

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

“In those days, when again a great crowd had gathered, and they had nothing to eat, [Jesus] called his disciples to him and said to them, ‘I have compassion on the crowd, because they have been with me now three days and have nothing to eat.’”

The Collect of the Day today summarizes well something about God you see in the Gospel reading today. “O God, whose never-failing providence orders all things both in heaven and earth.” God knows what you need. That’s something the sinful flesh is tempted to take for granted. It’s easy when you are suffering, lacking, or even hungry, to be tempted to think no one understands or knows what you need. In some ways that’s right. One thing that was drilled into my head in my early days of seminary was when talking to someone as a pastor who is going through something no matter how great or how small to stop myself from saying, “I understand.” That’s something you hear often and nine times out of ten it’s well intentioned and harmless. The point, though, why it was drilled into my head is because when talking to someone going through, especially something very terrible in life, I don’t and can’t fully understand the weight and burden and all those things the person is experiencing.

Now telling this is not a matter of splitting hairs or it’s not simply a matter of counseling, pastors aren’t counselors they are pastors (but that’s a whole other discussion), there’s a theological reason behind it all and a purpose. The only one who fully knows what you need and what you are going through is God himself. He’s the only one who can truly look at you, know you, understand, and know exactly what you need. Not only that but Jesus tells you, “And when you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard for their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.” So not only does God know what you need, he knows even before you ask him. The Scriptures also reveal to you that, “Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.”

In the Gospel reading Jesus St. Mark by divine inspiration recorded for you, ““In those days, when again a great crowd had gathered, and they had nothing to eat, [Jesus] called his disciples to him and said to them, ‘I have compassion on the crowd, because they have been with me now three days and have nothing to eat.’” Jesus knew these people were hungry and needed food. God knows what his people need. He is the Creator of all things, and he is the one who orders all things in heaven and earth.

As you see this all today you, God first calls you to humility. You are not the Creator; you are his creature. God has created you. He calls you to humble yourself before the Lord who knows what you need and for you to realize this and what this all means. Don’t doubt who your Lord is that he does not care for you. Don’t let temptation, times of hardship, and suffering tear you away from your Lord. Don’t let the devil have the upper hand in your life to lead you down a dark path that looks inwardly toward yourself or to someone or something else for your trust and security.

Don’t let the world lure and entice you into false belief and despair. The temptation of the world is found in love of riches and the things of this world and what it offers. This doesn’t mean being rich is wrong. Love of riches and coveting happens no matter how much money or debt you have. The world tempts you into thinking you need what you don’t have or you need what you can acquire yourself because you know best what you need. Both ditches are deadly and tempt you to find your confidence not in the God who knows what you need but, instead, what you think you need. In all these things there is no satisfaction. There’s no fulfillment. There’s the constant downward spiral of wanting one thing after another, searching for something better, trusting in the latest promise of care, and no end in sight only a life of no confidence, no contentment, and no hope. There’s no God who does know what you need and cares about you.

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Know who your God is and who you are. See your sin and repent. Turn away from doubt. Turn away from bitterness and all covetousness. Seek the Lord who alone is the Lord and there is no other. Look outside of yourself to the one who has created you and orders all thing.

Not only does God knows what you need, he gives it to you. Why? It is because you ask him? Is it because you deserve it? Is it because you are so sincere? Why? It's because God has compassion on you. He has gut-wrenching compassion on you? How do you know this? "If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?" And again, it is written, "God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life."

In the Fourth Petition of the Lord's Prayer, you pray as Jesus taught you, "Give us this day our daily bread." Taking to heart this miracle of Jesus in the Gospel reading and what great compassion God has had and continues to have for you in Jesus you confess, "*What does this mean?* God certainly gives daily bread to everyone without our prayers, even to all evil people, but we pray in this petition that God would lead us to realize this and to receive our daily bread with thanksgiving."

Praying the Fourth Petition of the Lord's Prayer you know that God knows what you need and he gives it to you. The thing in all this too flows out of the Third Petition of the Lord's Prayer, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." You see your daily bread and everything that God gives you through his gracious and compassionate will. All this is through the compassion and mercy you have in Jesus. The God who is your Creator and knows what you need is the same God who became flesh and redeemed you.

This all informs you too and combats temptation from the devil, the world, and your fallen flesh. When you are tempted to doubt God knows what you need and will give you what you need come running back to his word. Come running back to what he says today and hold those words before your own eyes. Confess them before the world. Throw them in the face of the devil. Jesus said, "I have compassion on the crowd." Your Lord is same Lord who has the same compassion on you. And even if you should be taking your last breath your Lord is the same and has the same compassion as he takes you away to be with himself.

"And he directed the crowd to sit down on the ground. And he took the seven loaves, and having given thanks, he broke them and gave them to his disciples to set before the people; and they set them before the crowd. And they had a few small fish. And having blessed them, he said that these also should be set before them. And they ate and were satisfied. And they took up the broken pieces left over, seven baskets full. And there were about four thousand people. And he sent them away."

Jesus took care of the people in the Gospel reading because he had compassion on them. He knew what they needed and gave it to them. They were hungry and the Lord fed them. They were listening to their Lord who was teaching them and prior to these reading was healing and working miracles. The Lord took care of this crowd out of his compassion for them.

In 2 Corinthians 5 God tells you, "In Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them." Even the little things of fish and bread are a result of the Lord's compassion and care for you. God knows what you need and he gives it to you. He gives you your temporal needs which are here today and gone tomorrow but knows you need them. Because of Christ living and dying for the sin of the whole world, even unbelievers have these temporal blessings. Jesus said, "For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust." Even unbelievers have these temporal things given to them and God cares for them.

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As Christians, though, you don't just have temporal blessings and care. You have eternal life. You have Christ and his eternal benefits given to you by grace alone through your God-given faith alone. The compassion of God is even in your faith in him that he has worked the miracle through his word that you know and believe in Jesus who has redeemed you. You trust in the Lord who knows what you need and you know he gives you what you need. Ultimately and especially, you know all this in Jesus who is your Lord and who has called you his own.

For your life now, then, receive your daily bread with thanksgiving. Always remember and look to the one who has given you all you need and takes care of you. Give him thanks every day and in all circumstances knowing you belong to the Lord and are his dear beloved child in the waters of your baptism. Your sin is forgiven and you are at peace with God through the blood of Christ. Even your daily bread is a testament to your Lord's compassion and care for you. Show compassion and mercy to others as well. God uses you as his instruments to take care of your children and those in need. He calls you to bear one another's burdens together as the Body of Christ and serve one another loving as you have been and are loved in Christ.

In all things fix your eyes on Jesus who worked this miracle in the Gospel reading. He still is and always remains the same Christ and has just the same heart, thoughts, and words for you as he was and had at that time. He has not become different either yesterday or ever, and will not become a different Christ either today or tomorrow. This is a truly beautiful picture which is painted for you the depths of his heart, namely, that he is a faithful, merciful Lord, who takes your needs to heart and looks deeper into them than you dare to ask or present to Him.

Rejoice in your Lord who knows what you need and gives it to you out of his compassion toward you in Christ. Eat your daily bread with thanksgiving. Feast at his Supper now where he gives you his body and blood to eat and drink. Look to that eternal day and feast that knows no end where you will hunger no more nor thirst anymore as the Lord himself will be your Shepherd and guide you to streams of living water.

All who confess Christ's holy name, give God the praise and glory. Let all who know His power proclaim aloud the wondrous story. Cast every idol from its throne, for God is God, and He alone: to God all praise and glory!

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