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This week at MRC we finished our short series in the Lords Prayer by considering the final 3 petitions. We noted that whilst last week the prayers had been at the 'macro-level'; focused on the Lord and his glory, kingdom and will. This week there's a significant 'gear change' as we zoom right in and focus in on the micro, our daily needs.

We suggested strong parallels in this prayer with the people of God that we encountered in Numbers back in June and July as Jesus teaches us to pray for provision, pardon and protection.

Provision: Give us today our daily bread

This is a prayer in the West (especially) that we struggle to pray. Partly due to the prideful nature of our hearts that rubs against a reminder of us being dependent upon the Lord, but also because in our culture there is a great distance between the food we eat and those who produced it. In the agricultural mindset into which Jesus was initially speak they would be painfully aware that a failed crop or a workers illness might result in no pay and so no food. Also the 'daily' nature of the prayer is a distance from us as we have freezers! Rather than the manna each morning for the wilderness generation we can store away food for years and again lose the reminder of our dependence.

We noted that for brothers and sisters around the world this is a daily issue - and as we pray for our daily bread with them, we ought not forget our responsibility in sharing what the Lord has provided for us, with them. But we are also prone to worry, not so much about bread but many other things that remind us we're not in control - whether situations and concerns at work, relationship struggles etc etc Praying that the Lord, as our Father in Heaven, provide what we need each day is vital.

Pardon: forgive us our debts as we also have forgiven our debtors

We said this was a once in a lifetime prayer, but also a daily prayer as we confess ongoing sin and rebellion and debt towards him to whom we owe everything. The daily humbling of ourselves to trust afresh in his mercies new every morning is a

necessary process to remember who we are and who he is.

We then noted how forgiveness from God and towards each other are closely tied. Drawing on the parallel of the unmerciful servant from Matthew 18 we outlined how our offering of forgiveness to others shows (or doesn't) our grasp of our need of grace ourselves.

Forgiveness comes as much more of a package than we would like. There is something peculiarly Christian about forgiveness.

Protection: lead us not into temptation but deliver us from the evil one.

We said again how this is both simple and deep. At the simple level it's a reminder that we are in a spiritual battle, that Satan is real and that we need the Lords help and protection against him. Yet at a deeper level, What kind of temptation are we to be kept away from? How does this square with 1 Cor 10v13 or James 1v2-3 where the benefits of temptation are outlined in helping people grow and mature in the faith?

We said that the best answer seems to be that the Lord would protect us from falling into the kind of temptation that our sinful hearts would draw us into (see James 1v13-15). Some trials from him are for our maturing and growth, but some situations that we find ourselves in are from our own stupidity - seeking to get 'as close to the edge ' as we can, rather than fleeing.

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As always, adapt the questions as you need to for your group.

Why do we struggle to pray for daily bread? How does this prayer translate to us? Does the fact that it is a 'corporate' prayer change how we pray it?

Why does Jesus describe it as a debt? What would you say to a Christian who struggles to forgive others? Are there different kinds of forgiveness? Why? Why not? Does forgiveness always result in reconciliation? Why? Why not!?

How aware are you of the reality of the spiritual battle that Jesus talks of here? What is Jesus speaking about here? How does this prayer square with James 1v2-3?

How can we help each other to be increasingly shaped by the Lord's Prayer as we consider life and the Lords priorities?