

**Summerland United Church**  
**Nov 3 The Prayer of Jesus “Give us this Day”**

**Call to Worship**

If you arrive here hungry for more of that divine bread which feeds your soul, then I welcome you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.  
 I, your minister, may sometimes disappoint you, but he will not.  
 His grace is sufficient for all your needs.

*Jesus says: “I am the bread of life.  
 Those who come to me shall not hunger,  
 and those who believe in me shall never thirst.”*

**Threshold**

The Prayer of Jesus, also known as the Lords Prayer, is one of relationship. Relationship between us, each other, Jesus and God. For the next few weeks we will be spending time with this prayer. Last week we considered the relational way Jesus invites us to address God, with a family term used by child to parent – Abba.

This week we are going to skip to line 3 of the prayer – Give us this day our daily bread – as it our communion week. We will return to line 2 next week.

In the third line of this prayer Jesus offers us assurance that asking God to act in the world is not a waste of breath. An important part of prayer is petitioning the Holy One, naming needs. We are called to become mindful of the needs of the world and our own need to remember the Source of All Gifts. In the version of the prayer we’ll read this week we hear the line as “Grant what we need each day in bread and insight.” Reminding us that our daily bread is more than just physical nourishment, but spiritual as well.

**Scripture: John 6:32-35**

*Whether you take what is written in the bible as fact, myth metaphor or story, listen for the meaning it holds for you on this day.*

Jesus said to them, “Very truly I tell you, it is not Moses who has given you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is the bread that comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.”

“Sir,” they said, “always give us this bread.”

Then Jesus declared, “I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.

Reader: May God bless our understanding of these sacred words.

**All: Thanks be to God.**

## Reflection: Daily Bread

You may recall, in the story of Moses, that when the Hebrew people are in the wilderness they run out of food. God provides for them each morning with 'manna from heaven'. Moses tells the people to only collect what they need for the day and no more. There are a few who fear not having enough, who do not trust God to provide for them each day, so they hide away more than they need for the day. When they wake in the morning all the manna they have hidden away had rotted and was full of maggots.

Jesus extends this story outward to embrace more than physical nourishment of enough to eat in a day. Tho, it is important to remember that – there is enough food in the world for everyone, how we as humans manage food production, harvest, import and export leaves some countries with more than they need and others with not enough. Even in our town, there are those who never have to worry about where their next meal is coming from, while others think about it most waking hours of the day.

The line – give us this day our daily bread – is a both a request of God to provide, as well as an agreement that we will be conscious of what our daily needs for physical nourishment are, no more no less. And ideally, if we find ourselves in a place of abundance, we share that abundance with others in need.

Jesus, as we heard in the passage from John, expands this message of daily allotment of food to what he refers to at "True Bread from Heaven". This conversation comes only a couple of chapters after his conversation with the Samaritan woman at the well where he's talked about 'living water'. He is suggesting that the true bread from heaven is more than actual bread.

He uses the everyday mundane, yet vital, foodstuffs as symbols for something divine and spiritual. Bread and water are the stuff of life at its most basic level, yet as Jesus says in Matthew 4:4 "humanity cannot live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God'."

Bread and water bring people together – they share meals and in the sharing of meals they share stories, make connections, form friendships and relationships. When we share the food of the communion table, we do this with each other and we know that God and Jesus are present with us too.

Bread and water then are relational, it is around the table we form bonds and we have the ability to go deeper into our relationship with God. The true bread of heaven, Jesus says is this relationship. The listening to and talking with God. The asking for God to provide and agreeing to take just what we need. From this relationship we gain spiritual nourishment and insight.

In this line we hear the invitation to make this a daily practice. We need, Jesus is suggesting, daily bread – nourishment and insight. Daily relationship and connection. When we thirst or hunger, be it for physical food or spiritual understanding we need only look to the daily offering of God's presence among us.

I'm going to jump us back to the 2<sup>nd</sup> line of the Jesus prayer for a moment which says, "your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as in heaven." We'll talk more about this line next week, but I wanted to comment on it now because, really, each line feeds into the next. This line is us, humanity,

calling on God to bring the kingdom of heaven to earth. Which like line 3 is asking God to provide for humanity while also making an agreement. As the adopted children of God, as the body of Christ in the world – the kingdom of heaven is only possible if we agree to help make it happen. And one of the ways we can help make it happen is by not taking more than we need for ourselves in a day. God's will on earth is possible when we take what we need and share the rest.

This is true for food as well as our spiritual needs, this line of the prayer is invited us, well no actually telling us, to take time for prayer, take time for reflection, seeking insight and wisdom from God on a daily basis. Which if you're anything like me, doesn't happen all that regular. However, when we do this, we also contribute to the Kingdom of heaven on earth and we are nourished body and soul.

As I've said, and will say again the Prayer of Jesus is about relationship. About being connected to Jesus, God and each other. Relationships grounded in God's love for us and love in general, always benefits, always nourishes and always feeds us. This is the living water and the true bread of God. Amen.