

1

I'm in trouble this morning. We're now studying the Lord's Prayer, which has 5 verses altogether, and last time I covered only one verse, spending 15 minutes. And today we have 4 more verses. Basically, that means I will need at least 40 minutes for my preaching to cover the other four verses this morning; 40 minutes which is totally acceptable indeed even desired in any Korean church, but this morning, I'm at St. Andrews; and here 40 minutes is not acceptable; disrespectful. I believe 20 minutes are the max for any fine Presbyterian church like Saint A's; so, I'm trouble now. What should I do then? So, here is my compromise. After much consideration, I decided to spend 25 minutes for my message today. I know, that is still too risky. But I believe the generous mind and the noblest spirit of St. A's will be able to accept a 25 minute sermon at least once in life. So, here we go; my 25 minute sermon for St. A's this morning.

2

Now, let's begin with the very quick recap of what we studied last time. We covered the first verse that begins with "Abba Father who are in heaven." Meditating on that verse, we realized, that verse allows us to meet and pray to God as our heavenly Papa and Mama, in whose holiness we can immerse ourselves deeply, which leads to both our existential trembling and fascination or spiritual euphoria! We agreed that, that should be our fundamental attitude or basic mind orientation when it comes to prayer. That was all about verse 9 of Matthew 5.

Now, this morning, we move on to verse 10 of Mathew 5, which goes like this,
"Your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven"

I believe, if verse 9 is all about the fundamental mind orientation in the practice of prayer, verse 10 is all about the primary—the prime—purpose of prayer. Which means verse 10 is all about why we pray; the fundamental purpose. Then, what is the fundamental purpose of prayer? Verse 10 says that we pray **because we want to see the Kingdom of God here on earth**. Now let me break it down—the meaning of the Kingdom of God here on earth, so that we can have a better understanding of it.

Here is a story. The other day I had a chance to have a quick chat with Claire who is seven years old and a good friend of my six-year-old daughter, Stella. It was Saturday afternoon, and Claire asked what Stella does on Sunday. I said, "Well, Stella goes to the church every Sunday. What do you do on Sunday, Claire. Do you go to church too or what else do you do?" And Claire, with full confidence, says this, "**No, I don't go to church. You know why? (Why?) Because only bad people go to church. You know why they go to church? Because they want to become good people. And you know what? I'm already a good person, so I have no reason to go to church.**"

Brilliant! I thought it was a brilliant answer, sort of.

Then, my little Stella, she got confused, hearing Claire. Stella says, “Dad, I go to church every Sunday. That means, I’m always a bad person?”

I know Claire is quite misguided about the purpose of the church, and so is Stella. But guess what? Claire, she’s got a point, a good point (sort of), right? At least, she knows that when people go to church, people can become good people; a better person; a better version of their life. And if we’re allowed to expand her thesis, we could say that when people go to church, we have a good chance to make this world **a better place; a more peaceful place; a little more just place; because again**, if Claire is right, people will become better people in the church through the grace of God, and then those better people will make this world, where they live, a better place to live in; isn’t that right? Isn’t that true? I believe that is a good argument for the purpose of the church.

And I believe that is what Jesus means when he prays

“Your kingdom come,
your will be done,
(here) on earth as it is in heaven”

That means, Lord, we pray that this world become a better place through our prayer, our Christian life, and through our love and care for the world; a world of wars shall become a world of peace, a world of hunger shall become a place of abundance and sharing, and a world of violence and abuse shall become a place of human nourishing and natural flourishing. That’s why we pray (x2), Jesus seems to teach us this morning. And that’s how we pray and carry out our prayer, Jesus teaches us; again saying;

“Your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven”

Now that purpose of prayer, Jesus, moves on to verses 11, 12, and 13 to talk about very practical ways of embracing and establishing the Kingdom of God here on earth; so three verses, and three very practical ways of achieving the Kingdom of God here on earth; again, we have the fundamental purpose of prayer, and then three practical ways of carrying out the purpose.

So, now, I want to talk about the three ways of enjoying the Kingdom of God here on earth. But, actually, let me only talk about the first of the three because my time is limited, and I really want to finish my message around 15 minutes; not 25 minutes (that’s too much). I promise, we can cover the second and the third when I come back one more time next year with a generous invite from St. A’s.

3

So, here is verse 11 that goes like this:

Abba Father and Holy Momma, **Give us today our daily bread** (x 2).

So, Jesus seems to say that the first most effective way for us to enjoy God's kingdom here on earth is to have daily bread, probably daily bread enough for all of us.

Here, "by all of us," Jesus meant, I believe, **every single person living here on earth.**

And I'm so glad that, I'm so happy that, Jesus upholds the significance of daily bread.

Let me be clear here. We may think that in verse 11 Jesus seems to praise or cherish the idea of prosperity gospel. Prosperity gospel typically loves the idea of **God making God's people rich and happy, no matter what.**

Don't get me wrong, being affluent and being happy itself is not a bad idea (I believe being affluent and happy is quite biblical), but misusing the holy name of God to get only rich and happy is fundamentally misguided and unbiblical. And I believe, that's not what Jesus means when saying, "Holy Father, Give us today, our daily bread." I don't think Jesus means prosperity gospel. Then, what does he possibly mean by saying that?

In order to get the true intention of Jesus saying that, I believe we need to time-travel to the historical context for which Jesus was speaking. According to biblical scholars and historians, it is very likely that the poverty rate in ancient Judeo-Palestine is around 90 to 95%. That simply means that only 1 person or less than 1 person in 10 could afford to have daily bread for themselves and their families. Can you imagine? Only 1 or less than 1 person among 10 could really have daily bread! (95 or 90 people couldn't)

- Friends, no, I'm not an economist, but I do know, that's not a good economic practice.
- I'm not a sociologist, but I know that, the 95% poverty is not a good sociological situation.
- And I'm not a politician, but I know that when something is not right with politics, daily bread is not shared by everyone in the community. There is injustice when daily bread is not shared by everyone; there is malfunctioning of the governing body when daily bread is not shared by everyone. And there is something really wrong with the mind of affluent social elites when there is so much poverty in the community. That's what I surely know, and we all know, that's not really a fine reflection of God's kingdom here on earth.

And that is the context into which Jesus is preaching, saying, "**Holy Momma, Holy Abba Father, I pray that, I sincerely pray that . . . , "Would Give us today our daily bread? (x 2)."**" In other words, by extension, Jesus seems to pray that,

- "Holy Heavenly Father, would you transform this world of economic injustice so that everyone else in the community can really have daily bread?"
- "Oh, Heavenly Mother, would you correct the crooked minds of the social elites so that they can be more generous in sharing their abundance?"
- "Oh Holy God, would you help us all to imagine a world of enough daily bread so that we will savor the foretaste of the kingdom of God here on earth?"

- “Would you give us our daily bread this morning, tomorrow, and the day after tomorrow?”

I believe that's what Jesus truly meant when he said,

Our Father who art in heaven, thy Kingdom come, thy will be done here on earth, **Give us today (this morning) our daily bread.**

That's why some good-minded Christians started a non-profit organization called, “The Bread for the World” as you can see on the front page of the bulletin. Their goal is simple yet profound, which is, every single child, every single adult, and every single world citizen could enjoy their own daily bread with no immediate threat, with no unnecessary worries, and with big generosity from the social elites. Oh, I believe, the social elites, they have a huge responsibility to feed everyone else in the community who is looking for the daily bread this morning, tomorrow, and the day after tomorrow.

4

So now, what are we gonna do, when we pray, “Holy Father, Holy Momma, Give us today our daily bread.” What are we gonna when we pray that? What should we do?

I believe, we already know the answer. When we pray that, we will make sure that everyone else in the community—every single child, every single adult, and every single world citizen—has enough daily bread, today, tomorrow, and the day after tomorrow.

Holy saints of Saint A's, I know, we can make it happen; we will surely make it happen; and we will actually see it in our life time.

Oh, Holy Momma, and Holy God, Give us today our daily bread!

Oh, Holy Momma, Give us today our daily bread (x 2).

Amen.