

Rev. Anthony T. Bertram

RECEIVING OUR DAILY BREAD WITH THANKSGIVING  
Philippians 4:6-7; Thanksgiving; November 26-27, 2025

The Sermon theme, “Receiving Our Daily Bread with Thanksgiving,” might sound familiar to you, and it should, because it comes from Luther’s explanation of the Fourth Petition, **Give us this day our daily bread**, which we learn and memorize in preparation for Confirmation. Let’s review the meaning together.

It is found on Page 324 of *LSB*. We will recite together the Petition, the questions, and explanations. It starts at the bottom of left column on page 324... What is the Fourth Petition?

**Give us this day our daily bread.**

*What does this mean?* God certainly gives daily bread to everyone without our prayers, even to all evil people, but we pray in this petition that God would lead us to realize this and to receive our daily bread with thanksgiving.

*What is meant by daily bread?* Daily bread includes everything that has to do with the support and needs of the body, such as food, drink, clothing, shoes, house, home, land, animals, money, goods, a devout husband or wife, devout children, devout workers, devout and faithful rulers, good government, good weather, peace, health, self-control, good reputation, good friends, faithful neighbors, and the like.

The Catechism explains that the “bread” we pray for is more than stuff baked in an oven, but “everything that has to do with the support and needs of the body.” It goes on to give some examples. Categories include: the physical stuff we need to live; the people God gives us in family; the society built upon the basic family unit of a husband and wife with children, including government; the good land He has given us to live and thrive in; good weather; protection from violence and warfare that prevent people from receiving daily bread; self-control that keeps us out of trouble; and the good people God brings into our lives to enrich them.

All of these things and more are included in Luther’s basic teaching from the Bible that, “God certainly gives daily bread to everyone without our prayers, even to all evil people.”

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The reason we pray to God for daily bread is that God is the one who gives daily bread to us. It would be senseless to ask for something from someone who does not have it. That all our daily bread comes from God is something we know only by faith.

Those without faith in God have a completely different outlook on their daily bread. For some unbelievers, daily bread is a matter of luck, which is beyond their control. Or having it, or not, is the result of privilege in an unfair world. Or having daily bread is simply a matter of hard work and good planning for those who deserve it. For those without faith, God is not the source of daily bread.

As Christians, we need to be careful not to think of our daily bread like the world does, apart from God. We know better than that. That God gives daily bread to believers “and even to all evil people” is a reflection of His love for everyone. God sent His Son to be the Savior of all. Even though we sinners don’t deserve it, He wants our sins forgiven. Christians believe that God’s gift of daily bread for all is just as gracious as His gifts of faith and forgiveness of sins. The God who loves sinners and wants all to turn from their sins and be saved is the same God who showers daily bread upon all people.

The obvious question in the face of the blanket statement, “God gives daily bread to everyone” is, Why is it then that some people don’t have enough daily bread? What about all the starving, dying, war-torn, naked, homeless, sick, and downtrodden folks? Where is their daily bread? The fault for their lack of daily bread should not be placed on God. This world that God created, even in its fallen state, has more than enough of what’s needed for all to thrive. The blame for a lack of daily bread lies on sinners and what they do, or do not do, with what God has provided.

Jesus explains how God provides. How do the “**least of these,**” those in need, receive what they need? Jesus says their need is His need. “**I was hungry and you gave Me food, I was thirsty and you gave Me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed Me, I was naked and you clothed Me, I was sick and you visited Me, I was in prison and you came to Me**” (Mt 25:35-36). When God answers our prayer, **Give us this day our daily bread**, what is given in abundance to us, individually and corporately, through us He gives to those in need.

With the faith and knowledge that God is the One who gives daily bread to everyone, Paul's encouragement in our Philippians four Epistle makes sense: **Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.**

Luther's second point, to "receive our daily bread with thanksgiving," is a timely reminder as we celebrate our National Day of Thanksgiving. As Christians, though, we don't wait for one day of the year to be thankful; every time we pray the Lord's Prayer's Fourth Petition we do so "with thanksgiving." And because we know from whom our daily bread comes, we know who to thank: God.

Do you know how to thank God? The answer seems a simple enough. By saying, "Thank you, God!"

What if you are having a rotten year and struggling to see anything to be thankful for, it being easier to count your losses than your blessings? How do you thank God when facing scarcity and not abundance? The more reasonable response when we lack daily bread is to be anxious and troubled by the cares of this life and coming up short of what we need, not knowing how we are going to get it.

Paul answers the question of how to show thankfulness to God when we are feeling anxious over our troubles: **in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.** When we have daily bread needs, we pray to God: **Give us this day our daily bread.** We bring our **supplications and requests** to God; we ask God for what we need because He is the One who has what we need.

Or course, God already knows what we need, but it does us good to put our needs into words; it shows faith in our gracious God when we entrust our needs to Him as the One who can and will take care of us. He has already saved our souls in His Son, Jesus, and we trust that our bodies are just as saved, both now and in the resurrection. **He who did not spare His own Son but gave Him up for us all, how will He not also with Him graciously give us all things?** (Rom 8:32)

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Gathered to celebrate Thanksgiving Day, God's Word speaks to our faith and encourages us. **Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.** Today and every day we can pray: **Give us this day our daily bread.** *What does this mean?* "God certainly gives daily bread to everyone without our prayers, even to all evil people, but we pray in this petition that God would lead us to realize this and to receive our daily bread with thanksgiving." Amen.

**The peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, guard and keep your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.**