

15/3/20, Matthew 6:11 Give us today our daily bread / Give us today the food we need

This week, mindful of a handful of local people I care for struggling with illness of those they love as well as widespread fear & anxieties of many re current COVID 19 pandemic & how they will cope, I was reminded of a friend's lengthy phone call re worries re husband with progressing dementia. Tired & uncertain for future.

Rosemary reported that when folk went to him with their problems, her Vicar would always inquire first, "*Have you talked it over with God?*"

Why is it that we often stay troubled because we don't want to trouble God, the loving Father who knows us and loves us? Or do I think that I can pretend / hide the truth from God, as we do with some other people/ keep up appearances, pretend that I am in control / always that all is well?

Give us today our daily bread –

Yes, you can spiritualise that to take *daily bread* to refer to spiritual nourishment: reading & trying to apply God's word in the Bible – food that lasts, that satisfies our deepest needs & longings. After all, Jesus said, "*I am the bread of life, whoever comes to me will never be hungry.*" **But**, in this context, it refers to what we need for each day. The important practical things – food, shelter, security but also anxieties, concerns & niggles, the things / the people that wear us down, anxieties & pain over children, fear for the future. Protection for those we love.

Give us today our daily bread-

Sometimes, people won't talk to God, pray for God's help, for things that seem unimportant in the big picture, or seem too personal or selfish to ask for - for good weather for certain events, for our jobs or our pensions, about holidays or retirement, about how we spend / use our time, our money, our talents. It is not selfish or wrong to talk to God about these personal things as well as about the coronavirus pandemic, hatred & division stirred up by political leaders across the world, floods, polar ice-melt and global warming, financial collapse. It is good to talk with God / to pray about what I shall face this week. Sometimes, in the Church, we don't pause much for prayer before we make key decisions about buildings or fundraising – almost as if we know more about such practical things than the God who is the Maker and Sustainer of the Universe! Don't shut God out of the "non-religious", secular parts of your life.

Give us today our daily bread –

Jesus taught the disciples, Pray to God as "Abba, your loving Father" Don't hold back, He wants you to share your cares & burdens, He wants the very best for you. & keep on talking & listening, asking & receiving. God, our Heavenly Father is concerned about everything that you & I are concerned about. Just as I want my children to talk about anything they are worried about, so God wants to hear about the things we are concerned about. The Lord's Prayer teaches us that it is not wrong to pray about our own concerns, provided that God's Name, God's kingdom & God's will are our first priority.

& in the original Greek of the New Testament, literally **Keep on giving us each day our bread**. Not asking God for coming months & then forget about Him for a while. Not a blitz to stock up freezer(s) & store-cupboard in panic preparation for shut-downs and shortages but daily coming to God for provisions.

15/3/20, Matthew 6: 19-25

. ***Our watchword is security!*** So declared Prime Minister, William Pitt the elder, in a time of war 260 years ago –the sort of Churchillian phrase that might yet be borrowed by our Prime Minister, now in current threat.

Truth be told, our watchword is security too. Security is that which keeps us untroubled by danger or anxiety, safe against attack, & confident for the future. Deep down, most of us search for that security. We long for predictability, reliability, stability, most of the time anyway. We kid ourselves that somehow by careful planning, we can be safe against life's storms & troubles. We tend to go to great lengths to procure whatever security we can. We lock our houses against burglars to make sure we do not lose what we already have, & we insure our possessions & our health & even our lives – just in case the unthinkable should happen. We set aside financial resources for our retirement. We hold on tightly to our jobs even if they are not well paid interesting or fulfilling. We invest in things – homes & furnishings – more than people. Though we also yearn for meaningful relationships that we hope will comfort & support us. Even in churches, especially in churches, we can hide behind what is familiar & what we know, even if it is not working, because it is comforting. We want to be in control & avoid inconvenient reality, awkward questions & all that makes us uncomfortable; that seems risky & challenges us to move out of our rut.

Sometimes, we have, paradoxically, to lose our security before we can find it. Perhaps, we suffer some deep loss –a person, a marriage, employment, health -& our once comfortable lives become suddenly insecure, unpredictable. It is at such critical times that we have special opportunities to take our eyes off from what our world considers to be the basis of security to renew our vision of what God, our Lord Jesus Christ, sees as the basis of security; Matthew 6: 25, 27,31, 33-***Do not worry about your life, what you eat or drink or what you will wear...who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life? Seek first your heavenly Father's kingdom & His righteousness & all these things will be given to you as well.***

In times of prosperity & contentment, that may sound like glib, idealistic advice, but in times of adversity & hopelessness, there is nothing else worth clinging to. ***Our watchword is security*** – the security of knowing that nothing can separate us from the love of God, & the completion of His purposes in our lives & in the universe. Isaiah 43:1ff – ***God our Maker, says to His people, Do not be afraid for I have redeemed you, I have called you by your name, know you inside out; you are precious in my sight & I have given myself for you. Whatever you face, know that I am with you.***

& words of Jesus in John 15:1ff. ***I am the vine and you are the branches. Remain in me as I also remain in you. Apart from me you can do nothing that last. Now rest/remain/make your home in my love.*** May trust God's promises and be held secure in His love . MP 583 Safe in the shadow of the Lord