

## ***Sunday of the Steward – “Give us this day our daily bread”***

*Delivered by Rev. Fr. Ghevond Ajamian  
St. Sarkis Armenian Church, Carrollton, TX  
March 19, 2017  
Gospel Reading: Luke 16:1-31*

In the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

As I always preach, the purpose of Lent is to learn. It is an opportunity to learn about our faith, how to grow closer to God and how we can become better Christians. Continuing with that tradition, this year’s Lenten Sermon Series is about the *Lord’s Prayer*. In the past weeks, we have learned that God is our Father who is full of love and power, and is also Holiness in nature. Last week we learned that when we pray for God’s kingdom to come, it is achieved through doing His will, that is to say, whenever and wherever His will is done, it is then and there that His kingdom becomes a reality.

For the past two weeks, we have examined the first half of this prayer which teaches us how to glorify and acknowledge Him as God. We have also established in our hearts and minds who God is, so today we will begin to learn the second half of the *Lord’s Prayer*. It consists of our personal requests to God and today’s request is, “Give us this day our daily bread.”

As we have said before, the entire prayer is in the plural: we, our and us. So we are asking that God give us bread, but what is bread? Many Church Fathers have interpreted this word differently. Some have said the bread Christ is referring to is physical bread, while others said it is spiritual bread. Still others have said it is Holy Communion, and yet still others have said it is Christ Himself. These are all different ways of understanding what this bread is, but for the Armenians, it is something different.

The Armenian word for bread (hug/hatz), according to St. Gregory of Tatev, comes from the Armenian word for request/demand (hujg\hayts), because that is exactly what we are requesting when we ask for bread: we are asking that God answer our requests, demands, and needs. When we pray this, we are saying, “You said you’d do it, so do it!”

To some this may come across daring and brazen, but God tells us to do this – He wants us to pray this way, for He will show us how true His Word is. Even Christ preached, “Ask and it will be given to you” (Matthew 7:7).

So He will answer our requests today, but what type of request? The Armenian word that is translated as *daily* (hanabazort) and also the Greek word

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(ἐπίουσιος/epiousios) are not found anywhere in Armenian or Greek literature, but rather they are made up words. The closest translation is 'frequent' and 'coming day'. Jesus, in His divine wisdom, and being wisdom Himself, teaches us not to pray for tomorrow's things, or next week's things, but to only concern ourselves with the present day's needs. We must not worry about tomorrow's bread, but today's bread. He stresses this on the "Sermon on the Mount", when He preaches, "So then, do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Let today's own worries be sufficient for the day". (Matthew 6:34)

It is very much like the heavenly manna of the Old Testament. When the Jews were wandering in the wilderness and were growing hungry, God answered their prayers with manna, heavenly bread, every morning on the dew of the fields. They were commanded to only gather enough for that day and no more. Naturally, the Jews gathered more than they needed, keeping some for the next day. But what ended up happening was the manna that was kept spoiled and was infested with worms and stunk. God did this to teach the Jews that they needed to depend on God's constant and daily assistance alone, and nothing else.

We see how God helps us maintain our lives as our creator and sustainer, because God gives us plenty when we ask for it. We may ask for a glass of water and He will give us a gallon of water. We may ask for a shirt and He gives us a shirt and pants. We may ask for a snack and He gives us an entire banquet. God gives us more than we ask for so we share with one another. It is not so that we keep it all to ourselves.

God gives us our daily bread, but we must take that bread to others. Last summer, a group of men took control of a police station in Armenia to force the government to clean up and stop the corruption it is perpetrating. The police and military surrounded the police station, laying siege to it. The men eventually became hungry and a man named Artur Sarkisyan, loaded his vehicle up with food and drinks, rammed through the police barricades and delivered their needed supplies. He risked danger to bring them their daily bread. We too are called to bring daily bread to others and in turn we will become answers to their prayers.

So let us remember two things in our prayers. First, we must only ask for what is immediately needed, not worrying about the future, but only the present. And second, whatever we receive, we must share with others. When we do this, then we are praying correctly and our heavenly Father will give us our daily bread.

Amen.