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## The Lord's Prayer, the Pastor's Prayer

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## The Lord's Prayer, the Pastor's Prayer

### The Fourth Petition

Matt. 6:11: Τὸν ἄρτον ἡμῶν τὸν ἐπιούσιον δὲς ἡμῖν σήμερον. Give us today our daily bread.

Luke 11:3: Τὸν ἄρτον ἡμῶν τὸν ἐπιούσιον δίδου ἡμῖν τὸ καθ' ἡμέραν. Give us every day our daily bread.

In both versions we have the word ἐπιούσιος. Until recent years this word was treated as a ἀπαξ λεγόμενον. "Wo nicht auf den ersten Blick ein Wort sich als juedische oder christliche Neuschöpfung zu erkennen gibt, da ist es bis zum Erweis des Gegenteils als gemeingriechisches Wort anzusprechen. . . . Das gilt meines Erachtens sogar von ἐπιούσιος, trotz der bekannten Notiz des Origenes. . . . Es macht voellig den Eindruck eines im Handel und Wandel des Alltags entstandenen Volkswortes." (Deissmann, *Licht vom Osten*, Ed. 1923, p. 61.) Deissmann's observation proved to be correct. A. Debrunner's discovery (1925) of ἐπιούσιος in a house-keeping book confirms Deissmann's opinion. A. T. Robertson refers to it in *Word Pictures in the New Testament*, Vol. 1:53, and remarks that "the word occurs also in three late MSS. after 2 Macc. 1:8, τοὺς ἐπουσίους after τοὺς ἄρτους." Make a marginal note at ἐπιούσιος in your older dictionaries and commentaries. The discoveries should help to establish the meaning of the word. Its derivation has perplexed expositors to this day. Lightfoot, Robertson, G. Milligan (*Vocabulary*, Part III), leaning on τῇ ἐποούσῃ in Acts 16:11, translate "the coming day." Blass-Debrunner prefer the translation "the current day." Others render it "bread of sustenance"; some, "bread for the present." Our synodical literature generally favors the translation "das zum Dasein noetige Brot." In some cases the intended meaning of a word is decided by the predicate, the verb of the sentence. In the Fourth Petition we have in the one version



δόξ, the aorist, and in the other δίδου, the present. The tenses refer to the manner of distribution. In Luke we are taught to ask for repeated action (present tense), and in Matthew we pray that the Father may provide us with the bread we need at that particular time (aorist). Inasmuch as both tenses are applicable to bread modified by ἐνούσιος, I hold that ἐνούσιος qualifies bread as ordinary bread, which the Father gives in portions as well as without ceasing. While the etymological derivation may remain for years to come a matter of controversy, it is certain that ἐνούσιος does not denote a bread extraordinarily given. And thus we arrive at the old, familiar translation "daily." It is not a far-fetched recommendation to pray the Matthew version in the morning devotion and the Luke version in the evening. However, we cannot pass on every occasion of prayer through the painful choice of the version to be used, for the day would end without our partaking of food. We use both forms; for the substitute is not changed by the form. The phrase τὸ καθ' ἡμέραν forcefully reminds us of Matt. 6:34 and 1 Pet. 5:7, so that we can wake and sleep free of care and worry, wearing a smile rather than a frown.

Since the heavenly Father is to give our daily bread, it must be in His possession and under His control. The Father is the Creator and the Lord of our daily bread, and He distributes it to each and all at such a time and in such quantity and quality as He wills according to His goodness. "It is miraculous bread which God distributes and multiplies; board always spread by the paternal hearth whereat each has his portion and all have it entire." (Victor Hugo.) Christ's exposition of this petition is very elaborate in Matt. 6:24-34. The Old Testament version of the petition is found Prov. 30:7-9. Christ's illustration of the manner of distribution appears in the feeding of the five thousand and of the four thousand. Though the bread is common, daily bread, it is nevertheless miraculous bread. Many a capitalist, as many a pauper, includes in the term "daily bread" much more than the concept of contentment implies, more than they actually need to support this body and life. How do we, the middle class, react to this petition?

The term "daily bread" invites us to make profitable excursions into many fields: fields of grain, fields of cotton, oil fields, the meadow, and the prairie; the field of economics, of geology and geography, of botany and herbology, of medicine, of sociology, and the like.

If a grain of wheat has sprouted and formed its stalk and ear, and if there is fertile ground and a good measure of rain for it; if it yields twentyfold, twenty grains will be harvested in one year, 200 quadrillion in ten years; if it yields sixtyfold, sixty grains will be harvested in one year, 600 quadrillion in ten years. How many



kernels go into a loaf? How many loaves does a person consume during the year? How many people find employment in preparing and delivering to our door one loaf of baker's bread? Luther remarks that it costs God the equivalent of the value of one kingdom per day to feed humanity. We stand in awe of God when we behold His miracle of providence, as He gives daily bread, sometimes by immediate, ordinarily by mediate action. To enjoy fully His miracle of providence, we must have peace and good government, discipline, health. Sometimes God withdraws a part of our daily bread. Then He restores it to us that we may have learned better to appreciate His miracle of government.

His manner of distribution is by way of our labor. It is His will that we pray for bread with our hand on the plow. "Thou shalt eat the labor of thine hands." Only to the sluggard, who will not work, does the Lord say that he should not eat. The possession of daily bread does not depend on one's labor. God provides also for infants, for the honest poor, for the sick. The petition implies the prayer: Withdraw not Thy feeding hand. Some 25 years ago God blessed our nation with great prosperity, most of which was wantonly wasted by the nation. God judged the nation. Banks crashed, labor ceased, the sun was darkened by dust, the prairies were parched, food was scarce. People had boasted that they could always make a living. They lived, but on smaller rations, rations borrowed from posterity; for the national debt contracted at that time is not yet paid. Where were the boasted resources? It has been said that the sea always furnishes food. We have observed that God hides also the fish from man's reach when He visits him with His anger. This petition teaches us to acknowledge that every good and perfect gift is from above. It exhorts us to humility. We and our congregations should sing more songs of praise and thanksgiving. America's standard of living is equal to her standard of spending and wastefulness, which is equal to her non-intelligence quotient. All the policies, slogans, and aims of either capital or labor, and all the pacts and agreements between the two, can never serve as substitutes for the simple Fourth Petition. Ps. 107.

In our meditation we allow our thoughts to roam upon a broad application of this petition.

We do not ask for life in the sense of existence. The individual once called into existence by God, exists as an individual in all eternity; for man cannot, and God does not, exterminate the personal existence of any human being. As dear children of God, we accept by faith what His Word teaches on the principle of life, the immortality of the soul, the preservation and restoration of the body, the eternal existence of the individual person. We do not pray for life in the sense of existence.



During the Lenten Season of 1517 Luther preached a series of sermons on the Lord's Prayer. In his treatment of the Fourth Petition, he abides by the literal meaning of the text for five paragraphs, but in the next 22 paragraphs he presents Christ as the bread for which we pray. In April, 1519, Luther issued the *Auslegung deutsch des Vaterunsers fuer die einfaeltigen Laien*. The sermons are lectures delivered in evening services attended also by children. Here, too, he allegorizes. "Zum ersten heisst es ein ueberwesentlich Brot [*panem transubstantialem*: cf. the translation of the Vulgata: *panem supersubstantialem*, in Matt.]. . . . Zum andern heisst es ein auserwaehltes, zartes, niedliches Brot." In one paragraph, the last, he asks: "Bitten wir denn nicht um das leibliche Brot? Antwort: Ja, es mag fast wohl auch das leibliche Brot hierinnen verstanden werden, aber vornehmlich das geistliche Brot der Seelen, Christus." (St. L. ed., VII:712-801.) An allegory can be indicated only by the Author of the Bible, the Holy Spirit. We have no such indication here. In his Small Catechism, and in his Large Catechism, both dated 1529, Luther defines bread as "everything that we need to support this body and life," and he expounds this petition with no reference to an allegory. He had followed first such as Jerome and Cyprian, who find disciples even today, among the mystics and pietists, in the exposition of this prayer. They argue that the daily bread is unworthy of a Christian's concern and that the word "our" qualifies the bread possessed by Christians only, namely, Christ. One may here think of the comment of *The Expositor's Greek Testament* (The Gospels, p. 120): "Whatever the adjective qualifying ἄρτον may mean, it may be taken for granted that it is ordinary bread, food for the body, that is intended." We should like to urge that our exposition must be Scripturally tenable, with proof and reason adduced. We recall the rule that the *sensus literae* is the *sensus literalis* as long as there is no reason or compulsion to adopt figurative speech. With reference to ἄρτος; no exegetical compulsion exists, neither in the petition nor in the context. Rather the fact that all other petitions are plain speech, free from figures and tropes, compels us to arrest all mystical tendencies and to remain with the literal meaning, not in its narrow sense as applying to baked bread only, but in its broader sense as signifying "everything that belongs to the support and wants of the body," as Luther defines it.

We ask for the provision of the means for sustaining our physical and temporal life. God protects human life by His prohibition "Thou shalt not kill." He sustains human life by opening His hand and fulfilling the desire of every living thing. But our sin is the disturbing factor. The days of our flesh are full of trouble. Job excuses his desire for death with the complaint: "My life is wind,"



**Job 7:7.** Our days are as a shadow, as grass, as a tale that is told. Yet Jesus says: "Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?" Whereas our earthly life is as nothing without the Father's grace and goodness, the means of sustaining it must be said to be less than nothing. From this viewpoint we ask for the most unimportant and insignificant things—and we ask them of God! Unless the Savior had encouraged us to plead for the means which support our brief, transitory life, even the means that appear to be less than nothing, we would not dare to pray: "Give us this day our daily bread." Therefore we should receive with thanksgiving not only our daily bread, but this petition itself.

The wicked do not share with us our *christliche Lebensanschauung*. Their attitude to life and its needs is either gloomy, or it is frivolous. In neither case do they thank God for life and limb, for food and fare, for peace and pleasure. To meet their needs and wants, they fight and kill, fret and sweat, rob and mob, scheme and hoard. They despair if they fail; they boast if they succeed. All this is unnecessary, for God gives daily bread also to all the wicked. Still their lot is that of the living dead. Many spend foolishly the bread given them, supposing that it will have no value after the war. But after the war they stand in the bread-line to demand your daily bread and mine. God is yet good to them that by His goodness He may lead them to repentance, Rom. 2:4. Indeed, at times it seems that God neglects His children in behalf of the ungodly. But the pastor sings Pss. 73 and 71.

Satan sputters at God: "Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life," Job 2:4. The children of God appreciate their earthly life more than the servants of sin and of Satan do. To us our temporal life is invaluable because it is the sum total of all the blessings of the Father on this side of heaven's door. It is the time of grace and of preparation for home, and the only opportunity for service to the fellow men. Our view of life is incomplete as long as we only recognize and deplore its vanity. The vanity of life is far outweighed by the value of life. Christ is risen, and the Holy Spirit has taught us to say: "The life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God." What a change in the attitude and activity of life has been wrought in us who are born again into this spiritual life unto eternal life! Our earthly days assume spiritual significance. Our physical powers and mental talents are dedicated to the Redeemer. Our body appears again in its God-given dignity. It is a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God. It will be changed and fashioned like unto the glorious body of Jesus. All this grace of the Father certainly changes also our evaluation of the means by which He sustains our temporal life. Whatever seems insignificant from the one Chris-



tian viewpoint becomes a potent and valuable *substantia* under the other viewpoint of life. As our life itself, so our daily bread is precious in God's sight and worthy of being received with thanksgiving.

We must not fail here to read 1 Tim. 4:1-5. God teaches us to sanctify the persons and things designated as daily bread. See how highly He Himself estimates His temporal gifts to us. Whatever the Father grants us for our sustenance and for our joy and pleasure is to be consecrated and hallowed by us. This Christian principle and duty leaves no excuse for murmuring, discontent, wastefulness, greed, or any other form of ingratitude.

The general principle is to be applied to each specific gift. Thanking God for their children and sanctifying them by God's Word and prayer, Christian parents will bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. They will refrain from neglect and tyranny. Thanking God for the wife and sanctifying his matrimonial life by God's Word and prayer, the Christian husband will dwell with her according to knowledge, give honor to her as unto a child and heir of God; and if she is unbelieving, he will by prayer, instruction, and example seek her salvation. When a Christian buys food, he will receive it with thanksgiving and enjoy it to the glory of God. The faithful of old sanctified the firstfruits in a divine service, and the Christian delights in following their example. We dedicate our homes as well as our churches. Our government should learn more and more to appreciate the Christian's loyalty and his influence with God in its behalf, even as the citizen should honor and esteem rulers and officials who intercede in God-pleasing prayer for the citizens. Our senses are items of our daily bread. Having enumerated under the First Article some of God's gifts to us, Luther says: "For all which it is my duty to thank and praise, to serve and obey Him." As we sanctify ourselves and all our possessions by God's Word and prayer, we really live and move in our home and profession as in the solemn atmosphere of a holy temple, dedicated with all its appointments to the glory and service of God.

Also the liberal arts are our daily bread, inasmuch as they serve as a means of livelihood and fill a want. Let us receive them with thanksgiving to God. Phil. 4:8. We thank God for music and its harmonious charms and develop our music appreciation along Christian lines. Do we compose, render, hear, music to the glory of God? 1 Cor. 10:31. Music as a means of expressing human emotion is subjected by the Christian to the scrutiny of God's Law, and the acceptable is transformed to serve the Gospel. Can we understand the heart and mind of a child of God who delights in the denuding of the body, for art's sake in exhibits, or for health's



sake at the bathing beaches, displaying what the good Father has covered? We despise whatever is outside that noble sphere of daily bread and whatever cannot be received with thanksgiving and hallowed by God's name and Word and prayer. This petition, as all other petitions, dealing with temporal things as it does, limits and confines their use to that noble, Christian freedom of emotions and activity. All God-pleasing creation constitutes our daily bread. We do not ask to enjoy creations the origin of which is traced back to hell, though they may be the product of a genius and composed of legitimate material. The Fourth Petition implies the renunciation of ignoble beauty. It is marked by its unworldliness and teaches us not to be conformed to this world, but to be transformed. It also reminds us that we as children of the Father should display that remarkable virtue of unselfishness.

And now let us narrow down the application of this petition and focus its meaning upon the pastors. Each worshiper should consider his station, but unselfishly. Consider the living conditions of those in whose presence Jesus preached His Sermon on the Mount. Some in the audience may have been rich. Most hearers depended on the day's wage for the next day's food. Some may have been destitute. Also poverty-stricken people worry. Jesus teaches them, and later expounds to them, this petition and the rich lessons contained in the brief prayer.

As we consider our station, we can say that we pastors are engaged in three professions: the *Naehrstand*, the *Wehrstand*, the *Lehrstand*. These are covered by the very form of the petition and by its meaning. Adopting Luther's enumeration of items included in the daily bread, we place under the caption of *Naehrstand* food, drink, clothing, shoes, house, home, fields, cattle, money, goods, a pious spouse, pious children, pious servants, good weather, peace, health, honor, good friends, faithful neighbors, and the like; under the caption of *Wehrstand* pious and faithful rulers, good government, peace, and the like; under the caption *Lehrstand* peace, discipline, honor, and the like.

We are pastors. 1 John 5:14, 15. For the spiritual gifts which we need in our stations we ask in the first three petitions. The faithful performance of our duties is work. We *work* in the Lord's vineyard. We are fellow *laborers* with God. Some among us may be tempted to say: I have *labored* more abundantly than they all.

God distributes to every pastor among us food and drink convenient for him, clothing and shelter and other needful things, according to his own ordinance: "They which preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel." In our day this ordinance of God is observed by the congregations by fixing a stipulated, sufficient



salary. In years past the missionary or pastor received a salary smaller than that of today, usually not in proportion to his needs. The fact that he did not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeded out of the mouth of God, glorifies God and not the congregations, who should have held him worthy of double honor. Nor should our pastors and teachers be neglected by the congregations today. A pastor watched the treasurer count out to him \$33.33 every month, except in December, when he was given \$33.37 to balance an annual salary of \$400.00. After every transaction the pastor read to himself 2 Cor. 11:7-12. He was too inexperienced to read the passage to his congregation for its training. Another pastor stood in the presence of his Mission Board and pleaded for a larger salary. When he was told that he was dressed well, he removed his coat and displayed a patched shirt; his shirt, and displayed an undershirt that seemed to have been in years past a coat of many colors; his shoes, and he stood in undarnable socks. In his rags he received the promise of a slightly higher subsidy for his congregation. There is humor in all this, but it is pathetic humor. These were *laborers* who truly worked zealously and untiringly; but the Church was poor. Why? Is not God rich? What do we mean by the paradox: The children of the rich Father are poor? Our congregations are now richer in the grace and virtue of meeting their obligations. We also hope that our vicars may receive from all responsible parties whatever they may need to support their body and life. During the depression the pastors of our conference received lower salaries; but these were regular. None wants to pass through another depression, please God. We pastors must learn also in prosperous times, as we did before and during the depression, that man lives not by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.

In our station we need a high IQ. We need tact, an agreeable personality, polite demeanor, active senses, common sense and good judgment, a good memory, an adequate library, and the like. We include these needs in this Fourth Petition. For the forgiveness of our undue cares and probable discontent we ask in the next petition.

And shall we mention here the pastor's office girl and stenographer, telephone operator, and vicar? He married, and his wife had to perform all the functions referred to. Is her service just taken for granted? We move in the sphere of sacred love when we speak of her. As a pious pastor's spouse and as a pastor's pious spouse, she includes her husband in the Fourth Petition as daily bread belonging to her. Affectionately viewing his family, the pastor prays that God may keep all members pious, and himself



pious, and that he may not be disqualified as pastor by conditions in his home. 1 Tim. 3:5.

Making provision for later years is not a sin. Neglect of providing for the rainy day is a sin, of which some congregations and pastors are guilty. Our synodical pension system is a gift of God and should be received with thanksgiving. After years of tireless activity in the *Naehrstand*, *Wehrstand*, and *Lehrstand* the pastor and his wife enter the *Ruhestand*. The new generation rises. Old associations pass away. The pastor and his sacrificing service are almost forgotten. "New leaf, new life, new love." The aged pastor, yet young in spirit, does not suit the newer day. It is difficult for him to adapt himself when he reaches the crossing where God has placed the sign pointing to the *Ruhestand*. He is haunted by a sense of uselessness. "At evening time it shall be light," Zech. 14:7. Give us this day our daily bread! Sometimes we emphasize too much the darkness and uncertainty of the future and too little the brightness of it. The proverb which teaches us not to boast of the morrow, for we know not what a day may bring forth, does not deny the element of darkness and ignorance; but it ascribes that ignorance to us, not to the future.

Our blessed Lord Jesus put a last question to His disciples before rising to go to the Mount of Olives, Luke 22:35. "When I sent you without purse and scrip and shoes, lacked ye anything?" And shall we, who in spite of painful economy had at times an empty purse, a worthless scrip, torn shoes, not gratefully join the company of the holy Apostles in their answer: "Nothing"?

Los Angeles, Calif.

G. H. SMUKAL

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## Christian Fellowship

(Concluded)

### IV

#### Restrictions upon Manifestations of Christian Fellowship

After having dwelt at some length on the manifestations of Christian fellowship, we now come to consider restrictions upon such manifestations. Let us begin by stating the obvious: There are restrictions; not man-made, originating in the decrees of church councils or in synodical resolutions, to be sure, but imposed by God Himself, the Head of the Church. To us this may seem self-evident, yet it is not conceded by all who lay claim to the name "Christian." There are those who aver that Christian fellowship must be *unrestricted*. Nothing must be allowed to limit it, they say, for that would be contrary to the spirit of the Founder of our faith, who openly consorted with publicans and sinners.