The lectionary text for this Sunday again includes the final verse from last week’s passage. Jesus continues to tell us he offers us bread and does this by showing us he is the source to make life worth living.

This final verse is important for Jesus to reveal who he is, and who we are meant to be as followers of Jesus. Jesus says, “I am the living bread which came down from heaven . . . . The bread I will give for the life of the world is my flesh.”

Ever since these words have been spoken by Jesus, questions surrounding eating the very flesh of Jesus remain, but we must remember that the author of John, along with the other gospels in the New Testament, use descriptive metaphors to describe the kind of relationship people can have as a follower of Jesus. We are not literally to eat the flesh of Jesus, because we are to examine how we talk to Jesus, model the life of Jesus, and commune with Jesus in prayer.

There is a universal prayer either spoken by people each Sunday, or when people are in great need, that stills our minds and hearts to bend our knees before God. It is called The Lord’s Prayer. The disciples ask Jesus how to pray, and Jesus tells them to pray this:

 **Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your Name,**

 **your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven.**

 **Give us today our daily bread.**

 **Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.**

 **Save us from the time of trial, and deliver us from evil.**

 **For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and for ever. Amen.**

When I say this prayer is universal, I mean that even if people cannot quote the entire prayer, they will be able to say parts of it if they hear another person pray it with them. I use the Lord’s Prayer often to soothe people when I am called to their home when a loved one has died, and from young to old, Christian or non-Christian, people feel soothed by this prayer, as I expect Jesus knew would happen when he gave it to his disciples. The Lord’s Prayer draws us into the presence of God.

So, today, I believe the focus of Jesus being the bread of heaven, is to be drawn into the presence of Jesus as flesh, as Spirit, as one of the Trinity, as God with us. The Lord’s Prayer is very true to life in every sense. Life is a combination of spectacular things and simple things. In almost everyone’s life there are breathtaking things and boring things. Fantastic things and familiar things. Awesome things and average things. That’s the way life is. Jesus gives this prayer to his disciples on an ordinary day.

Almost everyone notices that The Lord’s Prayer has two parts. The first part has three petitions; and the second part has three petitions. The first three petitions are:

* **hallowed be your Name**
* **your kingdom come**
* **your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.**

We are asking God to bring about these three things: cause God’s name to be hallowed; cause your kingdom to come; cause your will to be done as it’s done by the angels in heaven.

There is something unique about the first petition, “Hallowed be your name.” It’s not just one of three. In this petition, we hear the one specific subjective response of the human heart that God expects us to give — the hallowing, reverencing, honoring, admiring, valuing, and the treasuring of God’s name above all things. None of the other five requests tell us to pray for a specific human response of the heart, yet, the prayer begins with reverence, we are to respond to God in reverence. We are to remember we walk and live on sacred ground.

It is when we reverence God that the Kingdom Jesus so wanted us to experience takes place inside our hearts. Life can be extremely difficult for us to bear at times, but when we allow this prayer to soothe, to strengthen, and guide us, God’s kingdom lives in and through us. That’s what Jesus was telling his disciples, that the Kingdom of God is now, right where you live, right where you work, and right where you eventually die. God is with us. Hallowed be the name of God.

I have to be honest with my own spiritual habits when I bring The Lord’s Prayer forward; I mainly pray it on Sunday morning and Wednesday at noon. I have forgotten that this prayer is to ground me by helping me think of Jesus as the source of all life. Can I wake up with this prayer on my lips, if I begin to pray it when I first wake up and when I close my eyes at night. What gift from God’s kingdom will I experience?

So we keep our feet on the ground. That’s why the second three petitions are there. The second three petitions are:

* **give us this day our daily bread**
* **forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us**
* **Save us from the time of trial, and deliver us from evil.**

You can see the difference and feel the difference between these two halves. The first three petition us about God’s name, God’s kingdom, God’s will. The last three are about our food, our forgiveness, our holiness. The first three call our attention to God’s greatness. And the last three call attention to our needs. The two halves have a very different feel. The first half feels majestic and lofty. The last half feels mundane and lowly.

If I understand this prayer, I am to be strengthened by just praying it. This is a prayer for me to handle the pressures and problems of life. Sooner or later life can overwhelm all of us — physical problems (give us daily bread), relational and mental problems (forgive us our sins), moral problems (save us from the time of trial). We are to acknowledge our needs before a God who cares, because giving and receiving is *God’s creation norm*…But it is not a common practice in the *human* community…And so we need forgiveness. We need to acknowledge sin, even though, exposing and naming sin is not at the center of life lived to the glory of God…Forgiving sin is gospel work.

I am urging us to go to God for bread, and for healing of relationships, and for the overcoming of our sins, and for doing God’s will, and for the seeking of God’s kingdom — all of it, all the time for the sake of knowing and reverencing God’s name.

Jesus does not waste words in this prayer. The Lord’s Prayer is brief, where 38 words describe God’s presence with us, and our presence in God. He covers every part of what it means to worship God, and what it means to ask God to supply our needs. Jesus tells us he is the source and ‘bread’ of life.

That’s the way life is. And that’s the way this prayer is — a prayer filled with eternity and woven into ordinary life. So, I bring these words of hope or prayer to you.

* Father, cause your great and holy name to be honored and reverenced and esteemed and treasured above all things everywhere in the world (including my heart).
* Cause your glorious, sovereign, and wise rule to make a difference in the lives of all people (including my heart).
* And cause your all-wise, all-good, all-just, all-holy will to be done all over this world the way the angels do it perfectly and joyfully in heaven — and make it happen in me.

That’s the breathtaking part of The Lord’s Prayer. And when we pray it, we are caught up into great things, glorious things, global things, eternal things. God wants this to happen. He wants your life to be enlarged like this. Enriched like this. Expanded and ennobled like this.

All throughout John 6, Jesus has tried to help us embrace that God’s *wisdom* is not so much knowledge to be explained and understood as it is relationship to be trusted and embraced. Jesus no longer speaks of “belief in,” as we find in John chapter 3, but of “the one who eats me” John 6:57. For eternal life does not come through understanding correctly or believing the right things. Eternal life now is being in close communion with Jesus. The Lord’s Prayer is a daily way to stay in communion with God. Amen.