

Thought for the day – Thursday 15th April 2021

By Revd John Marshall

The Lord's Prayer and Gregory of Nyssa

A while back it was Gregory of Nyssa's day and I remembered that Stephen Cherry in his Lent book, "Thy will be done" quoted from Gregory as he commentated on the Lord's Prayer.

In the chapter Bread and Justice, Stephen Cherry goes straight to Gregory (330-395).

"For Gregory, the prayer for bread in the Lord's Prayer is significant precisely because of its modesty. When we pray it, we are seeking 'only what is sufficient to preserve our physical existence.'

Gregory says "So we say to God, 'Give us bread. Not delicacies or riches, nor magnificent purple robes, golden ornaments, precious stones, or silver dishes. Nor do we ask Him for landed estates or military commands, or political leadership. We pray neither for herds of horses and oxen or other cattle in great numbers, nor for a host of slaves. We do not say, give us a prominent position in assemblies or monuments and statues raised to us, nor silken robes and musicians at meals, nor any thing by which the soul is estranged from the thought of God and higher things; no – but only bread!"

Gregory comments on fine food, but he is also concerned for justice and encourages moderate eating.

"Ask for bread because life needs it and you owe it to the body because of your nature."

"For the bread of God is above all the fruit of justice, the ear of corn of peace, pure and without any admixtures of the seed of tares."

Later in the book Stephen Cherry refers to Gregory's views on the Tempter, which are also interesting.

God provides food for us and we should seek to see it is provided fairly.

We remember Jesus declared "I am the bread of life." John 6.35

Let us give thanks for our food and all those who provide it.

Stephen Cherry Thy will be done Bloomsbury

