know that I only want the glory of God, then I can ask for anything. These are the bold men in prayer.

These are the courageous men in prayer who only seek one thing. And they know it. And when they commune with their own hearts, even though they have temptations from this and that direction, their one concern is the glory of God.

Put those men on their knees. My word, they bring heaven down. You see, knowing that they only seek the glory of God and to do the will of God, they are encouraged to plead his resources.

You see, I find people who have problems about prayer, and I have invariably as a pastor to start here. Are you really living for God's glory? Because this is the fundamental issue. If you are really out for God's glory and you are in his will where he has placed you, then you should have no inhibitions in bringing to him the promises of his word and asking him to fulfill them.

I'll give you one illustration from the gospel. You remember the story of Peter. It's in Matthew chapter 14.

Peter is the central figure here, as in so many places. But the disciples are in a boat crossing the little lake, Lake of Galilee, caught in a storm. And then in the middle of the night they're toiling and they're going against the wind.

And if we imagine a right, the boat is becoming almost full of water, and they're terribly afraid. And then they see this ghost-like figure walking on the waves. It must be a phantom, it must be a ghost.

If it's not a subjective fantasy, it must be a ghost! And you can almost feel their blood turning cold. And then one of them said, Master, if it is you, it was Peter of course, if it is you, this is the kind of thing that he was able to do and no one else. And it must be him if it's not a ghost.

If it is you, he says, be it me, come to thee on the water. And then the Master's voice, obviously recognizable, and Peter would not mistake it, said, come. There's no reason for you to be afraid, come.

And do you see what Peter did? When the Master said, come, Peter, you'd say, stupid fellow, jumped out of the boat and put his two feet on the waves. Ah, but the Master had called him, and because the Master had called him, he could look to the Master to enable him to do the impossible. But you say, that's not the end of the story.

No, indeed it isn't. Because when Peter saw the wind, or rather felt the wind and saw the waves so high, he began to sink. Ah, but wait a moment, even in that moment, he was able to look to his Master, though up to here in water, and say, Master, save me! And save him he did.

You see the point? When you're in the Master's will, when you're doing what he's commanded you to do, when you're in the place of the Master's appointment, you can ask for anything. And fundamentally this morning, to people who have a problem about prayer, may I suggest that we ask first and foremost, are you where God meant you to be? Are you involved in the business that God ordained for you, so that you have perfect peace? Has he commanded you to walk that sea? Then if he has, though your feet be going down under the waves, you can cry to him and he will yet save you. We will be closing later on, don't turn to the hymn book just yet, I won't be long this morning.

But we shall be singing later on this lovely hymns of Nahum Tate and Nicholas Brady, a joint effort. Through all the changing scenes of life in trouble and in joy, the praises of my God shall still my heart and soul employ. Now, I chose that, not only because it generally synchronizes with our theme, but especially because of its last verse.

Do you remember it? Fear him, ye saints, and you will then have nothing else to fear. Make you his service your delight, your ones shall know his care. Oh, can I breathe those words into some troubled heart here this morning? Some perplexed soul, young or old, fear him, ye saints, which is just another way, worship him, honor him, give him the place of God in your lives, fear him, ye saints, and you will then have nothing else to fear.

Make you his service your delight, your ones shall know his care. It is true. So we move from the place of the material and the privilege of the loyal to the plea of the spiritual.

I think I'm breaking a record this morning. The plea of the spiritual. Now, this is related to the point with which we begun, but it is something different.

I want to suggest to you that the plea enshrined in our text this morning is one of the most spiritual utterances ever to fall from the lips of a man. But you say it's got to do with daily bread, it's got nothing at all to do with the immediate, direct worship of God. No, that is so.

But you see, we do not only respect and honor God directly, but indirectly. And here we have one of these amazing, this classical illustration of the indirect serving to the glory and the praise of the eternal God, and ultimately to the service of men. Now, I want to say that this prayer can only be prayed, really, as our Lord taught us to pray it.

It can only be prayed if we are truly spiritual. Now, let me point what I deem to be the proof of that. First of all, the reality of the petitioner's godliness is reflected here negatively and positively.

Negatively in this way. Notice what he didn't ask for. Now, please, put yourselves in this man's, or in these people's shoes, the disciples.

They knew that when Jesus Christ approached God, He had done so much. He had never said no to Him. The Father never said no to Him, in the absolute sense.

I say that because in the Garden of Gethsemane, our Lord prayed, If it be possible, let this cup pass from me. Well, that was not an absolute negative, but it was just saying it is not possible. Jesus Christ's life of prayer, God's word, was something of a most dynamic and perfect order.

He had that sweet, unbroken communion with God and confidence in God that was honored. Now, notice, they might have been tempted, that is, the disciples might have been tempted to ask for many things. That the Lord would give this, give that, or the other.

But our Lord says that they should ask for one thing. And this is the kind of true spirituality that is ours. When we can come and pray like this negatively, note that He does not seek everything.

He does not seek much, but He seeks one thing. He does not ask for what might keep Him aloof from God for one solitary day. Or let me put it positively, which is far better.

This man might have come and prayed. The man envisaged here in prayer, the individual disciple, might be tempted to come to God and say, Lord, give me enough for this next month, or give me enough for this next week. But He does not do that.

Give us this day our daily bread. Why? My dear friends, you have only got to pose the question to see the wonder of the answer. You see, to a man of the spirit envisaged here, he is as much concerned to be in the presence of God as he is to have his portion from God.

And if he had his larder full for a whole month, he might not go back to God for another whole month. And he is not simply concerned in getting things from God, he is concerned in being with God. And so he says, look, I'll not ask for such a quantity today that I won't need to come back tomorrow, but what I'm asking for is this, give me today my daily portion.

Just today. That's all I ask for, just for today. Why? Because, you see, God meant as much to him as his gifts.

This is why some of us ask for so much, you see. God's gifts mean more to us than God means. And therefore we want enough stock to take us right through life.

And this is what we would like this morning. We would like to sit here in Knox Church and say, now Lord, stock up my bank, give me everything I need until I'm out of this world. That's what we would like.

No, we wouldn't agree to that, would we? But this is the kind of thing we'd like. We'd like security to know that the bank is full right up to the very end. The prayer of the spiritual is this, give me today my daily bread.

Why? Because the spiritual man finds as much pleasure in coming to God each day of his life and receiving his daily needs from him as in receiving the gift itself. It's the pleasure of his presence. It's the delight of his countenance.

The worship of his name. You see, when he prayed at the beginning, Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

This man was real. Jesus envisages people being really worshippers of God and that's what it means. Very well then, if God means all this, I don't want such a stock today that I won't have to turn to him tomorrow.

The reality of the petitioner's godliness has reflected them both negatively and positively. It is also reflected in the frugality of his request. He only asks for daily bread.

Now, I'm quite sure that our Lord knew men well enough and would understand our gratitude if with daily bread God gave us a smear of butter and a little bit of jam. Of course, because our God and our Father gives good measure, good weight, pressed down and running over. Look at the beauty of the countryside at this time.

He's not skimmed his colors, has he? Look at the people of God throughout the ages. See their manifold gifts and their manifold services. Look at what the church has done through history.

God does not skimp his grace, I say. If anyone knew that, the Son of God, the Lord Jesus knew it and his disciples got to know it through him. Our God is not a mean God.

He gives good measure. It's not just sixteen ounces to the pound. It is good measure.

But he taught his disciples only to ask for their necessities. Leave it to God to give the over and the plus. He may.

He's told us that he will do that. But to ask only frugally for our necessities. See, one of the consequences of sin in our every life is this.

We expect things over and above our needs. We have become egocentric, centered in ourselves, and we are not content with our needs. We want always so much more than our needs.

Jesus said, when you pray, come to this. Give us today our daily bread. And one other word from there is this.

You know, modern expositors, particularly in the light of certain findings of manuscripts, suggest that really the word our Lord used was the word for the soldiers' rations or for the prisoners' rations. Now, I'm not going to dogmatize. I don't know.

I don't think they know, actually, but we don't need to. But if it is true, it's a very precious thought, you see. A soldier's rations.

Well, now, he doesn't get a packet of cream or a lot of luxury. He may not have his steamed Christmas pudding, but I don't know what he gets. But he'll certainly get his needs, his rations.

And this is what we should be primarily concerned with. If God gives us more, praise be to his name. But in prayer, we can expect our needs if we're in the will of God.

And I want you to notice the final thing that I'm concerned with this morning is, though he asks frugally, he asks responsibly. Because Jesus taught him to pray, Give us this day our daily bread. Not my daily bread, but ours.

Now, my good people, I don't know how you feel, but this touches me. The more I get to know about the needs of the world, I really find this pinches. I remember sitting one day and Reverend John Stott's study in London, who was our neighbor in the Anglican church, and we had lunch together.

And as John was saying grace over the meal, he turned to me and he said, I've just been reading some literature about certain parts of the world which can be nameless. You know, he says, I've got no stomach for this meal. Oh, we've made a mess of God's world.

With all the ability we have to transform the desert into a garden, and we use our capacities, our energies, our money, our finance, our ingenuity to do other things, even to produce weapons of destruction. Jesus taught us to pray that even though we pray frugally, we don't even ask exclusively for ourselves. There's always the other man, and there's always the other woman, there's always the other person.

Give us today. Harvest Thanksgiving. Hallelujah.

How good is the God we adore. How lavish our God is. How great our God is.

How bountiful our God is. He gives us much more than we deserve. He gives us more sometimes than we even ask.

Have we learned to place the material in the context of the spiritual? This is something which is absolutely necessary for a Christian man and a Christian woman to see the whole thing sandwiched where it is sandwiched here, that we may go out into life not itching for more than God has purposed us to have, which will only do us harm in the long run, but knowing something of that contentment of godliness which is great gain, knowing that he has said, I will never leave you nor forsake you. Let us pray. O Lord, our God, we thank thee once again toward the close of our morning worship that we are privileged to meet like this.

We have been meditating upon the words of our Lord as he taught his disciples of old and we have been seeing something of the significance and relevance of it to our day and age and especially on this Thanksgiving day. Come, O Lord, upon us in great, great grace that we may learn increasingly to align our lives to thy will and thy word and thereby be enabled to live the life of discipleship in a manner that is altogether pleasing unto thee. Hear us, forgive now our sins, the sins that we have been conscious of even as we have been meditating upon thy word.

Cleanse us from unrighteousness in the blood of thy Son and renew us by thy spirit and thy word and our fellowship together that we may the more honorably serve and please thee as long as life lasts in this world through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/4/SID4755.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/j-glyn-owen/daily-prayer-and-our-daily-provision/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net