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STUDY FOR SERMON FROM 4.21.24

SUMMARY

“Give us this day our daily bread” marks a turn in The Lord’s Prayer. Jesus first instructs his disciples to give attention to God’s name (Matthew 6:9), to pray for his kingdom (Matthew 6:10a), and then to pray for his will to be done (Matthew 6:10b). These are all prayers centered on God—his holiness, omnipotence, and sovereignty. Next, Jesus tells his disciples to ask for something for themselves—daily bread. It might be easy to think that Jesus is allowing us to think selfishly with this request, but there is much “baked in” to our request for daily bread. First, a request for daily bread is an acknowledgment of dependence; we proclaim our finitude and utter dependence upon him. The apostle Paul made such an argument before the philosophers in Athens at Mars Hill (Acts 17:23–28). As he made his way to the city, it grieved Paul to see the profuse number of idols its people erected. Earlier, the city’s philosophers accused Paul of worshipping “foreign gods” (Acts 17:17), but Paul points out their ignorance as he noted the altar with the inscription, “To the unknown god.” The “god” they didn’t know is the one true God. Moreover, the one true God is much bigger than they imagine; he doesn’t live in small structures made by human hands. Instead, he is the creator and sustainer of everything (Acts 17:24–25) and the ruler of all nations (Acts 17:26). Apart from him, we have nothing; we couldn’t exist. Ultimately, this is what we acknowledge when we pray for daily bread—that he would physically sustain us by the power of his providential hand. To what end do we ask for daily bread? That we might have the strength and the ability to worship him alone.

GROUP QUESTIONS

Share something that surprises, encourages, or troubles you from the sermon or your direct reading of Matthew 6:11 and Acts 17:23–28.

What significance do “this day” and “daily” carry in this prayerful request? Why doesn’t the Lord ask us to pray for “storehouses of bread?”

Does “daily bread” only pertain to food? What else might daily bread include? What would it not include?

If there’s one thing Jesus would want you to walk away believing and receiving as a result of this portion of Scripture, what is that thing?

CLOSE IN PRAYER

As you pray, be sure to include today’s themes in what you bring before God.