Matthew 6: 11, Proverbs 30: 7-9, Matthew 26:26

11 Give us today the food we need…

7 O God, I beg two favors from you; let me have them before I die. 8 First, help me never to tell a lie. Second, give me neither poverty nor riches! Give me just enough to satisfy my needs. 9 For if I grow rich, I may deny you and say, “Who is the Lord?” And if I am too poor, I may steal and thus insult God’s holy name.

26 As they were eating, Jesus took some bread and blessed it. Then he broke it in pieces and gave it to the disciples, saying, “Take this and eat it, for this is my body.”

VIDEO “Our Father…” (young girl sings the Lord’s Prayer)

SLIDE The Lord’s Prayer: Give Us This Day Our Daily Bread

Today we continue our series of sermons on the Lord’s Prayer. When I was a youth I used to sit in the back of worship and my friends and I would try to say the Lord’s Prayer as fast we could and we would time ourselves. I could do it under 10 seconds.

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. Lead us not in temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

I think my record was 8 seconds!

Somehow, that never came to mean much to me and I am not sure that is what Jesus had in mind when he taught us this prayer. Or was there something deeper Jesus hoped for when he taught us this prayer?

If we take the time think about this prayer that Jesus shared with his disciples when they asked him in Luke’s Gospel, “How should we pray?” that Jesus gave us a prayer that was meant to last a lifetime. This pray is meant to guide our spiritual lives and our journey with God. There is so much depth and profound meat here for us to chew on we can’t possibly get that in under 10 seconds.

During this series of sermons we are trying to step back and take a look at each phrase to see what God had in mind. We began two weeks ago by
recognizing that the patter to this prayer is the same as the 10 Commandments. We begin with God and then we focus on our relationships with others.

The opening line of the prayer has much power that we often overlook,

**SLIDE**  **“Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.”**

We learned that Jesus wants us to have an intimate relationship with God because we are really calling God, “Abba” or “Dad” and this indicates the kind of relationship we are meant to have with God. When we speak about God in Heaven we remember that heaven is everywhere, all around us, like the air we breathe. It is not a distant place but as near as air that fills our lungs and as vast as the cosmos in the night sky and beyond. When we hallow God’s name we are praising God. We humble ourselves before God which is an appropriate way to start all prayer, we recognize God’s holiness and we stand in reverent awe before God.

**SLIDE**  **“They Kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.”**

Last week we learned the next phase in this prayer which tells us that before we pray anything for ourselves, we first yield our will to God’s will. We are to seek God’s kingdom above all else as Jesus did, when in the Garden of Gethsemane, on the night he was arrested and just before he was crucified he prayed, “Not my will, but thine be done.”

Only after we have begun our prayer in this way are prepared to ask God to address our needs. Jesus takes us to that place in the part of the prayer as we shift from God to us, from “Thine” to “our.” As we do that the first thing Jesus invites us to pray is this.

**SLIDE**  **“Give us this day our daily bread.”**

What is Jesus asking us to pray about? Why is it so important we pray for bread first?

**SLIDE**  **The importance of bread – the “staff of life”**

There is an old expression that says, “bread is the staff of life.” It is an expression we find in the Bible on 5 different occasions. The Hebrew word for staff is literally a staff or a walking stick. When you can’t walk on your own you lean on a staff. Without it, you can’t move forward.

In essence, what the scripture is saying when it talks about bread being the “staff of life” is that without it you can’t move forward. You have to have this in order to survive and move forward in life.

I learned this last week that there are more than 300 references to bread in the Bible. When you start to read those references, what you find is that you could tell the entire biblical narrative through stories about bread.
When Adam and Eve are being expelled from the Garden of Eden for having disobeyed God, God tells them the by the sweat of their brow, from this point forward they will eat _________ what? It's not a hard guess...bread! Bread is even a part of that first story of what happened to human kind in the very beginning.

You might remember that then Esau is so shortsighted that he sells his birthright to Jacob for a bowl of porridge and a loaf of...bread.

Next we find in the Israelites in the land of Canaan. A famine comes to the land and because of it they go to Egypt in search of...bread. They end up becoming slaves for 400 years in the land of Egypt because they were searching for bread.

When that 400 years is up God uses Moses to deliver the people from slavery in Egypt and on the night where they are finally going to leave that place, they have been set free by the plagues, and Moses says, "Come and let's hurry we have to get out of here!" Unfortunately there wasn't time for the yeast to work on their...bread. So they had to eat unleavened...bread.

Remember that the Israelites were then in the wilderness for 40 years and they got tired of what they were eating and they cried out to God. God provided manna from heaven from which they made...bread.

Let's fast forward to the time of Jesus. Jesus has just been baptized and after that he goes to the wilderness where he is tempted and tested for 40 days and 40 nights. During that time he fasts. The devil comes to him and brings him a stone and he says, "Jesus, if you really are the son of God and you know how hungry you are, then you could turn this stone into a loaf of...bread."

Of course Jesus does not do it but later during his public ministry the Pharisees and the Sadducees are angry with Jesus because he continually spends time with sinners and tax collectors and prostitutes and what does he do with them? He breaks... bread with them.

Then we have several times where Jesus is with multitudes of people. There are thousands of people gathered around and he realized they are hungry and he turns to the disciples and says, "What did we bring for lunch fellows?"

What did they bring for lunch? They brought a few loaves of bread and some fish and Jesus takes the bread and fish and he multiplies it exceeds thousands.

Then there is the last night of his life. He sits down with his disciples during the Passover meal. He takes what? He takes the bread and he gives thanks and he breaks it and he says, "Take and eat, this is my body given for you, and as often as you eat bread remember me."
Many scholars believe that Jesus wasn't just talking about times when we might gather for communion when he says these words, but that every time we gather to break bread we should remember that he is the bread of life.

The whole biblical narrative could be told through the lens of bread.

When Jesus gives us the Lord's Prayer and he talks to us about bread in this line before us today is meant to include lots of things. The idea of bread and receiving our daily bread is symbolic for several different realities that I want to make sure we don't miss today.

I want to ask three questions about this passage before us.

SLIDE  **What did Jesus have in mind when he said, "Give us"?**

How does God give us anything? What are we asking God to do when we ask him to give us this day our daily bread? How does God work in the world and answer our prayers?

The next thing we will look at is the phrase, "this day." The phrase is meant to delineate just one day, from morning until night. **Why did Jesus tell us to pray only for bread this day?**

Finally, we will look at what Jesus was trying to tell us when he said we should pray for "daily bread." We will find there is a lot more to that phrase than meets the eye.

Let's begin with the idea of asking God to give us our daily bread. Part of what we are doing when we ask God for our daily bread is that we are trusting God with all of our needs.

**An Invitation to Trust**

We seek to trust God not just for food but for everything. Bread in the Bible signifies a lot more than just the stuff you eat. Bread is meant to encompass all of the needs we have. You might remember the scripture which says:

**SLIDE  **My God shall supply all of your needs according to his riches in glory.**

This is an invitation for us to trust God for everything that we need in our lives. We are not to worry or not be afraid that we must simply trust. We ask and we shall receive. This happens somehow and some way that we don't always understand.

It's hard to remember to trust God when we go through times of uncertainty or difficulty. Most of us are really great at worrying. We worry about a lot of things.
We are in the midst of a time right now in our nation that brings about much worry. The financial uncertainty in which we live has caused many of us to worry about income and jobs and investments and our retirement. This year in global markets and in our own market makes many of us look at our world with some fear and trepidation.

In the past year the Federal Reserve has lowered interest rates, sometimes more than once a week which is unprecedented. The federal government has been doing something over the last two years that it hates to do and that is giving money back. They sent out almost $200 billion in checks last year for no apparent reason except the hope that we would spend our way out of recession. The stock market still didn’t respond and so you know in the last several months we are back to 1997 levels. If you look at your stock portfolio or your retirement account you know that your investments are now worth 25 to 50% less depending on how you invest your retirement. We’ve been told that we have been in a recession since December of 2007.

The last few weeks we have had each political party blaming the other for not working together to get out of the recession. We have people like Jim Cramer on that show Mad Money screaming at us about selling or about what we should do to protect ourselves. I watched some clips Friday with Jon Stewart from Comedy Central ripping apart Jim Cramer for his role in creating hysteria instead of dealing with facts.

The reality is that there is plenty of blame to go around and you could listen to the news and work yourself into a tizzy. But what do we do with that? How do we respond?

I read this last week the financial advice that Kiplinger’s is giving out about how to invest in a time like this. The associate editor Thomas Anderson gave this stock advice for being in a recession.

SLIDE Hard times won’t stop gamblers from betting, partygoers from drinking and smokers from puffing. In fact, economic turbulence might give them even more reason to indulge in that makes so-called "sin stocks" (shares of alcohol, gaming and tobacco companies) a safe bet as the US economy slows.

How is that for some investing advice? I’m not sure we could get our church finance committee to follow those rules however!

What that tells us is that for some people, when they are going through a time of economic uncertainty or fear, they puff a little bit more, they gamble a little bit more and they drink a little bit more.

Do you think you find the peace that passes understanding and that will guard your hearts and minds in those places? Or is there something else or
somewhere else you turn to for peace in the midst of uncertainty. This is part of what Jesus is saying.

Jesus tells us, "Recession or no recession, pray this prayer."

**SLIDE**

*Give us this day our daily bread.*

God I trust you to meet my needs. I don't know how you're going to do it, but I am going to trust you.

Jesus gives us some words of interpretation for this idea of trusting God. Just after Jesus teaches about the Lord's Prayer in Matthew's Gospel he goes on to give us more detail. He says this in Matthew 6:24-34

**SLIDE**

24 “No one can serve two masters. For you will hate one and love the other; you will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money.

25 “That is why I tell you not to worry about everyday life—whether you have enough food and drink, or enough clothes to wear. Isn’t life more than food, and your body more than clothing?

26 Look at the birds. They don’t plant or harvest or store food in barns, for your heavenly Father feeds them. And aren’t you far more valuable to him than they are? 27 Can all your worries add a single moment to your life?

28 “And why worry about your clothing? Look at the lilies of the field and how they grow. They don’t work or make their clothing, 29 yet Solomon in all his glory was not dressed as beautifully as they are. 30 And if God cares so wonderfully for wildflowers that are here today and thrown into the fire tomorrow, he will certainly care for you. Why do you have so little faith?

31 “So don’t worry about these things, saying, ‘What will we eat? What will we drink? What will we wear?’ 32 These things dominate the thoughts of unbelievers, but your heavenly Father already knows all your needs. 33 Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need.

34 “So don’t worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring its own worries. Today’s trouble is enough for today.

Notice that just before we pray and ask God to give us our daily bread we pray for God's kingdom to come and God will to be done on earth as it is in heaven. Many of us are expert worriers and he is saying, "Just trust."

Somehow, someway we should pray every day for God to give us this day our daily bread and trust that it will come.
How Does God Give Us Our Daily Bread?

What are we expecting when we ask God to do anything in our lives? My experience with many things in life is that we pray and ask God for something and when we don't get it we are disappointed. We are expecting instantaneous results and we expect God to do something supernatural and miraculous.

Is that really how God works most of the time though? Does it work like this?

Is that how prayer works? We just sit down at the table and nobody really prepares a meal? We just get a meal... poof... and it magically appears!

Of course it does not work that way and you know it. So why do we expect it to work that way in any other area of our lives? How does God give us our daily bread?

Let me remind you of something we talked about a few weeks ago. There are several reasons why you were created by God. First, you were created to be recipients of God love because God loves to give love away. Second, you were created to reciprocate God love. That is why we offer God praise and Thanksgiving so that we can be in a relationship and fellowship with God.

Finally, you were created to do the will of God. You were created to be God's hand and voice on this planet and to do the things that God asks. This is why you and I pray, "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven."

Notice is after that we pray, "Give us this day our daily bread." How does God give us our daily bread? We received our daily bread through the hands of people.

This last week I was with Pastor Steve Easterday-McPadden who was the associate pastor here my first three years in Durango. Steve and I were in a meeting together all week in Colorado Springs and one night we had dinner together. Before we ate our meal we prayed and if you've ever eaten with Pastor Steve you know that his prayers are not short. He prayed for the people who grew the food, and the people who picked the food, and the people who shipped the food, and the people who prepared the food, and the people who delivered us the food. This whole time I had barbecue ribs and fresh baked bread sitting in front of my nose and it was really hard to focus.
The truth is there were farmers and ranchers who spent months toiling in the soil and caring for the animals in order to provide us our daily bread. They prayed for rain and they cared for the crops. This was their livelihood.

After the grain was harvested there were truckers who brought the grain and the beast to be processed. There were millers who turned the grain into flour and then trains carried it to the bakery. There were bakers who baked it and then truckers again who brought it to the marketplace or to the restaurant. In the back room are people in the store room who take the bread and store it or get it out on the shelf or chefs and cooks who prepare it to be eaten.

Finally, it was brought to our table. Do you realize how many hands touch your food in order to give us our daily bread? Do you realize that God used all of them to answer this prayer for us? That is pretty amazing how God works if you think about all of the people who make it possible for you to eat.

It is not just that others bring you your daily bread, but you are called to bring others their daily bread. This prayer is an invitation for God to use us to meet the needs of other people.

Most of us in this room have plenty of food in our pantry. When we pray, "Give us this day our daily bread," it doesn't strike us as being profound because we often have enough food to last a week or two in our kitchen. And we know where we can get more after that.

But there are many people in our country who don't know where their next meal is coming from. What might this prayer mean for those who live from meal to meal?

Alex grew up in a good home and went to college. He got married and had two children who were in their 20s. Alex began to struggle years ago with alcohol. He eventually lost everything—his wife, his kids, his job and ended up on the streets in one of our cities. Thanks to a Mission in his city he found Christ and he gave up drinking. He lives at the Mission and helps lead worship for those who are homeless and in a place where he was not that long ago.

Let's hear from Alex as he talks about what it really means to be hungry and to pray for your daily bread when you don't know where your next meal is coming from.

VIDEO Alex on daily bread
SLIDE Give Us this day Our Daily Bread?

How does God answer this prayer for those who are homeless on the streets when they prayed, "Give us this day our daily bread"?
It is through people like you who give your money to support Manna Soup Kitchen both through this church and directly to Manna. Many of you like myself have been down there to roll up your sleeves and serve meals.

**You become the answer to someone else's prayer.**

This is how it works in the world. God prompts our hearts and God uses us to answer people's prayers. There may be somebody at your workplace who has been praying, "God, I feel hopeless."

You sitting down with them and simply saying, "Hey, I noticed that you seem discouraged. I just wanted to say that I care about you," helps you become the answer to their prayer.

When someone has a need in your family and you offer to help, you become the answer to their prayer. When you see someone on the side of the road and they have been praying, "God, I don't know how to change a tire, please help me," and you pull over to help, then guess what? You became God's instrument in answering somebody else's prayer.

When Jesus says, "Give us this day our daily bread," why do you think he says "us"?

Sometimes I have people ask me this question. "Pastor Jeff, you believe in a God who is good and loving but how can you believe in that kind of a God when 25 to 30,000 people a day die of starvation and malnutrition related diseases around the world?"

How do you reconcile those two things? Do you know my answer is? My answer is always this question.

Is there enough food on this planet to feed them all? If there is enough food, then where does the problem really lie?

God is responsible for production. We are responsible for distribution? So when we think about those people who are hungry and we think about the fact that in our own country two thirds of us, including myself according to the charts, struggle with being overweight and obesity, while other people do not have enough to eat.

"Give us this day our daily bread," is both a call to trust in God for what we need and not to worry, and at the same time to recognize that God answers prayer through people. We are called to be the instruments by which God answers other people's prayers.

**SLIDE**** “This Day…”**

That leads us to the next two words in this prayer. Jesus says, "Give us This Day." This combination of words literally means from morning until dusk.
This day – just for this day – just enough and not more…

The idea of this part of the prayer is about wanting and needing just enough for this day. "God give me just enough for today."

The challenge for us is that we don't want just enough for today. We want plenty. We want to have more than enough for tomorrow and the next day and the next day. We don't want to worry about where our next meal comes from and we don't want to worry where our meals will come from when we retire in five, 10, 20 or 30 years.

But God says to us through this prayer and in other places in Scripture that is not always helpful for us to have more than we need for just today. Sometimes when you have more than you need you don't think you need God anymore.

You know that is true in the community of relative affluence. We have a tendency to think, "You know what? I have a good job. I have a good retirement fund—although it was better two years ago! I have a good wife or husband. I have good kids. I have a house and a car, or maybe two houses and two cars. I don't need God."

We don't really say that but that is how we end up living our lives. You might remember in the Old Testament the Israelites were wandering through the desert and God provided them Manna from heaven. It was flour on the ground which they could make into bread. God gave them this instruction.

"I only want you to pick up enough manna that will meet your bread needs for one day. Don't pick up enough for tomorrow, just enough for today."

The dangers of having too much

You might remember that the Israelites couldn't do that. They wanted to gather more and more and more. They hoarded it because they were afraid God would not meet their needs and next day.

But when they opened up their jars of Manna the next day, what happened to the Manna? There were worms and it was spoiled and destroyed.

God says, "Don't you get it? I'm counting on the fact that you will trust me each day to supply your needs."

The words of Agur from the Old Testament book of Proverbs gives us this warning.

8 First, help me never to tell a lie. Second, give me neither poverty nor riches! Give me just enough to satisfy my needs.
9 For if I grow rich, I may deny you and say, “Who is the Lord?” And if I am too poor, I may steal and thus insult God’s holy name.

This prayer, "Give us this day our daily bread," is the prayer of contentment.

SLIDE The Lord’s Prayer is a prayer of contentment.

"Help me to be content Lord with what I have. Help me think that just enough is really just enough and not to need more. Help me to not constantly be striving to have more and more and more."

SLIDE “Our Daily Bread…”

Finally, Jesus tells us to pray, "Give us this day our Daily Bread." What is daily bread about?

SLIDE The meaning of “daily” = epi-ousion – that which sustains our existence

The word “daily” is “epiousion” in the Greek. What is interesting about this Greek word is that in the entire New Testament it only appears in the Lord’s Prayer. This word appears nowhere else in the Bible.

If you look in ancient Greek literature, nowhere in ancient Greek literature does this word appear. We have no evidence of this word anywhere in ancient Greek literature except in the Lord’s Prayer. This tells us that the disciples may have made up this word in Greek in order to explain something to us from Hebrew or Aramaic that have no equivalent in the Greek language.

“Epi” is a modifier in Greek and it means "around, on top of, upon, by which."

“Ousion” however was a really important word in the Greek. It was so important that when the early church tried to describe that Jesus was also God, and that God and Jesus and the Holy Spirit shared something in common, they used the word "ousion" to say that Jesus was one "ousion" with the Father. They were of one essence or one substance.

So the word “epiousion” would seem to say that which supports your very essence. Your daily bread is that which makes you who you are. Your daily bread is meant to be a part of your very nature. In the same idea as the staff of life and that your very existence depends on this.

Your daily bread is that which sustains you.

You might have learned in high school or college about Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs.

SLIDE Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs
You have basic needs like food and water and clothing and shelter and security. Once you have those essential needs met which is the daily bread that you eat—then you begin being concerned about the higher-level needs. The higher-level needs that we have our things we talk about as Christians as grace, unconditional love, a connection with a divine being bigger than ourselves and a sense of purpose in our lives.

When your basic needs are met there still is a hunger inside of us for something deeper. How is that hunger met? How do we satisfy that hunger? We satisfy it with a different kind of bread.

You remember that when Jesus was being tempted by the devil in the wilderness and he was offered stones and the devil challenged him to turn them into bread Jesus had a response from that echoed Moses.

SLIDE "One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God."

At one point the disciples come to Jesus and say, "Jesus, you have to be hungry. Let's fix you a meal and get it setup."

Jesus said, "I have food that you don't know about."

What is he talking about? Jesus is talking about his relationship with God. He is talking about the way that he spends time in prayer, sometimes all night long, which sustains him and gives him strength to be able to do the things that he was doing.

SLIDE The Bread of Life

That bread gave him a sense of mission and call from God and the work of the Spirit in his life. All of this sustained him.

In John chapter 6 Jesus feeds the multitude and then he says, "This is a sign. Do you get it? Do you understand why I fed thousands of people with a few loaves of bread and there was plenty left over?

Just to make it clear Jesus says,

SLIDE "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry. Whoever believes in me will never be thirsty."

This is what Jesus offers us. He is the bread that satisfies the yearning in our hearts.

Here is an interesting tie in that I learned last week. Do you remember what town that Jesus was born in? It was Bethlehem. He was raised in Nazareth but he was born in Bethlehem.

Are any of you aware what the word Bethlehem means? I had kind of forgotten this last week. The word "beth" is the word house in Hebrew. The
word "lehem" in Hebrew means... bread. Jesus, who is the "bread of life," was born in a town called, "the House of bread" because he would be the bread for the world, our "daily bread."

In our contemporary service we sometimes sing the song in which we say, "this is my daily bread, your holy presence living in me."

In the traditional service we sometimes sing, "Fill my cup Lord, I lift it up Lord, come and quench this thirsting of my soul. Bread of heaven feed me till I want no more, here's my cup, I lifted up, oh make me whole."

Some of you know Tom Brady who is the quarterback for the New England Patriots. He didn't play last year because he suffered a knee injury on the first game of the season, but he still has won three Super Bowls before he was 30 years old. He also is married to a supermodel and they now have a child together. Before he got married half the women in America are willing to freely give themselves to him because of his wealth and fame and good looks. He has more money than he can know what to do with. He has it all.

But he was interviewed after his last Super Bowl on 60 minutes in this way said;

SLIDE Why do I have three Super Bowl rings and still think there is something greater out there for me? Maybe some people would say, "Hey man, this is what it is all about. I have reached my goal and my dreams in my life." Me? I think it has to be more than this. I mean, this isn't...this can't be it. This isn't all it's cracked up to be. What is the answer? I wish I knew. I love playing football and I love the quarterback for this team, but at the same time I think there are a lot of other parts of me or about me that I'm trying to find.

What is he looking for? What else is there? I mean he won three Super Bowl rings and have it all, right? He has all the dough he could want. Is that all there is to life?

I think there is a different kind of dough that he might be looking for. There is a different kind of bread. I think of Isaiah 55:2 we read these words.

SLIDE 2 Why spend your money on food that does not give you strength? Why pay for food that does you no good? Listen to me, and you will eat what is good. You will enjoy the finest food.

We all need the bread of life. We all need to hear that there is one who loves us more than we can imagine and belongs to bring us bread that will sustain us through the good times and the bad. When we understand this we can have hope.
Are You Well Fed or Malnourished?

When I look around at us as a congregation I realize that most of us know we need something more than we can see and feel and touch. We know that there are higher-level needs and that Jesus is the bread of life.

But here is our problem if we are honest. We all get malnourished pretty easily. Sometimes we simply plan on having one meal a week and we think that will be enough to feed us. We come for a feast on Saturday night or Sunday morning. We sing and we pray and we walk out and we feel better. We feel more confident in our faith again.

Then we go out during the week and we eat garbage. Some of the things that we put in our minds and our hearts make us sick because it's just not good for us. We have heard a lot about salmonella the last few weeks and I'm afraid that many of us do the same thing in our spiritual lives as we eat bad bread and think it is good for us.

Or sometimes we go six days without anything to eat in between the feast. I have fasted for one day at a time and when I do that, by the end of the day, I feel exhausted and lethargic and apathetic and lifeless. But try going six days where you haven't done anything to feed your soul and you will find that your faith has no power. We will be barely struggling along from week to week.

How do you eat the bread of life?

You eat the bread of life by asking God each day to walk with you. We eat the bread of life when each day we pray, "God help me to live for you today. Be my companion throughout this day."

It happens when you see someone at work and you stop (because Christ is Lord in your life) to love that person and encourage them even when you don't feel like it. But when you do that you can feel the Spirit welling up inside of you.

It happens when you open up your pocket New Testament or your Bible and read a chapter or a passage during the day. We ask our congregation to carry Bibles with them throughout the day and if you don't have one we will give you one back on the table in the narthex or on the welcome Center in the atrium. Because we eat the bread of life when we stop and read from God's Word. When you ask God before you read to touch your heart you will find something, I guarantee you, that will nourish you for that day. You listen and you underline that part that speaks to you and you find spiritual sustenance in those words.

Or take home the devotional and prayer guide we have for this season of Lent. Using that each day is a meal that will nourish your soul.
Then we get down on our knees at night or we pray in our bed and we say, "Lord I'm sorry for how I blew it today, but I love you and I thank you for your love and forgiveness. Help me even as I sleep to nourish my soul."

Eating our daily bread is what will carry us through the tough times.

One of the ministries that we have in our church is a group of people who will take meals, bread, to those who are going through a tough time. When people are dealing with an illness or they've had a new child coming to their home there are people who will bring you bread, food that will nourish not only your body but your soul.

When we came back from Ukraine with our children several years ago many of you made meals and our refrigerator was stocked with fresh food. It was an amazing gift and it's one that many of you do for each other.

But let me suggest to you that giving someone a meal or bread not only nourishes their body but also their soul. With your own hands you can make something that could be a source of encouragement and refreshment for someone's soul. There is something about warm bread and warm food that lifts our spirits.

They say that scent is the most powerful memory sense, and my guess is that some of you smelled bread when you came in today. When I think of heaven, this is what heaven smells like, fresh and warm bread.

This warm baked bread is a symbol and a sign of the goodness of God and God's promise to provide for us. It is a sign that we can trust God no matter what is happening in our lives because God will supply all of our needs.

The bread is a reminder that God will take care of us daily and we need to trust him.

Giving bread away is assigned and that all of us are called to be the bread for somebody else in Christ's name.

This physical loaf is a reminder of the One who sustains us, who broke bread and gave it to us and said, "This is my body given for you. Do this and remember me."

**SLIDE** Give us this day our daily bread.

Please put your hands on your lap like someone is going to put a loaf of bread in them, and let's pray together. While your heads are bowed and your eyes are closed I want you to know and imagine that God longs to give you your daily bread—to care for you so you don't have to be afraid—to sustain you through dark and difficult times.

But God also longs for you to offer your hands as His instruments, to be the answer to someone else's prayer. He longs that you wouldn't be afraid and
constantly looking for and searching for more and more and more—but instead to be willing to receive just enough. He longs to meet more than just the needs of your belly and your body, but the needs of your soul, to be for you the bread of life. So I would invite you to pray with me this prayer that Jesus taught us to pray. Let's pray just this one phrase.

Say it with me out loud. With all that you have heard today let's say it with meaning.

*Give us this day our daily bread.*

*Give us this day our daily bread.*

Oh God, we trust you in our lives to supply our needs according to your riches and glory. Help us not to be afraid and not to worry but simply to trust—to look for your hand and work in other people who come our way that you have sent.

Use these, our hands, to supply the daily bread for someone else. Help us to be looking for ways that we can be your instruments for someone else—your answer to their prayers.

God teach us to long for just enough, to be content and satisfied with what we have.

Finally, oh God, we pray that you would forgive us for the garbage that we often eat or the times that we go without eating for days on end. Instead, help us to have a hunger for your word—a deep desire to feast at your table and to walk in fellowship with you.

Feed our hungry souls oh God.

*Give us this day our daily bread,* in Jesus’ name. Amen

Theme: Sermons on the Lord’s Prayer

“*Give us this day our daily bread*”

**Matthew 6: 11, Proverbs 30: 7-9, Matthew 26:26**

11 *Give us today the food we need…*

7 O God, I beg two favors from you; let me have them before I die. 8 First, help me never to tell a lie. Second, give me neither poverty nor riches! Give me just enough to satisfy my needs. 9 For if I grow rich, I may deny you and say, “Who is the Lord?” And if I am too poor, I may steal and thus insult God’s holy name.

26 As they were eating, Jesus took some bread and blessed it. Then he broke it in pieces and gave it to the disciples, saying, “Take this and eat it, for this is my body.”
Introduction

The importance of bread – the “staff of life”

I. “Give Us…”
   A. An Invitation to Trust (Matthew 6:25-34)
   B. How Does God Give Us Our Daily Bread?

II. “This Day…”
   A. This day – just for this day – just enough and not more…
   B. The dangers of having too much (Proverbs 30:8b-9)

III. “Our Daily Bread…”
   A. The meaning of “daily” – epi – ousion – that which sustains our existence
   B. The Bread of Life
   C. Are You Well Fed or Malnourished?

Conclusion

During the season of Lent we will be using the 2009 Lenten Prayer and Devotional Guide as our weekly study guide. You can find these on the Welcome Center or from an usher.