



Give Us This Day Our Daily Bread

[Mark 6:30-44, Exodus 16](#)

Pastor Julie McCain, August 10, 2014

Please pray with me: Speak, O Lord, in words that we can hear. Open our hearts to your word, and plant the light of your grace deep in our hearts. Amen.

AT & T has a commercial out right now in which a man in a suit sits in a circle with a bunch of kids. The man asks them: who thinks more is better? Of course, all the hands shoot up. When he asks why more is better, a child tries to explain and end up basically saying that more is better because sometimes your parents won't let you have more, but if you really like something, you always want more. The ad ends with the slogan: it's that simple: more is better.

In our culture the prevalent message is that more is always better.

And then we hear how Jesus tells us to pray: Give us this day our daily bread, and it is a countercultural message.

In the first reading, every day God provided bread from heaven for the Israelites. So I've got a question:

- **Does anyone remember what would happen to that bread, that manna if they tried to store up more than they needed for the day?**
 - It would rot.
- **And does anyone have any guesses as to why God might chose to provide only enough for the day? Why not give them their whole supply up front so they wouldn't have to worry?**
 - It forced them to learn how to trust him.

Now in today's world of rent or mortgage payments, and monthly bills, it would not be a good thing to only have enough for one day. We need a bit more security than the nomadic Israelites did.

But sometimes I wonder how I would respond if I were out in the desert waiting for God to give me some bread every morning.

Always, I think it would be tempting to take a little more than you needed just in case, to hide some in the bottom of your bag, or to run out and grab an extra handful when you were sure no one was looking.

With such amazing proof of God's faithfulness, I wonder whether it would be 3 days or 3 months or 3 years before I started to trust that God would provide.

A verse from Matthew, I think, hits at the heart of this story: Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink... Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them... So do not worry about tomorrow for tomorrow has enough worries of its own.

When we pray give us this day our DAILY bread, it is not a prayer for more, but for enough, for manna. It is a prayer that God would give us what we need, and then help us to trust that it actually is enough.

So here's my question: **what are some of the things that might fall under the category of daily bread? What are some of the things we need for a happy and healthy life?**

- **Money, food, shelter, friends, family...**

The list of things we need is so long that even after thinking about this all week you've come up with some that I hadn't thought of! And all of that long list is a gift from God.

God cares about that whole list and about US, so that there is no need too small for us to bring it to our Father.

The main need in our gospel story is for food.

Thousands of people who have been out all day and who are hungry for a big meal, and yet there are only 5 loaves and 2 fish.

And in our world, too, we so often come up against the reality that everyone does not have their daily bread. We come up against the reality that we are still praying for God's kingdom to come and God's will to be done, but that they aren't completely realized yet.

If we talk just about literal hunger, we come up against that reality with the statistic that one in eight people in the world, or 842 million people is undernourished and consistently doesn't have enough food. In Marshall, I couldn't find statistic on hunger, but the food shelf, the soup kitchen, the folks who stop by the church looking for some help, tell me that hunger is real here, too.

And this is where if we're honest, the situation can get a bit scary, because we often find ourselves with only 5 loaves and 2 fish, without much capacity to help. The disciples find that they have probably around 15,000 hungry people on their hands if you count the women and children, and while they probably want to help feed those people, it just doesn't seem realistic. It just doesn't seem like a possibility.

So when they say: "Send them away," it isn't out of spite or lack of compassion or understanding.

And when we feel like we've only got 5 loaves and 2 fish, we're likely to behave the same way. We, too, have the best of intentions, but it is all too easy for us to walk away from people hungering for daily bread because we just don't know how to feed them.

But did anyone catch what Jesus says to the disciples, in the face of their objections? Did he say, yes you're right, send them away hungry?

- You give them something to eat. You give them something to eat.

A favorite hymn of mine is called You Have Come Down to the Lakeshore. It refers to the story of Jesus calling the disciples, who were just regular people, without any special degrees or qualifications in discipleship. But nonetheless he calls them out of their boats to come and follow him. The song reads like this: "You know full well what I have, Lord. Neither treasure

nor weapons for conquest, just these my fishnets and will for working. Sweet Lord, you have looked into my eyes; kindly smiling, you have called out my name... on the sand I have abandoned my small boat, now with you, I will seek other seas.”

Jesus does know full well what we have, and what we lack, and still he calls us to follow. Still he calls us to feed our neighbors.

We have before us the story of some very realistic disciples who know that what they have is not enough and Jesus who says otherwise. “You go feed them.” he says. And somehow, miraculously, all at and were satisfied, and they even had 12 baskets of leftovers at the end.

We pray give US ALL this day OUR daily bread, and we are praying not just for daily bread for ourselves but for the whole world. For the people sitting next to us, for the people we’ll see on the evening news, and for the people whose faces will never make it onto the news, but who still need daily bread.

And even as we pray, Jesus says to us: You go feed them. He says that, and then he makes an abundance of bread and fish show up where we thought we didn’t have nearly enough.

This week, when you recognize that someone needs some form of daily bread, be it a friend or a stranger, someone near or far, I would ask you just to pray: give us this day our daily bread, and then to add this: God use, me.

Then I think we will all be surprised at how many baskets of leftovers there are.