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THE SERMON
on the
MOUNT as
EUCCHARISTIC
HOMILY

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There is nothing even resembling agreement on the Sermon on the Mount's literary nature. Bibliographical research of this section of the NT has received more than its share of consideration. Common is the opinion that the Sermon lays down guidelines for Christian living within the kingdom that Jesus brought. Thus the Sermon is seen as Law directives set within the Christian context, i.e. sanctification, within the terms of dogmatic theology. This opinion is not without difficulty as the reader of the Gospel moves quickly from introduction of Jesus with its clear but nevertheless brief Christology to rules for Christian living. Such a quick progression of thought is logically and theologically defective. Logically sanctification would best appear after Matthew's clearer sections on the atonement and death of Jesus or even after the Lord's Supper.

Several things about the Gospel of Matthew in which the Sermon has its most complete expression are striking. Of the Synoptic Gospels, Matthew is both the most literary in regard to organizational style and the most theologically complete. The Evangelist does not show the same concern for picturesque details about the life of Jesus as do Mark and Luke. Matthew's purpose is chiefly theological and does not get sidetracked into non-theological related bibliographical detail. His chief purpose is to present the theological content of Jesus' preaching and to demonstrate that Jesus Himself is the content of His own preaching. The Evangelist after reporting the baptism and temptation of Jesus informs the reader that He has begun that work which would occupy His life's time and effort. "From that time Jesus began to preach and say. 'Repent. For the kingdom of the heavens is near!'" With this Matthew identifies Jesus' preaching with the Baptist's (3:2). Without doubt both John and Jesus used these words, but the Evangelist uses them as an abbreviated code to summarize

the entire preresurrection message of both preachers. The preaching of both were equally effectual in bringing about God's desired results in the hearers. The Evangelist has prepared his Gospel not only to preserve in stenographic fashion the ipissima verba of Jesus, but to direct these words to the earliest church in a way that it would be most useful and intelligible. Superimposing the three year framework of the fourth Gospel on any of the Synoptic Gospels prevents appreciation of each Evangelist's literary contribution. Matthew presents the teaching of Jesus in several discourses (the Sermon on the Mount, 5-7; the Institution of the Apostolate, 10; the Parables, 13; the Discourse on Kingdom Greatness, 18; Kingdom Responsibility, 20; the Discourses of the Final Week, 21-25). Within these discourses the entire theological program can be expected to be found as the Evangelist concludes his treatise with the command that the Apostles should teach everything commanded by Jesus (28:20). While Mark can present Jesus as miracle worker and Luke, Jesus as the Helper of the afflicted, Matthew presents Jesus as the Revealer of God's truth in His message about Himself, especially as He related to God (11:27-30).

The Matthean discourses show such a remarkable comprehensiveness that they would have been the Evangelist's arrangement of the teachings of Jesus into homilies suited for the worship of the early church. The early church gathering for worship would not simply hear the teachings of her Lord, but rather these teachings put into homiletical form so that His message would be directly applicable to her life. The congregation waiting for the full manifestation of God's kingdom had experienced it in Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection. The message of the Baptist and Jesus that "the kingdom was near" had to be transposed into "the kingdom had come" without casting any doubt that it was the authentic preaching of Jesus. This Gospel, as all authentic preaching, is born out of the tension of faithfulness to the original message and concern for the present situation. The Gospel of Matthew has this advantage

over all other NT writings (with the exception of James) in that its audience can be more closely identified with those who actually were acquainted directly or by hearsay with the message of the Baptist and Jesus. The person of Jesus was not for them a novum. The transforming element was not the introduction of Jesus' person, but that this person once crucified had risen from the dead. His resurrection and His subsequent appointment of the apostles into full authority demanded that His original message be reevaluated. The preacher of the discourses was not simply another itinerant rabbi, but One whose person and message God had authenticated by the resurrection. The Evangelist claims to be faithful in the preservation of the original message, but his faithfulness is not simply that of an adequate scribe, but that of one who has witnessed the coming of the promised kingdom in the crucifixion and resurrection. A simple, unadorned pre-resurrection posture is simply impossible for the Evangelist. In the Gospel, the discourses of Jesus are no longer preserved to be directed at the messianically expecting, pre-kingdom audience addressed by Jesus, since that situation has been made nonexistent with the completion of the messianic work. These discourses are recorded for those who have heard the message of the crucifixion and resurrection and have already obeyed the command to be baptized. The Evangelist has recorded the discourses so that in hearing them He who gave them can be present among them as the Preacher of God's kingdom and the Revealer of God's will.

Among the recorded discourses of Jesus, the Sermon on the Mount is given the most prominent position by being placed first. Testifying to its complexity is the diverse and contradictory opinion about its message. It hardly seems to be directed against applicants for or novices in the kingdom. Though the message is heard by crowds (5:1) who are astonished at the style of delivery (7:28-9), it is intended for the disciples (5:1,2) who have been given the understanding of mysteries (13:11). The Gospel is written for sharing this understanding. As the discourses are the major literary actions of the

Gospel, they should be expected to present this understanding of the mysteries, i.e., divine revelation in the most literary developed forms. The Evangelist has chosen the material of the Sermon as the first and thus the most prominent form for the disclosure of the divine mysteries.

The early church did not always gather to baptize, but they did always gather because they were baptized. Faithfulness to the message of Jesus required baptism just as it required sharing of the message (13). Though the church did not gather to baptize, it did out of faithfulness to Jesus gather to celebrate His Supper and thus ensure His presence in their midst (26:26-8; 28:20). This Sacrament visualized before the worshipping congregation the One who had called them into being and whose message they were committed to preserve. The Sermon cannot be considered simply as dogmatic or even homiletical material unrelated to Jesus whose body and blood focused the atonement and its benefits into the church.

With this in mind it is not unlikely that the Sermon was intended by the Evangelist as a homily for the congregation gathered in eucharistic celebration. The NT epistles were intended to be read as sermons in the earliest congregations to take the place of an absent apostle who still had pastoral obligations to them. The reading of the OT Law, i.e., the Books of Moses, and the Prophets served as liturgical lessons to be read during the service, with the NT writings serving as sermons. This is not to deny that congregations had their own preachers, but in any forming situations formerly prescribed sermons can be necessary. At the beginning of the Reformation, Luther's sermons, later to be confessionally canonized into the Large Catechism, served a similar purpose in congregations whose pastors lacked complete certainty about the content of the message to be preached.

Thus it was not unlikely the Sermon on the Mount by its prominent place in the Gospel, was given a correspondingly position of honor among Christians coming to worship with Christ's Supper. Seeing the Supper as the center of the

early congregation at worship, the following outline for the Sermon is proposed.

I. The Description of those Who Worship and Receive the Sacrament

1. Description of Worshiping Congregation in Christ (5:3-12)
2. Description of Congregation as It Faces the World (5:13-16)

II. Preparations for the Sacrament

1. Place of Written Word in Service (5:17-20)
2. Rite of Reconciliation before the Sacrament (5:21-26)
3. Warning Against Adulterous Apostasy (5:27-30)
4. Divorce as Failure to Reflect Christ's Relationship to Church (5:31-32)
5. Confessional Commitment without Oath (5:33-37)
6. No Retaliation - Atonement Accomplished (5:38-42)
7. Love Extension of Atonement (5:43-48)

III. Liturgical Rubrics for the Service

1. Money Giving (6:14)
2. Character of Prayer (6:5-8)
3. OUR FATHER AS EUCHARISTIC PRAYER (6:9-13)
4. Justification (Forgiveness) Eschatology Viewed (6:14-15)
5. Fasting for Eucharistic (6:16-18)

IV. Post-Eucharistic Reflections

1. Concern for other Christians at Supper supercedes Concern for Things (6:19-21)
2. Character of Pastor as Eucharistic Leader (6:22-23)
3. Satan and God as Controlling and Opposing Forces in Church (6:24)
4. Greater "Food" of Sacrament Makes Concern Over Earthly Food Unimportant (6:25-34)
5. Non-judgmental Attitude of Eucharistic Participants (7:1-6)
6. Effaciousness of Eucharistic Prayer (7:7-12)
7. Baptism as Commitment to Truth as Entrance (7:13-14)
8. Distinguishing among Pastors (7:15-20)
9. Eschatological Judgment of Pastors (7:21-23)
10. Two kinds of pastors (7:24-27)

Sermon's Conclusion (7:28-29)

The Lord's Prayer as Eucharistic Prayer

The place of the Lord's Prayer in the canon of the Mass and in Protestant eucharistic worship can be easily demonstrated. Why was the early church, and the church through all times motivated to place this prayer in the Supper commemorating Christ? As participating in the Lord's body and blood was the most sacred of the church's worship rites, the suggestion that it was an act of honor and respect for the exalted Lord hardly seems adequate. The liturgy is an expression of the church's faith and doctrine, lex orandi lex credendi. This is more applicable in the early church where the liturgy and doctrine shared a more natural organic unity. The connecting key between the Prayer and the Eucharist may be the Prayer's most controverted words "Give us this day our daily bread" (6:11). Ernst Lohmeyer aptly refers to "the riddle of the word epiousios," translated commonly in English by 'daily' and asserts that the phrase 'give bread' occurs only in the Gospels and not in the remainder of the NT and not in the Apostolic Fathers and the Apologists. Lohmeyer says the following:

The prayer 'Give us our bread' is made to God only here; otherwise it is said three times of Jesus that 'he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and gave it to them' (Matt. 14:19; 15:36; 26:26). . . . But outside this narrow and holy circle the phrase occurs nowhere else in the first three Gospels, so that it seems to have been usual only in religious language. (Our Father: An Introduction to the Lord's Prayer. Tr. by John Bowden. New York: Harper and Row, 1965, p. 135.)

Remarkable is that in the phrase which Lohmeyer claims uses "religious language" there is the reference to bread, the most common ingredient necessary to sustain earthly life. Lohmeyer commenting on the personal possessive pronoun, "our daily bread" refers to Septuagint translation of Gn 3:19 which inserts the personal pronoun before the word 'bread' for which Adam must work with the sweat of his brow (p. 138). Luther's understanding of prayer as reference to everything needed to support life receives support from the Hebrew lehem and the Aramaic lahma, which not only means bread but any kind of food.

The word 'bread' refers to the entire economic system which man has had to create in order to nourish himself in the world now cursed by sin. In Paradise man was nourished directly from what was grown. There were no intermediate steps. Adam had only to stretch forth his arm and eat food that was pleasing both to sight and taste. With the coming of sin the produce of the earth must follow a circuitous route before reaching man. The ground must be prepared in combat with undesirable non-nourishing vegetation. After harvesting, it must be further prepared for baking. Then finally man eats it and is nourished and given a lease on life. Bread refers to the most elemental of all prepared foods as it can be made simply with flour made with crushed grain and water. Man sweats in the planting and harvesting and then in the baking. Baking assumes a culture developed to produce ovens for making the bread. The advent of sin required a culture in which man would come together no longer to praise God, but out of necessity for mutual preservation. The word 'culture' suggests worship of God, but then it also suggests man gathered in an agricultural community. The agricultural community soon develops into an economic community in which each person is given a specific role in bringing the produce of the earth to each member of the community. Man has no freedom of choice to participate in this system, but the sinful condition mandates cooperation with those with whom he has been alienated by sin. Man in sin despises the very persons upon whom he is dependent to survive. Even in the system necessitated by sin, God remains the Creator and Provider. Jesus' words, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God," does not condemn man's economic life but sees it as necessary along with that life that comes from God and must be fed by His Word. Bread is the nourishment provided by God for man in his sinful condition, that condition in which he waits for God's final word of judgment. Jesus' self-reference as 'the Bread of life' and 'the Bread of heaven' must be understood in the same context. He is that food prepared by God, i.e., in heaven, for man in his sinful condition.

Without sin, Jesus would not have been prepared by God to feed man's spiritual condition. Without sin, man would have been fed directly by God; but with sin, man was incapable of confronting God directly. Jesus is that divine Bread prepared especially by God for man in his sin.

The real problem lies with the word 'daily.' Lohmeyer says that the three ways of determining its meaning - etymologies, the ancient versions and the ancient commentators. All three different sources are uncertain (Lohmeyer, p. 141). Lohmeyer narrows down the meaning of epiousios to four possible understandings: "tomorrow's (future) and daily, needful and future (heavenly)" (Lohmeyer, p. 145). That commentator's remarks express well the dilemma connected with 'daily,' epiousios.

The scope for choice once again highlights the difficulties of the position: in a prayer which is intended for daily use and which deals with the simplest and deepest matters of human life and divine action, in a prayer which is as clear and brief as it is close knit and comprehensible, we find a Greek word which appears here for the first time and which for a number of centuries occurred only here. There is no Aramaic word which clearly suggests itself as the basis for this Greek word; and yet the word must have been comprehensible, and it must at the same time have given the petition a content or at least a colouring, all of its own (pp. 146-7).

Lohmeyer's words express the dilemma that an essential word in a prayer so basic that the unlettered who heard Jesus and used it in the early church has remained the point of unreconcilable debate from the immediate post-apostolic period right up to the period of current scientific exegetical study. This does not however prevent him from providing his own solution, one which asks God to relieve physical and eschatological hunger with physical and eschatological bread (p. 154).

It therefore means the future, the coming bread, the bread of and for tomorrow, which God is to give today, and hence it is a hint of the dual character inherent in Jesus' idea of bread, which in turn fits the situation indicated by all the Gospels, that of standing on the threshold between this world and the world to come, and being in the grasp of the powers of both worlds, of both grace and need (p. 155).

Lohmeyer is aware of the tension in his position that attempts to mediate between physical and religious understandings of bread in the petition

by regarding the request for physical bread as religious because bread is holy (p. 156). Here he seems to be grasping at straws because the entire tenor of all four Gospels is that concern for bread, i.e., food, is the mark of unbelievers, not believers who can and should expect earthly nourishment from their heavenly Father. Even Lohmeyer provides this observation.

For a long time it has been thought remarkable, even highly significant, that Jesus has a petition made for physical bread as the first of all human concerns, as he forbids all such thought elsewhere (pp. 155-6. Emphasis added.)

Lohmeyer does not follow the natural direction suggested by the Gospels' evidence that the petition for daily bread cannot be simply a request for God to keep us alive physically.

"Give Us This Day Our Daily Bread": No Reference to Physical Sustenance

While the OT and the Jewish writings have a firm commitment to seeing physical life as a gift given and sustained by God (Lohmeyer, p. 137), the Gospels all point to another and higher life which is nourished by a supernatural food. The quest for physical food is a sign of unbelief, a characteristic of the Gentiles which the Christians are not to emulate. This is the message of the Sermon, itself, the Synoptic Gospels, and the Fourth Gospel.

One entire pericope (Mt 6:25-33) forbids concern about nourishment for the body.

Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you shall eat or what you shall drink, nor about your body, what you shall put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? And which of you by being anxious can add one cubit to his span of life? And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin; yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O men of little faith? Therefore do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the Gentiles seek all these things; and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things shall be yours as well (RSV).

The pericope forbids Christians to be concerned about the provisions for the body simply because God as the heavenly Father is providing for food and clothing even before asking for them. God provides for the birds, the lilies, and the grass which do not and cannot pray. The Creator God is at the same time the Provider God and the goodness of the creation is extended naturally in His providential care. God needs no urging to continue what naturally belongs to His creative love. The Gentile makes obtaining physical things the center of both his physical and religious life, since he has no knowledge of a God who is the loving Provider of His creation. The Christian who slips into religious concern about nourishment follows the example of the unbelieving Gentiles by not taking full advantage that through faith he has already received God's revelation of Himself as one who cares and provides for what He has created. Such concerned Christians are called "men of little faith" (6:30) not because their faith lacks sincerity, but it has not made full advantage of what it already knows.

The closing verse of the pericope, "But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and these things shall be yours as well (6:33)" with its implicit prohibition against religious concern for physical sustenance appears to be diametrically opposed to the common understanding of "Give us this day our daily bread (6:11)" as a prayer for God's continued providence of our physical life.

The first temptation (4:4) is a repudiation of making central in our lives that existence which is sustained by bread. In response to the Satanic request to turn stones into bread, Jesus quotes Deut. 8:3, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God," words originally directed by God to the Israelites in the wilderness who were concerned more about what they were eating and what they could eat than they were with God. The Bread of Life pericope of the Fourth Gospel (Jn 6:22-40) further develops the theme of the first Matthean temptation that any anxiety about

nourishment is tantamount to unbelief as it doubts the continued goodness of the Creator God. Even this unbelief is instigated by Satan and falls under God's condemnation. Again it does not seem plausible that a request for bread as earthly sustenance would have any place in the Lord's Prayer. The comparison of God's answering prayer to an earthly father fulfilling his son's request for bread does not suggest that God is the ultimate provider of physical sustenance. Providing bread for one's close relatives and dependants belongs to the ordinary course of this evil world. In a similar fashion God is dependable in providing

"the good things" to those who ask Him (6:9-11). Luke catches the religious significance of "the good things" by interpreting them as the Holy Spirit (9:13). The entire thrust of the Sermon is religious, not physical. Hungering and thirsting are not in themselves virtuous, but only the hunger and thirst for righteousness can be identified as blessed (5:6). Already the evidence begins to silhouette the position that any request for 'bread' must be understood as the desire for a supernatural food. All the evidence is not however in.

Jesus begins His ministry by fasting (4:2) and throughout His ministry has no permanent place of lodging, a privilege accorded the brute creation (8:20). This deprivation demonstrates that the Messiah's faith is not like the Gentiles who have no adequate knowledge of God, but is perfect in knowing the nature of God as love. Fasting, though not announced, is seen by Jesus as a religiously rewarding exercise (6:16), because it shows that the real life is fed by the Word, i.e., the 'bread' which comes from heaven. Feasting can be as equally appropriate as fasting, since the style and quantity of food does not belong to the essence of kingdom (9:14,5). Instructions for fasting (6:16-18) seem inappropriate if the petition for 'daily bread' actually means a request to God for food. These instructions follow closely the Prayer and as the statement on forgiveness (6:14-15) should also be regarded as an interpretation through fuller explanation of the Prayer.

The lack of concern for physical sustenance in the Messiah is expected among His immediate followers who are to make no physical provisions for their journeys in His behalf but who are to receive their sustenance from those who hear them (10:9,10).

The inclusion of two miraculous feedings of the crowds, four and five thousand, has suggested to commentators that the same incidence has been reported twice (15:32-39; 14:13-21). The second pericope is followed by the second reference to the sign of Jonah (16:1-4) with the condemnation of those as adulterous who seek a sign as proof of the presence of God's kingdom. Significant is that the Evangelist places both pericopes so close to one another and adds no editorial comment about the deity of Jesus who is present as the Creator God or about any recognition by the crowds about how Jesus truly is. Providing physical sustenance, does not generate or sustain faith. The crowds had not recognized that God was present in Jesus and thus were incapable of glorifying Him. The second miracle, the Feeding of the Five Thousand, precedes the promise that the sign of Jonah shall be the ultimate one to the generation opposed to God and under Satanic control. Jesus' warning about the leaven of the Pharisees and the Sadducees, i.e., concern for earthly things precedes the recognition by Peter that Jesus is Messiah (16:13-20). God's kingdom is not recognized in the divine providing of bread, but in Jesus whom Peter correctly sees as God's Christ and Son.

Peter's recognition follows Jesus' warning against the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees, which the Evangelist interprets as a warning against their teaching (16:12). Problematic is that the Pharisees and Sadducees are seen as holding to one doctrine (Gr. didache). Though political alliance was for them possible, theological alliance was not. Not only did they differ on the extent of the canon, but the Sadducees were thoroughly Hellenized and had effectively debunked the supernatural in religion. Nevertheless, Jesus attributes to them the same position. The reference to their mutually held position as

"leaven" (16:6,11) of which the Evangelist makes editorial comment (16:12) and the placing of this reference within Jesus' own commentary on the two miraculous feedings with His condemnation of their concern for food all indicate that Jesus sees as false that religious concern over physical life. Jesus' scolding of the Twelve, "O men of little faith, why do you discuss among yourselves the fact that you have no bread? Do you not perceive? Do you not remember the five loaves for the five thousand, and how many baskets you gathered?" (16:8,9), the admonition to the disciples about their anxiety about food and clothing (6:25-33) - in both places they are addressed by Jesus as "men of little faith." The Final Judgment scene (25:31-46) which views feeding and giving drink to the hungry and needy as evidence for reaching the verdict does not place the emphasis for kingdom on physical care, but suggests that just as God provides without our asking so the believers demonstrate they are His children by providing for the needs of others without their asking.

While the Feeding of the Five Thousand in Matthew is provided without homiletical commentary from Jesus or editorial commentary by the Evangelist, it is used in the Fourth Gospel as the backdrop for Jesus' self-proclamation as the Bread of Life (6:22-40). This miracle is recognized as one of the few places in which the Synoptics and the Fourth Evangelist converge. The Fourth Evangelist however, is more elaborate in his presentation. Rather than calling attention to what He has miraculously accomplished in the feeding of the five thousand, Jesus rebukes those who find the miraculous effects God's ultimate work (6:26-7). God's ultimate food was not the manna (6:32; cf. Mt 4:4; Deut 8:3), but Jesus Himself. The contrast is between the manna and the miraculous multiplication of fish and bread on one side and Jesus on the other. The earthly food sustains human life for this world (6:49) but Jesus sustains a person for the resurrection and the life of the future world (6:35-40). Though the Fourth Evangelist has a more fully developed theology contrasting the earthly and the heavenly foods than does Matthew, the basic themes are the

same. Jesus lives by God's Word, a bread for the soul contrasted with bread for the body (Mt 4:40), while the believer lives by Jesus who is Himself the life of the soul. Both evangelists strongly condemn seeing earthly sustenance as God's ultimate provision for human existence.

'Daily Bread' as a Reference to the Eucharist

While Christians have a responsibility flowing naturally from faith to provide for those who through no fault of their own lack enough for normal sustenance, Christians themselves are not to be concerned with their own physical lives as such concern indicates a basic unbelief typical of the Gentiles. Christians are part of a new order which transcends the earthly one. The new order will finally be consummated by the heavenly banquet of the Messiah where believers, even the Gentile ones, "will sit at table with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob" (Mt 8:11), a theme developed by Jesus in the parables of the Ten Virgins (25:1-12) and the Marriage Feast of the King's Son (22:1-14). Provision for the believer in the final kingdom is picturesquely described in Rev. 7:16-7. The hunger and thirst for spiritual food (Mt 4:4) are finally and completely satisfied in the life where the dimensions of the new kingdom are truly unveiled.

Lohmeyer recognizes the eschatological element in the petition for 'daily bread' when he writes that, "One might almost say that from this point of view to pray for the coming of the kingdom and to pray 'Give us our bread today' amounted to the same things" (p. 148). He wants to draw a line from the physical eating of the community with the final eschatological banquet to which the outcasts are invited (pp. 149-50). The ordinary physical eating for bodily nourishment cannot be regarded as prelude to the eschatological banqueting, since all four Gospels see bodily eating as being abolished and not merging into the eschatological feasting. Though Lohmeyer dismisses any sacramental understanding of 'daily bread,' Jesus does contrast sacramental eating with eschatological eating. Remember that Lohmeyer cannot fail seeing that in 'daily bread,' an eschatological element is present. No reasons are offered

by Lohmeyer for his rejection of the sacramental understanding (p. 157). In closing the institution of His supper Jesus points ahead to the eschatological banquet. "I tell you I shall not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom"(26:29). Sacramental eating and drinking and not mere physical nourishment, but a proper eschatological prelude. The petition, "Give us this day our daily bread," is a request for sacramental nourishment with Christ's body and blood now in preparation for the heavenly banquet of the Messiah.

The Fourth Evangelist is most explicit and develops the identification of Jesus as the heavenly bread, but the thought is not absent entirely from Matthew. Jesus says to the Canaanite woman that the bread of the children cannot be cast to the dogs. To which she replies that dogs are entitled to the crumbs. For this her faith is described by Jesus as great (15:21-28). As this section is one of the two or three pericopes where Jesus favorably speaks of the faith of believers, the reference to bread and crumbs cannot merely be dismissed as a homiletical device and illustration from the ordinary world to prove a divine doctrine. The children who are entitled to the bread are the Jews, "the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (15:24). Since to them salvation has come, they are called "lords." Rather than providing her with illustrations to make the truth more digestible, Jesus is using religious language to which the woman responds with an understanding rarely found by Jesus among His hearers. She is aware of the Jews' place of prominence in the plan of salvation and more importantly her own place in relation to them. She also knows who Jesus is, i.e., the Son of David, the messianic figure who is entitled to be addressed as 'Lord' and that her cravings can only be satisfied by Him. He is the object of her faith (15:22,28). The bread or crumbs she desires is not simply a share in general salvation, but participation in Him. Only Jesus will satisfy the spiritual hunger of her soul. In her reply to Jesus she refers in a capernaic way to the actual eating of the crumbs, while the children have bread there is

no reference to their eating it (15:26-7), perhaps a subtle reference to the Jews who have the Bread of heaven at their disposal but ignore Him.

In John 6, Jesus as the Bread of Life and Heaven (35,58) describes participating in His flesh and blood as necessary for salvation and the resurrection (53-4). As the Reformed have seen proof for their non-corporeal view of the Sacrament, Lutherans have been hesitant to see any eucharistic over- or undertones in this Johannine pericope. As the Fourth Gospel has a highly developed baptismal doctrine, it could also be expected to have a eucharistic doctrine of similar proportions. Blood and water are mysteriously joined in the crucifixion (19:34). The bread which gives life and the resurrection is identified by Jesus as His flesh and blood. In the early church, bread, flesh, and body were becoming synonymous as references to the Sacrament. The bread broken was participation in Christ's body (1 Cor 10:16). Acts 2:42 and 27:35 could also be possible sacramental references.

So far the evidence points away from 'daily bread' as a reference to a mere request to God to sustain the physical life. Here there is a reference to something which the Christian desires to be present now for his nourishment and which he hopes will some day be unveiled in the coming kingdom. Next our attention must be given to the place of the petition in the Prayer itself.

The Place of the Petition "Give Us Our Day Our Daily Bread" in the Prayer

Lohmeyer points out that while the first three petitions have their focus on God, the latter three have it on the suppliant who offers the prayer (p. 134). 'Give us this day our daily bread' thus structurally would belong to the two remaining petitions about trespasses and deliverance from the Evil One by protection in the temptations. The petition for bread is grammatically joined to the request for forgiveness by 'and' (Gr. kai). The brevity of the Prayer makes the connection between the two clauses by 'and' more noticeable. The conjunctive 'and' does not appear previously in the Prayer, but the two 'ands' tie the last three petitions together. But why and how should the request

for 'daily bread' and receiving forgiveness for trespasses and forgiving them be connected? How does God's giving physical bread relate to our being forgiven and our forgiving. Lohmeyer rules out that the reference here is to sins for which man is indebted to God in favor of partner relationship by which man is indebted by contract to God (pp. 168-180). Sin which is the basis for man's need throughout the NT is no less evident in Matthew and there is no reason as seeing "and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors" as anything less than a confession of sins together with a promise of extending the same beneficial attitude to those who offend us. It is the only petition for which the Evangelist immediately provides Jesus' explanation (6:14,5). The connecting 'and' between the petition for bread and forgiveness seems all the more alluring. The reception of the 'daily bread' provides an opportunity for God to release debts.

Where Matthew uses 'debts,' Luke uses 'sins' to express the relationship of the Christian to God; however both use 'debt' to express the relationship of Christians among themselves. This does not mean that Matthew does not have a concept of 'sin.' Jesus comes to save people from their sins (1:21). The paralytic hears that His sins are forgiven. All sins with the exception of the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit are to be forgiven (12:31-2). Peter is concerned with the frequency of forgiving his brother's sins (18:21-35), a question related to Jesus' charge to Peter to forgive sins (16:12). Lohmeyer points out that "the noun phrase 'forgiveness of sins' is connected in Mark and Luke with the baptism of John, in Matthew with the Last Supper, and thus with the blood of Jesus" (p. 165).

While both Matthew and Luke see this petition as a confession to God, Matthew by the use of 'debts' places the confession within the context of God's covenant relationship with His people. It is not simply that people have sinned but they have betrayed a trust given them by God. They have offended against the terms of the contract given by God. Without denying the Law as objective norm, there is according to Lohmeyer "a special, almost subjective norm, i.e.,

one relating to the partner, mediated through the fact of a relationship concluded earlier, which is itself immediate, like that between master and servant or between father and child" (P. 169). Matthew contains parables teaching this personal subjective relationship between God and the believer; the Talents (25:14-30); the Unmerciful Servant (18:21-25); the Servants in the Vineyard (21:33-41). God has given His people a special revelation of Himself and they have not only sinned against the objective standards of the Law, but they have offended against those gracious terms which have brought them into existence as His special people. Luke has the petition asking God to forgive 'sins' and not 'debts' in order to distinguish the offense against God as more serious than the offense against a believer. It is not that Matthew depreciates the understanding of sin, but he sees the sinner in a covenant relationship with God as part of a relationship with all believers. Here is the picture of the church as corporate entity which has received God's forgiveness and sharing this forgiveness among themselves.

At this point a number of themes come together: (1) the prayer for release from debts to God comes from a community which is releasing one another from debts against its members; (2) the Eucharist is that act within the worshipping community in and by which God releases debts to its members; (3) the payment for the debts has been made by Jesus who by His blood has fulfilled the debts incurred under the terms of the old covenant.

Behind this petition for release from debts is the act of Jesus in His atonement. In the birth narrative He is destined to save people from their sins (1:21); He gives His life as a ransom for many (20:28); and He pours out His blood for forgiveness (26:28). The forgiveness from or release from the debt towards God does not simply flow from God's general goodness or from the expiatory character of confession as in ancient middle Eastern piety (Lohmeyer p. 167). Release from the debt is possible because Jesus by giving His life as a ransom or payment for many (20:28), and by presenting His blood as a sacrifice

to the Father (26:28). Through this act sins are released to those who participate in the sacramental act (eis aphasin harmartion). Since the sacrificial payment act has been accomplished by Jesus, the Christian can place upon God the demand that his sins be forgiven.

The request for forgiveness is in the aorist imperative. This means that the believer is demanding forgiveness not at some future indeterminate time but right now, immediately. This petition should not be robbed of the urgency suggested by the aorist. Thus the petition does not request that God should keep on forgiving sins, but rather He should provide immediate and direct help for the believer in his present dilemma of sin. Dogmatically the church recognizes the sacraments as providing that visual and concrete help desired by the believer afflicted by sin. As the Lord's Prayer is the worship activity of the baptized community, help from God would be provided not in Baptism but in the Lord's Supper. This has also been pastoral practice to give this Sacrament to those distressed. But without reference to dogmatic considerations and pastoral practice, the Evangelist places forgiveness requested in the Prayer in the Sacrament. All this is more striking when it is considered that 'forgiveness' from God is not in Matthew a frequently used word.

Lohmeyer notices the use of the aorist imperative in the petitions for bread and forgiveness and concludes that in each the eschatological element is present.

This petition too, then, stands under the influence of the 'today' of which the fourth petition spoke. It is no more permissible to keep this bare 'today' by itself than tacitly to extend it to a 'daily.' The aorist, as hitherto, demands not only a single action, but an action that is once and for all: it asks for God to give us bread today because it is eschatological bread, and to forgive our sins today because they are eschatologically blotted out. In other words, although the petition refers to a forgiveness of sins now, on earth, it also refers to a final forgiveness on the one day of God, which makes the person who prays free for God's kingdom and his glory. (p. 179)

The forgiveness requested in the petition is not a request for divine leniency in the present situation, but places the petitioner before the God

who on the last day will hold all men accountable to Him. The forgiveness of that day is the certainty of forgiveness today. Behind this petition is the juridical procedure in which God justifies the sinner. God as the establisher of the covenant relationship with man is also entitled to determine whether the believer has fulfilled the obligations placed upon him. The believer petitions God for forgiveness because he has failed to live up to the divine requirements. God forgives because Jesus has taken the place of many by offering to God His life in exchange (20:28). God has already forgiven man once, but in the Prayer the petitioner requests that God would actualize this forgiveness in his life. God answers this request by actualizing the death of Christ for sins in the Sacrament.

Lohmeyer mentions no conceptual connection between the petitions for bread and forgiveness even though he does notice an eschatological urgency in each. Neither does he comment on the intriguing 'and' with which the petition for forgiveness is grammatically attached to the petition for 'daily bread.' Both petitions place a demand upon God to act immediately. Any request for God to act immediately in providing physical sustenance would only show underlying anxiety for physical food, which Jesus condemns as the weakness of the Gentiles and the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees. In the petition for bread there is the same urgency as in the petition for forgiveness. If 'bread' here was the ordinary bread of physical sustenance, a deo volente, would be an appropriate condition. Prayers for forgiveness are without condition and prayers for physical aid must be bracketed with the condition of the divine will.

The early Christian community praying the Lord's Prayer would understand the request for 'bread' not to be petition for physical food whose value extends only to the limitations of this life, but for the 'bread' of the Sacrament whose value extends from this life into the future life. Very early in the church's life this sacrament was referred to as shaking or partaking in bread after the references in the Synoptic Gospels and I Corinthians to Christ's breaking bread.

'Bread' became the accepted shorthand. This 'bread' was not given to individuals but to the entire community of the church. The church celebrates the Sacrament in the same way that the church is in its totality God's redeemed people. The Supper with its forgiveness belongs to all in the church.

Regardless of the Prayer's use in individual devotion, it was intended for the corporate worship life of the church. God is addressed 'our Father.' The first person plural pronoun is not again introduced until the last three petitions where it appears in each, i.e., for bread, forgiveness, and assistance in temptation against Satan. The liturgical unity reflects that one act in which God accomplished the redemption of His people as a unit. His people, and not just individuals have been saved (1:21; 20:28). Thus in their totality as God's people they respond with 'our Father'; 'our bread'; 'our debts'; and deliverance of 'us' from temptation and Satan.

Just as the Sacrament can be celebrated many times, there is really only one celebration in which all participate so there is only one Prayer which each Christian community at its appointed time joins. The prayer comes up before God as the one corporate prayer of the entire Holy Christian Church and thus the one Prayer is truly catholic and ecumenical. This church only known finally to God does not pray for physical sustenance, but that 'bread' which will sustain it in its new life with God. This 'bread' gives the forgiveness requested by the petitioner, assists him in the temptations that threaten to destroy his place in God's kingdom, and provides protection against Satan.

The request for forgiveness is followed by a statement of the believer's own forgiving attitude to others. The perfect tense used, "as we have forgiven those who are indebted to us," Luke brings into the present "indeed also we forgive everyone who is indebted to us." There is here no suggestion of a causal relationship as 'because' (Gr.: hoti) is not used. Just as it has become natural for God to forgive so also it is become natural for Christians to forgive each other and others outside of the community. The forgiveness of the Father

extends not only to petitioning congregation but also to those within and without the community who have offended it. The early church saw both Jesus and Stephen forgiving those who brought about their deaths. It is not enough that the early church emulate them as examples, then the basis for forgiveness would be no more than moral example. The believer standing before God the Judge knows that the divine forgiveness extends not only over himself and the other petitioners but over all. Christians' forgiving others does not entitle them to forgiveness as a quantity which they have earned, but demonstrates that they are personally aware of the divine universal forgiveness.

The early church practiced a strictness in regard to the Lord's Supper that seems legalistically anachronistic to our time when nearly all barriers around altars have been dropped. Not permitted at church altars for the Sacrament were church members whose bishops were recognized as heretics. Within the worshipping community, quarreling members, i.e., those with unresolved 'debts' against each other could not commune. Mt 5:23, forbidding the bringing of a gift to the altar before reconciliation with the offended brother had taken place, has been traditionally used as providing the principles for this type of discipline in connection with the Sacrament. The pericope in the Sermon may have been placed there in its original situation as this sort of rubric on sacramental discipline. From the very beginning the church would have it within the eucharistic context.

Part of the ancient liturgy was a request by the leader or priest for worshipping members present to reconcile themselves. The 'kiss of peace' within the eucharistic congregation indicated that reconciliation had taken place, that the words "as we forgive our debtors" had indeed actualized themselves. Those who refuse to forgive are not allowed to participate in the Sacrament, but will be revealed on the last day as not really belonging to God who forgives all sins to all generously.

The eschatological element which Lohmeyer correctly recognizes in the

petition for forgiveness in the prayer because of the urgent necessity in the use of aorist imperative is supported by Jesus' theological commentary immediately following the Prayer.

For if you have forgiven men their trespasses (parptoma), your heavenly Father also will forgive you; but if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses (6:14-5).

The Prayer as the Sacrament will both be eschatologically validated. The Supper will be consummated in the heavenly banquet in which the Lord who instituted the Supper will visibly join the congregation who shared in His body and blood. At that time the reality of the present forgiveness will be seen to all. Though the Father answers the request of the petition to provide forgiveness note the commentary pericope uses the future tense not to suggest that forgiveness from the Father does not now exist, but that its personal manifestation will be realized at that time.

The Greek word epiousion appears in the NT only in the Matthean and Lucan editions of the Prayer. Luke who tends to simplify matters which are complex in Matthew carries this word over into his version. An interpretation would have been appreciated. Lohmeyer discounts a fifth century A.D. Egyptian use of the word which probably means a ration of food sufficient for a day (pp. 141-2). Theologically this would contradict the view of God who gives liberally and extravagantly to all. Jesus points to God the divine extravagance in the feeding of the Five Thousand so that there is more food than the crowds could consume. Jerome's translation of epiousion into the Latin supersubstantialis may of all possible options be not only the correct one but the best. The Greek epi can be translated 'above' and ousion can be derived from on meaning essence or being or substance. The epiousion bread would be the bread whose existence comes from God or heaven and is thus to be distinguished from the ordinary bread which is available at all times. The thought is not that we are to regard ordinary food as divinely given, but we are to recognize one 'bread' as having actually originated in heaven.

Above we have developed this thought according to the Fourth Gospel (Jn 6). God gives us daily bread without our prayer, as Luther says in the Small Catechism, but there is one type of bread that does not come without our request, and that is the food of Sacrament.

This part of the Prayer's meaning can be set forth in paraphrase. "Give us our share in the Sacrament and by this forgive our indebtedness to you as even now we are releasing others from their debts to us."

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