

**St. Andrew's Church – June 20, 2010**  
Sermon "Lord's Prayer Part 3" – The Rev. Doug Kendall

May the words of my mouth,  
and the thoughts and meditations of all of our hearts,  
be acceptable to you, our God and our rock.            AMEN.

This month we have been looking at the Lord's prayer in some detail.  
Last week we looked at what it means to call God  
father, and also whether we are really ready to ask for God's kingdom to come,  
and God's will to be done on earth as it is in heaven.  
I had hoped to finish this series this week,  
But it was looking like a very long sermon if I did,  
So this series on the Lord's Prayer will be held over for one more Sunday.  
I will finish it up the First Sunday in July.  
If for some reason you are unable to be here that Sunday,  
Do check the church's website and you can read the sermon  
wherever you happen to be.

When we say the lord's prayer, or when we pray in general,  
what do we most often ask for?  
There are many different kinds of prayer by the way.  
Even in a Sunday morning worship service,  
there are at least five different kinds of prayer.  
There are prayers of supplication - for ourselves.  
Prayers of intercession - for others.  
Prayers of thanksgiving - for all that God has done for us.  
Prayers of adoration - in praise of God's nature.  
Prayers of confession - recognizing in God's presence that we do sin.  
There are many different kinds of prayer.  
What do we expect as well when we pray?  
How many of us would sit down at the dinner table with our families and pray,  
"Give us this day our daily bread"  
and then just sit there and wait for the bread to appear?  
Is that what we would do if we had real faith,  
or is there something more that is required of us?

What role do we play in working with the gifts God has given us,  
to acquire the things we need?  
To what extent do we work with God,  
rather than being passive and expecting God to provide for us?

I asked earlier what do we really pray for when we pray?  
Do we ask for our basic necessities of life like daily bread,  
or do we often pray for things that are not really necessary for us?

I was driving on a long trip with another minister one time,  
and we got to talking about prayer.  
After much discussion,  
the two of us wondered out loud,  
if perhaps the only appropriate prayer might be,  
that God's will be done,  
and that we be given wisdom to see God's will in our lives?

Today we are looking at the words, "Give us this day our daily bread..."  
the basic necessities of life.  
How do we read and understand that today  
when our basic necessities are rarely an issue for us?

I thought certainly of all of the phrases in the Lord's prayer,

this one should be pretty straight forward.  
There shouldn't be any controversy over these few words.  
"Give us this day our daily bread..."  
Well apparently I was wrong.

There is confusion about the word "Daily" in this verse.  
This passage can be translated either,  
"Give us this day our daily bread",  
Give us the bread that we need for today,  
or "Give us today the bread we will need for tomorrow."

In each of these cases, the emphasis is on the basic necessities of life,  
and a necessity that will not last very long,  
especially in the ancient world,  
before it goes bad and is of no use to anyone.

Whether it is today or tomorrow,  
The need is immediate,  
and the prayer is that God will provide today  
what we need for our immediate survival,  
not that God will provide today,  
what we will need for the rest of our lives.

This is a good reminder for us when we pray,  
to think about whether we are asking for things we really need,  
or just material things that we want.

In fact, if we already have our daily bread provided for us,  
should we be repeating these words at all?

Again we are reminded that this prayer we pray,  
is not just a prayer for me,  
it is a prayer that God would  
"Give us this day OUR daily bread."

Enough bread to live *for* you, for me, and for all people in the world.

Give us this day, Our daily bread.  
not "Give me this day my daily bread"

Asking who the "us" is in this passage is like asking Jesus  
"Who my neighbour?"

These simple words in the Lords prayer are not just about me,  
they are about asking God to provide food for our world,  
and along with that prayer is the implication that,  
if we really do want God's will to be done on earth as it is in heaven, that we will work to make that  
prayer a reality,  
Right here in our community of Stittsville,  
and also around the world.

This is a radical prayer,  
and not words to be said without thought and commitment.

Moving on in the prayer...

I have a brief quiz for you.

How many of you owe money on something?

Student loans,

Loans to family members, Car, House, Boat,  
credit cards?

All of the above maybe?

Now how many of you, when you say the Lord's Prayer say the words

"Forgive us our trespasses,  
as we forgive those who trespass against us"?

How many of you say,

"Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors"?

Well believe it or not, those questions are related.  
Do you know where the word trespasses came into the Lord's *prayer*.  
I expected to discover them in the King James version,  
but they were not there.  
After some time, and looking at old prayer books I discovered some good news  
and some bad news about trespasses.  
First of all the good news.  
The term trespasses predates the King James version of the Lord's prayer  
as the English translation.  
Wycliffe, when he translated the Lord's prayer from Greek to English,  
before the King James Version was authorized (by King James of course)  
translated the Greek word as Trespasses.  
So trespasses is older than debts  
that is the good news if you prefer trespasses.

Unfortunately there is some bad news as well.  
Even though it is older than Debts and debtors,  
it is actually not a very accurate translation of the original Greek.  
That is why the King James,  
and most translations since then have used debts and debtors  
instead of trespasses.  
The trespasses tradition has continued though in many churches,  
including the Anglican prayer book,  
and many United as well as Presbyterian Churches.

So why would Wycliffe knowingly translate from the original Greek  
with a term that was less accurate?

Picture this scene if you will.  
You are a poor farmer in England in the middle of the sixteenth century.  
You have begun to be taught the meaning of the words to the Lord's prayer  
in your own language instead of in Latin for the first time.  
Now it suddenly hits you, you are praying the words,  
forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.  
It doesn't take long to do the math.  
You have loaned another farmer a few coins to buy some chickens,  
and he still has not paid you back,  
but at the same time you owe a local Lord a large sum of money,  
as well as much of your crops in taxes.  
...forgive us our debts... as we forgive our debtors..."

That is like Jesus parable of the servant who is forgiven a huge sum,  
and then all he has to do in return is forgive a fellow servant a small sum.  
"forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors..."

Why not forgive the few coins the other farmer owes you,  
and then the overlord also has to forgive you your debt?

Sound simple?  
How much money do people owe you, versus what you owe other people.  
My brother owes me \$5.00,  
has since I was 12 years old and still hasn't paid me.  
Does that mean if I forgive him that debt,  
then the Bank has to write off Pam's and my mortgage on our house,  
credit cards, any other loans we have?  
Is that what this prayer is all about?

Apparently that was becoming a common misperception in the time of Wycliffe,  
so to clarify things, he translated the term "debt" as trespasses.

Subtle difference in meaning, but the financial connotation is removed.

In ancient Jewish thought though,  
the people saw their relationship with God as a covenant,  
which was in essence a binding contract.  
They vowed to be God's people,  
and to follow God's laws, and in return God would be their God.  
Now when an individual or the community broke God's commands,  
or did something that was contrary to God's will,  
then they saw themselves as breaking the contract agreement,  
and then there was a debt to be paid to God,  
to bring the contract back into effect.  
It was not a financial debt,  
but a debt of honour and faithfulness.

That legal language is the language that was used in the Lord's prayer.  
We are asking God to forgive us our debts to him,  
to forgive us our sins, as we forgive our debtors,  
or those who have sinned against us.  
But wait a minute... What have we said there?  
The King James says,  
forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors,  
or Wycliffe's version,  
forgive us our trespasses,  
as we forgive those who trespass against us.

In the Lord's prayer,  
in this prayer that we say so often, we are asking God to forgive us our sins,  
in the same way that we *have* already forgiven other people's sins.  
In other words, if we have not forgiven other people,  
then God is not expected to forgive us...

That is quite a high expectation on us.  
This makes it quite clear that we are not just passive recipients  
in the forgiveness game.  
We do not just come to God and expect forgiveness,  
without being willing to  
and indeed having already forgiven our brothers and sisters.

This should not be confused with either earning God's forgiveness,  
or holding God to a contract agreement.  
God is still sovereign,  
and can choose to do whatever he pleases,  
but Jesus warns us not to come to God expecting cheap grace.  
Experiencing forgiveness is a two way street,  
we can not experience forgiveness ourselves,  
unless we are willing to forgive others.

"Forgive us our sins,  
as we forgive those who sin against us.  
May God give us the strength and wisdom to forgive each other.  
Even as we know we receive God's forgiveness.

Today we have looked at our daily bread, the basic necessities of our life,  
and also of the lives of the rest of humanity.  
And we have also considered what it means to be a forgiven and forgiving people.  
I am going to do one more sermon to finish off this series,  
And it will have to be the first week in July since next Sunday  
Is our combined service with Stittsville United Church.

That will be the last in this series,  
and that is when we will be looking at whether God  
"leads us into temptations and delivers us from evil"  
or "saves us from the time of trial and delivers us from the Evil one  
or even leads us into evil and saves us from temptation.  
Temptations, evil, sin, should be a good Sunday for the beginning of July!

I am going to give you some homework to do though.

Over the next two weeks

go through all of the different translations of the Bible you have,  
and see how many of them end the Lord's prayer  
either in Matthew 6 or Luke 11 with the words,

"For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, AMEN"

and how many just leave you dangling.

If those words are not in our translations, where do you suppose they come from? You have two weeks to think about that,

and pray about it as well.

In Jesus Name, AMEN,