

What About... Give Us This Day Our Daily Bread?

BY STEVE SEBASTIAN

Give us this day our daily bread (Matthew 6:11)

...He took the seven loaves and the fish; and giving thanks, He broke them...
(Matthew 15:36).

- Where does the food we eat come from and why should we ask God daily to provide it?
- When giving thanks to God before meals, what are we thanking Him for exactly?
- God's curse on Adam included *By the sweat of your face You will eat bread, Till you return to the ground...* (Genesis 3:19).

So, does our food come from us or God?

Since becoming a Christian, I have tried diligently to keep the Lord's example of praying before meals. I raised my family in this tradition and have been happy to see it passed on in the families of my children. But Christ also tells us to specifically ask the Father to give

us daily bread. Should *daily bread* be loosely interpreted to mean "our basic physical or spiritual daily needs?" Well, if that's the case, then why not loosely interpret the rest of the prayer - "our Father who art all around us" or "forgive our trespasses as we forgive those who deserve it?" I suggest He means the food we eat every day. Our prayers should include a request to God for our daily food. He time-stamps it, kind of like manna. In general, outside of the "Lord's Prayer," I don't generally think to ask God to provide my daily food. Why is that? For starters, I've personally never known God to withhold food because I didn't ask beforehand. I work and make money to buy the food I want and need, as the Bible says to do. I live primarily by the rule handed down to Adam, *By the sweat of your face You will eat bread, Till you return to the ground* (Genesis 3:19).

We expect that the farmer, the butcher, the grocery store, the government, and others will produce and provide food. But what if we arrive at the store and there's no food to buy? What if there's nothing in the pantry or the garden? Consider the once rich nation of Venezuela, where almost overnight the people are starving. The "New York Times" reported in February 2019:

Venezuela is on the brink. Grocery shelves lie empty as food becomes increasingly scarce and expensive. People are fleeing the country at re-

cord rates, flooding neighboring countries. Inflation is set to reach 10 million percent in 2019.

The truth is that the world's food is supplied by God, not man. God provides it as He sees fit and is under no obligation to us. I suggest Jesus is reminding us of this very fact in Matthew 6:11. It's His land, His weather, His processes (germination, photosynthesis, the water cycle, etc.) which produces the food we live on.

Notice what God said through the prophet Jeremiah to the nation of Judah, after having become idolatrous. *They do not say in their heart, Let us now fear the LORD our God, Who gives rain in its season, Both the autumn rain and the spring rain, Who keeps for us The appointed weeks of the harvest* (Jeremiah 5:24).

We should never become complacent and dishonor God by taking His mercies for granted. Work doesn't feed people, food feeds people. We work to get food, but the food comes from God.

Teaching us to ask God for our daily food gets to the heart of the matter. It reminds us that our daily lives in this physical world depend solely upon the grace of Almighty God above.

What is man that You take thought of him, And the son of man that You care for him (Psalms 8:4).

