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DATE: July 4, 2026
SERIES: The Shape of Prayer
MESSAGE: Give Us This Day Our Daily Bread
PASSAGE: Matthew 6:11
SPEAKER: Ryan Harmon

You know, as a father myself, I remember when my kids were first learning to talk and put words together, and some of the first things that they could say to me and my wife were making requests of us. Things like, Dada, up. Dada, snack. Dada, help. You know, as a father, this brought me so much joy. This is exactly what I wanted from my children.

But I can also say that now that my kids are 7 and 10, I'm very thankful that our communication has grown beyond that point. Not that they've ever stopped asking me things, but as our relationship has grown, so has the depth of our communication.

And, you know, I think that parallels pretty closely to our spiritual walks. When a child or a new believer is first learning to pray, one of the first things that we learn and get pretty comfortable with is making requests to God. And that's not a bad thing; in fact, scripture instructs us to do just that.

In Philippians 4, verse 6, the apostle Paul writes, "be anxious for nothing, but in everything, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God." And Jesus himself says in Mark 11, verse 24, "whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours." So yes, we should present our request to God, but I also believe that it's easy for our presenting of requests to God to become unhealthy in a few ways.

First, for some of us, there can be seasons of life where the only times we seem to be talking to God is when we want or need something. God is almost like a genie in a bottle who we just communicate with when we have a need. We would all recognize that's not healthy. That's not what God wants from us relationally, but it's easy to drift there.

Or sometimes we start to filter our requests before bringing them to God, like they have to be worthy before we present them to God. You know, it's interesting because working in kids' ministry, kids don't do that. They understand that there's nothing too small or too large to be brought to God in prayer. But for some



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reason, as adults we can sometimes do that. And I don't think there's anywhere in scripture where we're instructed to do that.

Or sadly, sometimes we just stop asking altogether. The weight of life, or discouragement, or our sin, or the lies of the enemy, come to us, and we start believing things like, "God can't hear you. God doesn't care about your request. God has bigger things to worry about. You already asked that once and didn't get the answer you were looking for, so why keep asking?"

So whether it's our prayers are only making requests to God, or we start to become our own gatekeepers for what we can bring to God, or we get discouraged and stop asking altogether, none of those are healthy. And that's why I'm so thankful that Jesus gives us a better way. That's what we want to look at this evening.

If you have your Bible, I would encourage you to open up to Matthew chapter 6. If you're visiting on this Independence Day weekend, we're currently in a summer series, going word by word and phrase by phrase through the Lord's Prayer. In one of Jesus' most well-known teachings, in Matthew chapter 5 through chapter 7—it's often called the Sermon on the Mount—right in the middle, Jesus takes some time to teach us how to pray. And in this prayer, Jesus gives us a framework or a shape, we have said, not just for the exact words to pray, but how to pray.

And this evening, we kind of come to a turning point in this prayer. I know Ryan has mentioned how in the Lord's prayer, there are really two sets of three requests being offered up to God. The first three are found in verses 9 and 10, and they have to do directly with God: Hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Now in verses 11, 12, and 13, the focus turns to us. And this evening, we're going to dig into verse 11: Give us this day, our daily bread.

First, it's important to notice that the order of Jesus' prayer was not accidental. It was very intentional. Jesus wasn't just giving us words to pray or a bullet list of things to pray in any order that we want. Jesus was quite literally shaping the heart with which we pray. Because before Jesus ever gets to our needs, he anchors us in God's glory.

You see, Jesus didn't begin the Lord's prayer with, "our Father, here's what we need." He begins with our Father who is in heaven. So right away through the prayer, we are reminded of who we are praying to, God, our good heavenly Father. He is not some distant, detached deity—he is personal. He is involved in our lives, and we are reminded of our identity, as we are a part of God's family—we are a part of his household, or as Mark shared several weeks ago, a part of his *beth ab*.



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So prayer doesn't start with our anxiety or our lack or our need. Rather, it starts with our identity as dearly loved children of the Father.

Then we move to hallowed be your name. Before we ever ask God to do something for us, we acknowledge who he is. We slow down long enough to say, God, you are holy. You are worthy, may your name be exalted. Our hearts are being lifted out of self focus and into worship through the shape of this prayer. That's really the same thing that we do when we gather this evening and start our service by singing praises to God. We are lifting our hearts and our minds out of everything that we've gone through this week and lifting them to worship of God. And that is what Jesus is doing with hallowed be your name.

Then next we come to your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. So it's not just "God, you are great. You are exalted." Now it becomes "God, we surrender." Your will above our will, your agenda over my agenda, your kingdom over my comfort. And this is where something profound happens as we pray in this way. Our hearts are being aligned to our Father's heart, so by the time we get to "give us this day our daily bread," we're not coming as consumers demanding a service. We're not coming as anxious people grasping for control. Rather, we're coming as children who trust our Father, as worshipers who have seen his greatness, as servants who are choosing to submit to his will.

And that changes everything. Because once again, if Jesus had started this prayer with, "pray then in this way: give us this day our daily bread," the whole prayer would have a different shape, a different tone. It would feel transactional. It would feel self-centered. It would feel like God and prayer exist to meet our needs. But Jesus teaches us not to start there. Why?

Because when our communication with God starts with our needs, we will begin to interpret who God is through our circumstances. And that's not good. But when our communication with God starts with God's character and worship of God, then we interpret our circumstances through who he is, and that's healthy. So now when we finally bring our requests to God, we do so with confidence, because our hearts are anchored in "God is my good Father. God, you are holy. God, you are in control."

So now we can ask. Now we can request. Now we can trust. Now we can say, "give us this day our daily bread." Because I know the one I am asking. And that's why the first word here in verse 11 matters so much. *Give*. This word is not just a request. It is actually a reflection of who God is. When we ask God to give, we are not persuading a reluctant God to act against his nature. Because God is at his very core a giver. So when we pray, "give us," we are not begging God to do something that is against what he wants to do. Rather, we are trusting him to be exactly who he has already revealed himself to be, a generous, faithful, attentive father who



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delights in providing for his children. The well-known verse, James 1:17, says “every good and perfect gift comes from above.” Every good and perfect thing that we have comes from God. That is who God is by his very nature. He is a giver.

I want you to think with me for a minute of all the things that God has so graciously given to us. First and foremost, he's given us life. He has given us purpose in this life. When we ask, he gives us wisdom for how to live this life well. He has given us peace that surpasses understanding. Joy that is beyond our circumstances. When we mess up, when we fail, when we sin, he pours out his grace and his mercy on us. And in the greatest act of love in human history, he gave us his one and only Son. That is who God is in his very nature.

The Greek word for give used here by Jesus in the Lord's Prayer, is the word *didomi*, which is the same word that was used in John 3:16. For God so loved the world that he *gave* his one and only son. You know, our giving as humans is often conditional or self-interested or at very least limited. But God's *didomi* is generous. It is joyful. It is abundant. And that should give us great confidence in our prayer life.

Next, we see the words *us*, and later in the verse, *our*. Give *us* this day *our* daily bread. Have you noticed how in the Lord's prayer, there are no singular pronouns? It's not my father who art in heaven, it's our father who is in heaven. It's not give me this day, my daily bread. It's give us this day, our daily bread. You know, I think this is important to emphasize because here in America, we honestly live in a hyper individualistic culture. We drive our own cars, live in our own houses with locking doors and blinds on the windows. We spend our time on our personal electronic devices, our iPhones and iPads. I wrote this message on my personal laptop computer, and each member of our families can each have our own profile on our Netflix and our Spotify accounts so that all of my entertainment can be geared towards me.

But I want to remind you, that was not the culture that Jesus was teaching in when he taught the Lord's prayer. And it's definitely not the culture of God's kingdom. You see, when we pray, we are a part of God's worldwide, intergenerational, intercultural family of believers. And so we have no right to ask for ourselves anything in prayer that would harm another member of God's family. If we are praying in the will of God, as Pastor Ryan talked about last week, then the answers to our prayers will be a blessing to God's kingdom in the entirety in one way or another.

Now, I don't say that because I believe it's wrong for some prayers to be personal and intimate. In fact, in the gospels, there's many times where Jesus gets away alone with God to spend time in prayer with God. And while we don't know a lot of what Jesus said during these prayers, we do get a glimpse in the Garden of



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Gethsemane, right before Jesus goes to the cross. And in that prayer, Jesus uses personal pronouns. He asked, "God, may you take this cup from me. Yet not my will, but yours be done." So yes, some prayers are personal and intimate between just me and God. But I also believe it was intentional by Jesus to use plural pronouns when teaching us the shape of prayer. Because praying in this way will expand our vision in our heart for God's family. It will help break our natural, sinful, selfish desires.

And so I challenge you this week to try, pay attention, to your pronouns in your prayers. Try spending some time in prayer using only plural pronouns. It might feel kind of awkward and clunky at first, but I would bet that it will help you rethink and recenter some of your prayers to God's kingdom, helping us get outside of ourselves.

Next, we see Jesus being incredibly specific. Give us this day our *daily* bread. Not tomorrow's bread, not our weekly bread, not our monthly bread, or all the bread we'll ever need. You know, that raised the question for me. Because if God is truly generous, if he owns everything, if he has unlimited resources at his disposal, then why limit the request? Why not teach us to pray, "God, give me everything that I will ever need right now so that I will never have to worry again?" The answer to that is actually quite simple, but also deeply challenging. Because God is more concerned with our dependence on him than our independence. God is not trying to form inside of us self-sufficient individuals. God is forming in us dependent children who increasingly grow in trust for our heavenly Father.

You know, we see this clearly from the Israelites in the Old Testament. After God rescues them out of slavery in Egypt, he is leading them towards the promised land. But along the way, they fail to trust him. And as a result, they have to spend 40 years wandering in the desert, wandering in the wilderness. But, you know, God's not gonna waste those 40 years. So think with me about the environment the Israelites were in. No grocery stores, no supply chains, no fertile lands to raise crops or allow livestock to graze, no backup plans. The Israelites came to know that if God didn't provide, eventually they weren't going to eat and they were going to starve to death.

So what does God do? I want to read about it in Exodus 16, verse 4. It says, "then the Lord said to Moses, behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you." So God literally rains down provision for the Israelites, but here was the key. They were only allowed to gather enough provision for one day, except on the sixth day where they could gather enough for the Sabbath, enough for two days. And look at what it says in verse 16. "This is what the Lord has commanded you. Everyone gather as much as he will eat." Verse 18. "The one who had gathered much, did not have too much, the one who had gathered little, did not have too little. Everyone gathered as much as he would eat."



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So God provided exactly what they needed. No excess, no shortage, exactly enough. And if they tried to store up if they tried to create security for the next day, what happened? It spoiled. So why would God set it up that way? Was it because he's a God of scarcity? Was it because that is all the manna that he could fit in his heavenly ovens that day? Of course not. He was teaching his people something deeper than survival. God was teaching them to trust him.

And scripture actually tells us this directly. Moses writes about this event in Deuteronomy 8, verse 3. He said, and he, being God, humbled you, being the Israelites, and let you go hungry, and fed you with the manna which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, in order to make you understand that man shall not live on bread alone, but man shall live on everything that comes out of the mouth of the Lord.

You see, God wasn't just interested in feeding their bodies. God was interested in forming their hearts. Every single morning, the Israelites woke up with the same reality: if God doesn't provide today, we don't eat. And every single morning, for 40 years, God was faithful, day after day after day, he was teaching the Israelites to trust. He was teaching them that he was their provider—not their ability to plan, their ability to save, their ability to work hard, their ability to control their circumstances—none of that. Only God was their provider.

Now I'll admit, this gets a little bit tricky for us to directly apply to our lives here in 21st century America. Because for the majority of us, we have more than enough food to last us for several days, if not weeks. And if we're running short, we have grocery stores, and restaurants, and our amazing community even has great nonprofits like Matt Talbot Kitchen, the Food Bank, the People's City Mission—we have food available to us.

So to Jesus' audience, on the side of that hill, the need for daily bread may have been a real concern. And I also recognize that if I was teaching this in other parts of the world today, the need for daily bread may be a real concern. But the question is, how do we apply it to our lives in the blessing and abundance that we so often live in?

Well, let me ask you this question. Is there any part of your life where you have recently thought to yourself, "If God doesn't show up today, I or we are in trouble"? That is the type of daily bread shape of prayer that Jesus is exemplifying for us.

You know, about a month ago, I was pondering this prayer as I was preparing for the amazing week of VBS. As we just saw in that video, VBS is such a blessing here at our church. I love how so many people come together with one goal of showing



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the love of Jesus to so many kids, of teaching them the gospel message, of showing them where hope is found. But also, to be honest, VBS is quite the daunting task to oversee. And so a few weeks out from VBS, we still needed about 40 or 50 more volunteers. We had a super long list of tasks that needed to be accomplished before the week could happen. And I remember praying to God and saying, "God, if you're not in this with us, if you're not in control, we are not gonna make it."

And then I remember going into the week of VBS, I already felt very tired. I felt burnt out and the week hadn't even started. I didn't have the emotional capacity, the energy, or the spiritual well-being to lead well through the entire week. But I can tell you with confidence that each and every day, God gave me and so many others exactly what we needed for that day.

You see, the daily bread of Jesus' prayer example can apply to so many areas where we need God's daily provision. And I recognize this evening, one of the beauties of the church is that we all come here with our own different burdens and needs. Maybe you're here this evening and you have a relationship that is barely hanging on by a thread, and you need to ask God to give you just what you need for this day in that relationship. Maybe you're facing a scary health diagnosis or upcoming medical procedure, and you're not very certain on how it's going to go, and you need to ask God to give you just what your body needs today. I know there are some who are walking through financial stress, bills piling up, unexpected expenses, uncertainty about the future, and you are quietly praying, "God, give me just enough for today."

We have parents in our church who I know are feeling overwhelmed this summer. They're running on empty. They're trying to work and parent their kids while school is out. They're trying to lead well. They're trying to give their best to their kids. And they need God to give them wisdom and grace for today. Not for the rest of the summer—for today. Some may have job situations that feel uncertain or unstable, and you're thinking if something doesn't change, I don't know what I'm going to do. And you need God to meet you in that uncertainty one day at a time. Some are in seasons of deep grief and sorrow. You've recently lost a loved one. Or the loss of a season or what you thought life was gonna look like at this point. And you need to ask God to give you just enough comfort for today.

These are all areas where we can regularly cry out to God, "Give us this day our daily bread." You see, this line in Jesus' prayer example shapes in us a deeper dependence on our good, generous, loving heavenly Father. So when we pray, "Give us this day our daily bread," what we are really saying, is, "God, you are the giver. You are generous. God, I will trust you to provide today. God, you know what we need. God, we depend on you."



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You see, Jesus shows us that the goal of prayer is not just asking God to get things done for us. After all, God already knows what we need before we even ask. So the goal or shape of prayer is so often about us growing in our trust, in reliance, on our good and generous and loving heavenly Father.

I loved what Ryan said last week. We've named this series The Shape of Prayer. But I think what Jesus knew when he gave us this example is when we pray in this way, the prayer can also shape us. Let's pray.

Heavenly Father, you are our good, good father. We are your children, dearly loved by you, created in your image. That is our identity. God, our desire is that your name would be magnified above all else. And that you would help us to submit to you more and more each and every day, to trust in your goodness. God, in whatever areas we are feeling unstable, we are feeling like we need you to show up. I pray that you would help each one of us to trust you to do just that, one day at a time.

I paused in this prayer now to invite you to join me as we pray as the Lord taught us to pray: Our Father, who is in heaven. Hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our debts, as we have also forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For yours is the kingdom in the power, in the glory forever. Amen.

*Scripture taken from the NEW AMERICAN STANDARD BIBLE
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