

Our Daily Bread and Forgiveness

Prayer: Something Understood

Week Four

Christ the King Adult Education

May 5, 2019

Thou art coming to a King
Large petitions with thee bring
For His grace and power are such
None can ever ask too much.

- John Newton

HC Q. 125: The fourth petition is "Give us this day our daily bread." This means that we should ask that God supply all our need. It also serves as a recognition that without God's blessing, our labor and his gifts would be utterly useless. Thus, it should aid us in removing our trust from created goods and placing it in our creator and redeemer.

Unless the LORD builds the house,
those who build it labor in vain.

Unless the LORD watches over the city,
the watchman stays awake in vain.

It is in vain that you rise up early
and go late to rest,

eating the bread of anxious toil;

for he gives to his beloved sleep. - Psalm 127:1–2

Jesus and anxiety (Matthew 6)

Augustine believed that the petition is equivalent to Proverbs 30:38: Give me neither poverty (lest I resent you) nor riches (lest I forget you).

Luther also sees a social dimension to this prayer – work has both a private and a public meaning

- To pray this prayer is to pray against exploitation that “crushes the poor and deprives them of their daily bread.”
- Also to pray with the hungry, particularly those within the church – “Our Father... Give us...”

The personal meaning of work

- bearing the image of God: patients, plumbing, raising a family
- reintegration with God, with others, with yourself, with the world

The public meaning of work

- Subduing the chaos
- Bringing the presence of God, source of all goodness
- Alongside nonbelievers!

HC Q. 126: The fifth petition is "and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors." We are taught by this petition to ask God not to hold our sins against us for Christ's sake. We also confess that God's grace at work in us causes us to forgive our neighbor as well.

“If anyone insists on his own goodness and despises others... let him look into himself when this petition confronts him. He will find that he is no better than others and that in the presence of God everyone must duck his head and come into the joy of forgiveness only through the low door of humility.”

– Martin Luther

For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses. - Matthew 6:14-15

"Not that it is ours to forgive the guilt of transgression or offense, for this belongs to God alone! This, rather, is our forgiveness: willingly to cast from the mind wrath, hatred, desire for revenge, and willingly to banish to oblivion the remembrance of injustice. For this reason, we ought not to seek forgiveness of sins from God unless we ourselves also forgive the offenses against us of all those who do or have done us ill. If we retain feelings of hatred in our hearts, if we plot revenge and ponder any occasion to cause harm, and even if we do not try to get back into our enemies' good graces, by every sort of good office deserve well of them, and commend ourselves to them, by this prayer we entreat God not to forgive our sins."

- John Calvin

Oliver O'Donovan:

“To desire pardon is not to desire that God should wink or bend; it is to desire that he should show himself in his majesty as the one who raises lost mankind from the dead.”

If we are going to ask for this new world, we had better be prepared to live in it in its (rather, its Creator's) terms, “peopled as it is by all who stood in need of forgiveness, our own forgiveness as well as God's, and now stand in need no longer.” To do otherwise is to fail truly to live in the new reality God has given...

Lived plausibility structures – the world ought to see us living in such a way that when it asks why, the only appropriate answer is a story about a Father running to forgive his wayward son, or one about a king who forgave an unforgiveable debt, or a god who took on flesh and humbled himself to die for his enemies.