

Luke 11:1-4 - Daily Bread

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Preacher: Will Spink

[0 : 0 0] Amen. Thank you all for preparing us so beautifully to hear God's Word.

As we prepare to look at God's Word this morning, I want to tell you a couple other things. One exciting announcement I get to tell you about this morning, we have been searching for a pastor of shepherding in young families. I've been leading that search team with Stephanie Newberry and Amanda Utley and Rick McCann and Russell Joffrey on, and we have made a unanimous recommendation to the session, who unanimously agreed to call Derek Harris, and he has accepted our offer. Derek and his wife, Anna Catherine, live in Nashville, where he is a pastor at Christ Presbyterian Church there, and they are now eagerly looking for a place in Huntsville. Some of you met them Friday night at Family Movie Night. They were here looking for a house. They have a son who started kindergarten this week, John Paul. So please pray for them. We're so excited that God has called them here. They've got a lot of transition in the next few weeks, especially for their son, as he has just transitioned into his first week of school and will be transitioning out and back in again. So please do pray for them, and we'll tell you more about them and let you meet them when they're actually here in person to introduce them to you. You may have heard that there's a really cool astronomical phenomenon going on tomorrow. It's a big deal if you hadn't heard, and I just had this real itch this week to be relevant, you know, to say something profound about it. And so early on,

I thought I'll preach about the end times, you know, the signs of the times, but I'm not a prophet or a son of a prophet, so I backed off of that, and I thought, you know, what I really need to do instead is to preach a sermon about sin, about our utter depravity, and title it Total Eclipse of the Heart. Thank you. It would have made the offertory song choice easy. And oh no, this is bad because he left, and I noticed later in the week that there was another church that was giving out glasses to everybody who came on Sunday, and I thought, you know what, I want to be more spiritual than that.

I'm going to preach a sermon, and the title, I know it. Sun exposure prevents and protects from sun exposure. That, and if we had a billboard, that would be on it this week, but we don't, so you're saved from that. I had trouble refining any of these ideas into a sermon, so I'll just work on them for the next one in 2024, and instead we're going to stick with our study of the Lord's Prayer in the Gospel of Luke, and all God's people said, amen. Yeah, the sermon title is just about as creative as the other one's, Daily Bread. We better pray, and then we'll look at God's Word together.

Father, what Kayla just saying is true. You're always right on time. You have an open hand. You give us exactly what we need. You provide our daily bread, moment by moment, day by day, and so Father, we come to you this morning and say, teach us to trust you for that. Lord, teach us to pray. We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.

[3 : 5 6] This is God's Word, Luke 11, at verse 1, God's Holy Word. Now, Jesus was praying in a certain place, and when He finished, one of His disciples said to Him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples. And He said to them, when you pray, say, Father, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Give us each day our daily bread, and forgive us our sins, for we ourselves forgive everyone who is indebted to us, and lead us not into temptation.

Thus far, God's holy, inerrant, inspired Word. Give us each day our daily bread. Jesus is teaching us how to pray. We've seen He's also shaping our hearts at the same time. What should we long for? What should we love? What should we value? And this particular petition about daily bread, I think, takes aim at the very heart of why we don't pray, or at least why we don't pray consistently. Imagine for a moment that you're an Israelite living back in Exodus 16 that Peter read for us earlier. You're wandering through the wilderness nomadically.

That's your life. In a Middle Eastern desert, you've felt deep hunger. You've had no options for addressing it. No way you could feed yourself. You would wake up with this prayer on your heart, wouldn't you? Give us this day our daily bread. Why? Because if there's no manna the next morning, you're going to feel that ache again. You hate it. You need God to provide your daily bread.

So if you were an Israelite in the wilderness with nothing to eat unless manna shows up the next morning, if you were a farmer in an agrarian society where unless the crops grow, your family is going to go hungry, you won't have anything to eat, then you would pray this prayer. Praying for daily bread would be a must if that was you. But we aren't, are we? Israelites. Farmers and agrarian societies growing our food for each day. Most of us could flash a credit card and have food saved up for days if not weeks or months with no problem. And that's where I started as I was contemplating this petition this week. If there's one thing that keeps us from a life of prayer, it's the lack of feeling need. And I do think there's truth in that, that conscious awareness of our need is vital to a life of prayer. But that's actually kind of easy to acknowledge. And so I got a little bit more honest. The reality is that even though we may not have to wonder where our next meal is coming from or how we're going to get it, we are still really anxious, aren't we? We fret, we worry, we carry a lot of stress.

In fact, more than any group of people ever has, if you believe any study that you read these days. That's who we are. We're anxious, we're stressed, we're burdened. As I searched my own heart for why this is true, and as I asked myself why I don't just pray about everything all the time, I realized the truth is often more painful than I'd like to admit.

[7 : 54] Truth is, we trust ourselves more than we trust God. We trust ourselves more than we trust God. Now, that sounds harsh.

Many of our hearts are probably arguing about that right now. No, that's not true. I tried arguing with it this week, and then I asked myself some diagnostic questions. When a significant decision or a difficult situation arises in the middle of my day, do I typically pray first or plan first how to deal with it?

Do I instinctively turn to God or to myself? What about when my plans are changed? When my plans are altered, what emotions persist in me?

In case you don't know me very well, frustration and anxiety would be nice words for when my plans get changed. Panic is probably more accurate. I'm convinced that it will be catastrophic for everyone involved if my plan doesn't happen the way I've expected it to.

When I'm feeling uncertain about my financial situation, do I tend to find security in considering my bank account or God's resources? Does that question itself sound even a little bit sarcastic to you?

[9 : 27] Like, okay, come on, seriously? I mean, of course I'm... It does tell us something about where we put our trust, doesn't it? When we slow down and analyze our busy lives, we realize we can't blame our lack of prayer on mere busyness and success and that we just don't have a lot of needs. That's too easy. It's deeper than that into hearts that trust ourselves more than we trust God.

Paul Miller just zinged me on this one. He got me right on. I read his perspective on the need for what he calls learned desperation. This is what Miller says. If you are not praying, then you are quietly confident that time, money, and talent are all you need in life.

You'll always be a little too tired, a little too busy. But if, like Jesus, you realize you can't do life on your own, then no matter how busy, no matter how tired you are, you'll find the time to pray. Then he adds this helpful tip. Time in prayer makes you even more dependent on God because you don't have as much time to get things done. That's why I don't do it.

Don't tell me that. That's not nice. But listen to what he's saying. In other words, he's saying that you may say that's not true, that I don't think my resources are all that I need in life. And I do trust God even more than I trust myself. But if I'm not praying, my life says something different. My actions scream that what I'd like to believe is true is not actually true. We so struggle practically to trust God, don't we? We tend to trust ourselves more than we trust God. And Jesus comes in this passage to people like us and says the heart of prayer is assuming a posture of trust. That's what prayer is about.

When we pray, give us each day our daily bread, we are acknowledging our relationship of constant communal dependence upon God. We'll come back and talk about some of those words. But remember, prayer is about having a relationship with God. It's not merely a transaction where I put a request in and then await the desired outcome, like a Coke machine, as it were, where I rub the magic lamp and God's supposed to do what it is that I want. That's a transaction. That's not prayer. Prayer is to be similar to that, but it's a relationship built on trust where we come and we tell Him what we need, where we listen to Him direct our hearts, and where we watch for His good provision in our lives.

[12 : 38] We come like a child to a father and tell Him what we need. Daddy, I'm hungry. Daddy, I'm cold. Daddy, I'm scared.

As we look at this particular petition this morning, how it calls us to that posture of trust, first look back briefly to the beginning of the prayer Jesus gives His disciples. Let's not isolate this petition from the rest of the prayer. We come to pray for our daily needs in the context of having our hearts pointed to God, to God-centered priorities. Remember from last week, the priority of God's glory, of His name being hallowed, of His kingdom, of His kingdom needing to come more and more in our lives and in our world? That's actually where our needs start. No matter what our situation is, no matter what needs we feel, it's always true that our needs begin with the glory of God needing to be first in our hearts and the kingdom of God needing to be more and more a reality in our lives.

So this petition, give us this day our daily bread, is not an encouragement to turn away from God towards ourselves and all the things we want. That's not what's going on. Rather, it's an invitation to bring our broadest needs and our specific momentary needs to Him. Both of those. See, that's the kind of dependence that we have on God that we're so uncomfortable with. It's utter dependence for everything. We're to be so utterly dependent upon God that we must pray to Him not merely for the big things of the kingdom, but just as certainly for the little things of our momentary existence. Remember, it's in Him that we live and move and have our being. Our next breath is dependent upon Him as much as our next meal. And so Jesus says for us to pray, give us this day our daily bread. Give.

Over and over, give. Every day, give. Even the basics of life, Father, give. Because you are the benefactor and we the beneficiaries. You are the resourceful one and we are the charity cases. You are the giver and we are the recipients of your abundant provision.

But as Americans, we're proud of our independence, aren't we? We do struggle to see our need and to trust anyone beside ourselves to meet our needs. That's almost in our DNA in this country. It's certainly in the air we breathe in the culture around us. But the Bible promotes our dependence upon God. And that dependence fuels prayer. That's why in our core commitments here at Southwood, we say we recognize our deep dependence and need for prayer. It's part of who we are. Our relationship with God is one where we remain desperately needy and He remains gloriously sufficient. Notice that's not something intended to change in our relationship with God. We remain needy and He remains sufficient.

[16 : 26] Not because we don't grow, not because we don't mature, but because God has so designed our relationship with Him. That we grow by what? By abiding in Him. We grow and bear fruit by remaining connected to the vine, by drawing life from Him, by depending on Him for everything. It's no failure in us that we need God.

It's the glorious way He designed it because He loves to meet our needs. He designed us that way. We're dependent upon Him. Secondly, notice the communal nature of our dependent relationship with God. What I mean by that is how we together need Him and together seek His provision. The pronouns of this prayer are very important because they help us lift our eyes again beyond ourselves and our personal needs. It's not give me each day my daily bread. That's how we often pray for what I need, right? It's give us each day our daily bread. A prayer for God to meet the needs of all His children, not just mine. You may not be wondering where your next meal is coming from, but some of God's children are. Some of them don't have the resources you have. Some of them He's providing for differently from the way He is for you, and so we pray for God's provision for all. This means we pray for the ways God will provide our daily bread too.

Things like peaceful communities, just governments, wise leaders, and the like. Ways in which God provides what we need. It's a corporate dependence where the needs of others, which I'm told to put before my own anyway, are to be on my heart and in my prayers. Who else are you praying for? Who besides yourself do you pray for? Who else are you praying with? That communal dependence doesn't just look like praying for others. It looks like praying together. It doesn't mean Jesus is telling us not to pray alone, something that He very clearly did often, but it does imply as we're praying for our daily bread that often others will be praying alongside of us, either praying together for the same things, which is one of the reasons we have been sending out this prayer guide, so that we as a family can be praying together for similar things. That's part of it. It also sometimes means praying physically in the same place where you've got someone there alongside of you. It reminds us that our common Father has called us together to depend upon Him and to carry each other's burdens, Galatians 6. One of our elders,

Jeremy McCoy, has been getting a group of men together early in the morning to pray, really early in the morning. But one of the things I appreciate about what He's said to us in that as He invites us to that time, is He says He just needs the strength of other brothers praying with Him to help Him pray.

He wanted to pray more consistently and He said, I need your help. Come pray with me. If you need help praying, ask someone else to join you. Whether we look at or act like it, we all need it. We all need it. Equally, we need God and depend upon Him and need prayer. So go together to your Father. Dependence is communal. It's also finally constant. Jesus reminds us that this posture of trust, this dependence upon God that we have is to be constant. Give us each day our daily bread. Why? Why? He's capable of providing any way that He wants to. Why do you think God wants us to ask Him each day for what we need then? The Bible tells us, for example, that God already knows what we need before we ask Him. Is He wasting your time? Why go tell God what you need when in another passage you're going to tell us He already knows it? Does He just only have a memory that can go one day so every day He needs us to come and ask? That's not the problem. It's not for information and it's not because we don't already expect we know how some of our needs will be met that day.

[21 : 22] It's not because we don't know where we'll eat lunch or how we'll be able to get there, practically speaking. God's not against savings accounts or diligent work. What's it about? Why?

It's about the relationship, isn't it? God has created us and designed us to trust Him moment by moment, to live in relationship with Him, to follow His Word one step at a time, to trust His promises one situation and circumstance at a time. And this petition reminds us that we may pay with a credit card, but the money is a gift from His hand. We may work for our living, but the job and the productivity are gifts from His hand. Listen, God desires relationship with you, interactive relationship.

Isn't that amazing? God wants to have a relationship with you. He wants to know what you need. He's invited us into a relationship of constant dependence every day, every need He wants to hear about.

That's why I mean prayer is not a transaction as much as it is a relationship. One of my favorite things about my relationship with my wife is that I get to share everything with her. There are not a lot of people in the world who just want to hear about my day all the time, what I did, where I ate lunch, how I failed, how I felt through the day, but she does. And every experience is enriched by telling her about it. And I love to hear about hers. We share those things together. It's having a relationship.

God has invited us into a relationship of constant dependence. He wants to hear about those needs. He wants us to live in relationship with Him. I told you last week some of the things I learned from Mike Stanfield as he's going through cancer treatment, as he's been studying this prayer, as he's been praying that God would use him for the sake of the kingdom. Mike said what God has been teaching him most about is this petition, this daily bread petition. If you don't know Mike, Mike is a successful business executive. He's driven. He's visionary. He's strategic. He's capable.

[23 : 57] He said this cancer has helped him learn to bring to God not only big annual goals, but also daily problems that may seem small. He says it's thinking what provision from God he needs today. It's been things like strength to sit in an awkward position for several hours while blood is drawn. Patience with waiting. Boldness to share of Christ while suffering and dealing with pain.

Ease of finding a vein. He says he's seen God answer those specific prayers in such particular, specific ways and seen how encouraging that is to see God answer specific things, to see how he particularly provides for something we've particularly asked for. We see God answer and work and it helps us to trust him. He's seen God do that for him. No need is too big for God to handle. We bring big requests to our king, right? But no need is too small for him to care.

That's what Rosemary Miller learned when someone told the Christian writer and speaker, she was a grandmother at the time, she would drive her grandkids around London and pray for a parking spot for them to get in. And someone told her, you shouldn't pray like that. It's trivial and it's selfish for you to pray for parking spots. And she just laughed. She said, how else would I find a parking space? It was just second nature to her. She talked with her father. She told him what she needed, that she couldn't walk far and she had kids to manage and she prayed for what she needed.

She looked to her father for everything, moment by moment, day by day. I've been finding it lately to be really helpful in remaining prayerful throughout the day to start each day by praying about the things that I need for that particular day, thinking through the schedule and the plan and telling God what I need so that I'm then able through the day to revisit that prayer and to walk into a meeting and say, God, this is that meeting that I prayed about. I needed wisdom for. This is the person I've prayed for, patience with. I bring to God the needs that I know about for the day and then I've learned I really better pray for the ones I haven't planned yet. I don't know about you, but my days don't usually go the way the calendar looks at eight in the morning.

But there are needs he knows about. And ask him to provide for those as well. It may look entirely different for you from Mike or Rosemary or what God's teaching me, but it's that posture that he's calling all of us to of constant dependence, of trust, of relationship with him. Our father wants that with all of us. That's the heart of asking for daily bread, that we would come and trust him and see him provide. And the focus is on that constant momentary dependence for today. The words also point us to look forward. As God provides each day. One after another day after day, because he gives us what we need each and every day, he eventually does that forever. He eventually gives us exactly what we need eternally, doesn't he? It's a good chance to stop and remember again who we're praying to. It's not just the first word of the prayer, Father, that calls us to remember that. It's all through this prayer. The heart of it is who are we praying to? He's the God who provides, isn't he? All the way back to the first time he's called that name when a ram is caught in a thicket and Abraham sacrifices that ram in place of his son,

[28 : 09] Isaac. To when God sends his own son to provide for our greatest, deepest and longest term need, a savior. That's why Paul says in Philippians 4, God will meet all of our needs, right? Not just the one today, but he'll keep meeting them beyond today. Every need according to his riches and glory in Christ Jesus. He says something similar in Romans chapter 8, but he makes a little bit of an argument. He says it this way, he who did not spare his own son, but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? In other words, if God's taking care of your greatest need, he's certainly not going to abandon you today when you need a meal, when you need patience, when you're alone.

We can certainly trust him never to abandon us. We can certainly trust him to provide our daily bread. We can certainly trust him to meet our every need if he has met our greatest need. Last week, we rejoiced that our father is the king. Today, we need to remember that our father is also our shepherd, making us lie down in green pastures, leading us beside still waters, preparing a table before us, even in the presence of our enemies. See, because God is my good shepherd, I shall not want.

We don't talk that way much anymore. It means I shall lack nothing. Because he's my shepherd, I have exactly what I need.

Whatever I have is exactly what he knows that I most need. So I need not stress. I need not fret. I need not worry.

I can trust him more than I can trust myself. I'm the sheep, right? He is the good shepherd. We must trust him.

[30 : 33] And every day together, depend on him. I want us to practice that together this morning. And I promise to make you all feel awkward at this point in every one of these sermons on prayer.

I'm going to come through on that again. I want us to practice it by taking a posture of trust and dependence physically and kneeling together to pray.

Kneeling is not the only way to pray. We usually don't do that. And if you're uncomfortable or unable to kneel, you can pray right where you are. That is no problem at all.

But I want to invite us to have a tangible reminder of our utter dependence on God. We don't always have to be on our knees for that to be true.

But we need that reminder because we forget so quickly. We're going to begin by spending a moment privately reflecting on how God has already been faithful to us.

[31 : 33] Here's questions to lead us in prayer this week. To start by thinking, how is it God provided for me yesterday exactly what I needed? These aren't complicated questions.

We're going to then lead us in praying for what we need today. The things that I already know I need. And then thinking of others and others' needs that I'm aware of that they have.

I'll lead us in that and just let you join with specifics in your own hearts. But let's kneel together in prayer if you're able. Father, we come before you with thanksgiving because you are so good.

And have provided for us in so many ways. Hear the prayers of your people as we pour out our thanks to you. Thank you.

Father, we bow before you together and we plead with you for your continued care. You have been so good to us. You have cared for us so well.

[33 : 09] And we are dependent upon you day by day. This congregation is for your provision for us. Financially as a church, you've kept us over the last several years.

You've cared for us so well and you've kept us dependent one week at a time. You've given us just exactly what we've needed for the day. And we ask that you would continue to do that.

Would you continue to meet our needs? Would you especially be with those who are hurting this morning? Father, there are those who are sick. There are those who are grieving among us.

And we cry out to you before them. They need your presence and your care and your comfort. And so would you be with them as you promised. We pray for our country.

We pray for you to direct us. There is a lot of hurt. Not just in this room, but in this world. There's division.

[34 : 09] There's anger. There's violence. And Father, we pray that you would bring healing. We need you. We pray, Father, for others.

For those who today don't know where their next meal is coming from. And we know there are those in this congregation. But we also know they're in this city and in this world. And we pray, Father, that you would feed them.

Would you do that miraculously? Or would you do it as you often do through your people, through generosity, through work that you've created us for? Father, would you meet all of our needs?

And would you especially remind us that what we need is to see your glory? That what we need is to see you as faithful and as good as our shepherd.

Lord, that we might know that we have everything we need. Do that work in our hearts, we pray. That we would trust you today. That we would trust you tomorrow.

[35 : 15] And that you would give us hearts to trust you always. In your eternal provision for us. We worship you and we thank you. In Jesus' name, amen.

Amen. You can stand with us as we respond and ask for God's continued provision. Singing, guide me, O thou great Jehovah. Aniliona and Suptora Cod grape word of the word■■ through Eulfion