

Lord's Prayer: Provision
Matthew 6:9-13
Sunday, September 20, 2026

I surrender! Now, when I say that, what do you think? Do you think, “Wow, I want to be just like him. I want to be a quitter.” Probably not. In fact, in our cultural context, which is all about winning, you’re probably questioning my manhood right about now.

This is the third week and final week of our series on the Lord’s Prayer. So, in the first week, we talked about “Our Father:” God our loving father and his son Jesus, our hero, who we want to be like when we spiritually grow up.

Then, last week, we talked about God’s kingdom; how when we pray “your kingdom come, your will be done,” we’re actually praying that God will help us to become more like Him—to think his thoughts, say his words, and do his deeds—so that God’s will—God’s love—can spread to more and more people.

And now it’s week three, and we’re going to talk about the last part of the prayer, at least as recorded in Matthew’s Gospel.

Now, the way we typically understand this last part of the prayer is that we’re petitioning. We’re asking God for stuff: for food—the stuff we need to live; for forgiveness; for protection from evil.

But I want to take a step back, because in doing so, we’re also acknowledging a couple of things about God. First, we are saying that we believe God has the power to do what we’re asking. We’re saying we believe God *can* take care of us. God *can* provide for us.

And, even more than that, we are saying we believe God isn't just *willing* to grudgingly help us. We're saying we believe God *wants* to do what we're asking; that God loves us and will always do what's best for us. God *wants* to provide for us.

And, interestingly enough, the key to make that happen is surrender. Which, again, sounds kind of counter-intuitive ... or at least counter-cultural.

So, to illustrate what I'm talking about, let's first talk about the bread. And just so we're clear, when Jesus talks about bread, he isn't just talking about bread. He's talking about what we need to live. Bread was THE basic staple of his peoples' diets back then. So, when Jesus says we should pray to God to give us bread, what he means is, we should pray for God to provide us with *everything* we need.

But it goes even beyond that. Because in using the image of "daily bread," he's also calling to mind one of the formational stories of the Jewish people: their exodus from captivity in Egypt. Specifically, he was reminding his hearers about the manna.

Y'all know the story. The Israelites have escaped from captivity in Egypt. They're out in the wilderness, and they don't have anything to eat. They are utterly dependent on God to take care of them, and so God gives them manna.

Which, quite literally, was their "daily bread." Because, to ensure that the people fully surrendered themselves to him—that they did not try to take care of themselves by hoarding the manna—he made it so they could only collect enough for one day. Anything extra would just rot.

So, in telling them, and us, to pray this prayer, Jesus isn't just saying we should pray for what we need, he's also telling us to surrender, to make ourselves utterly dependent on God just like the Israelites were, out in the wilderness; to not save up a whole bunch of bread for tomorrow, but to surrender ourselves to God and let God take care of it.

And this surrender leads us naturally to our next ask. Forgiveness. To the extent we surrender our need to be in control and give control over to God, we allow the Holy Spirit to work within us, and we become more like God. We become better able to actually follow Jesus ... to love like he loved and forgive like he forgave the people who were crucifying him. Remember? "Forgive them Father, for they don't know what they are doing."

And, as with our willingness to rely on God for what we need, real forgiveness itself requires surrender. Because, when you get right down to it, an unwillingness to forgive is an attempt at control. We seek to control another person—in a sense hold them hostage—when we refuse to forgive them. We can't control what they do or say, but we can control whether we'll forgive them.

However, when we give up the need to be in control—when we surrender that need to God—we are able to release the person who has hurt us. We can turn them and what they have done over to God, who's the only one with any real control anyway. If there's anything that needs to be taken care of, God will take care of it.

And that's the point Jesus is making when he says we will be forgiven as we forgive. Now, we could interpret this part of the prayer as saying that if we want God to forgive us, we'd better busy forgiving, or else! But that isn't what Jesus means. What he means is that when we

embrace God's love and forgiveness—as we surrender more and more of our hearts, minds, lives, and selves to God—we become more like Jesus and therefore more able to forgive. Or, looking at it from the other side of the coin, to the extent we can't find it in us to forgive, we are showing that we haven't fully embraced God's forgiveness of us. Again, it boils down to surrender.

Which brings us to the last of the 3 petitions: “do not bring us to the time of trial, but rescue us from the evil one.” Now, one way of understanding this verse is that God causes our trials, our temptations, our suffering. And it has sometimes been understood that way.

But I want to be clear. God does not *cause* our suffering. Period.

The way Jesus' people, the Jews, saw it, that was the devil's job; to tempt us through trials and suffering to surrender, but not in a good way; not to *God*, but to surrender our faith *in* God.

We see this understanding most clearly in the Biblical book of Job, in which Satan inflicts death, destruction, loss, grief, sickness and pain on Job in an effort to get him to renounce God.

Now, one of things the story of Job illustrates for us is the fundamental truth that we *will* be tested and tempted. In this life, we *will* suffer, whether through our own stupidity, or the activity of evil, or the fact that sometimes in this world, bad things just happen.

So, when we pray this prayer, we aren't asking God give us some sort of free pass. We aren't asking God to steer us around the suffering. We are asking God to help us through it. To

be with us through it. To give us faith and endurance to make our way through it without losing our faith, hope, and love.

And scripture gives us two very different examples of how this can play out.

On the one hand, we have the example of the Israelites. After God released them from their Egyptian captivity and gave them their daily bread in the wilderness, they grumbled. They wanted to go back to Egypt. They surrendered, just not in a good way. They gave up depending on God and decided to create their own God ... a golden calf. They allowed the suffering they experienced in the wilderness to lead them away from God, and as a result, God allowed them to spend 40 years in that wilderness.

Contrast that with Jesus. You may remember the story. Right after his baptism, the Holy Spirit let him into the wilderness, where he fasted for 40 days. Then the devil showed up and tested Jesus. And the first thing the devil did when he showed up is to ask Jesus if he wanted something to eat. He told Jesus to turn some stones into bread.

But, unlike the Israelites, Jesus passed the test. He pointed out what was obvious, at least to him: humans don't survive on bread alone. They survive by God's Word.

Or, another way of putting it, "real" life for us humans isn't about chasing food or clothes or popularity or power or any of the other things the world around us tells us are important. Real life, abundant life, eternal life is found when we rely on God. When we surrender our lives and our selves to God.