

Ordinary 1

Salem United Methodist Church

Rev. Emily Hart

2/21/2021

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CBS: Water crisis plagues millions in Texas after deadly winter storm

Fox: Biden approves Texas disaster declaration as millions still on boil-water notices

New York Times: Texans are on the hunt for food and clean water after storm

NPR: In Texas, Food Supply Disruptions leave store shelves bare

New York Times: Extreme Cold Killed Texans in Their Bedrooms, Vehicles and Backyards

USA Today: 'Just crippling': Texans devastated by ice storm are now hunting empty shelves for food and water

The Washington Post: A Texas grocery store lost power and let people leave without paying. Shoppers paid it forward.

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Give us this day our daily bread.

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These are some of the headlines in the aftermath of the deep freeze in Texas this week.

People are literally dying in their homes from the cold or carbon monoxide poisoning.

Give us this day our daily bread.

What is their daily bread right now?

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Throughout the Hebrew Scriptures and the New Testament we see God giving the people bread again and again.

The Israelites eat **manna** in the wilderness. In fact, they eat 40 years of manna. Always exactly enough. Not so much they can hoard it for the next day. Never slight enough that anyone goes hungry. I don't imagine they *loved* manna at the end of 40 years... but their needs were met.

Give us this day our daily bread.

Earlier, when they escaped Egypt, God gives them specific **instructions** on how to make their bread quickly. Don't wait for leavening, for rising. Just bake it and GO!

God cares that they have the ability to provide for their own needs AND that they have enough information to do it well. God coaches them through it, and they leave with food to sustain them.

Give us this day our daily bread.

In Ezekiel (much later!) God even gives them a new bread recipe in the midst of a famine. The instructions say to use wheat, barley, beans, lentils, millet, and spelt. That's pretty specific! Also, probably not delicious. This is a bread to make when you're desperate and can't gather enough of anything to make what you *want*. However, its also a source of complete proteins! So, its actually... healthy. There's a version sold in the supermarket now that is (actually) delicious. With this bread, even in times of war or famine, their needs are met.

Give us this day our daily bread.

In the New Testament we see Jesus feeding crowds bread and fish. The disciples try to send the hungry people away. Jesus says, "no. *You* give them something to eat."

With only 5 loaves and 2 fish more than 5,000 people were fed with 12 baskets left over. Their needs are more than met! This kind of story happens more than once in Matthew.

Give us this day our daily bread.

After Jesus dies and is raised, he starts appearing to the disciples. Peter and the other seem to have left their discipling jobs and are back to fishing. One night they fish all night and catch nothing. Early in the morning, Jesus is on the shore asking if they've caught any fish. They don't recognize him. They say no and he instructs them to do something crazy. Simply toss their net on the other side. Voila, they catch so much they can't haul in the net. This abundance shows them who he really is. Of COURSE, Jesus would provide them with an abundant catch. **Who else could or would?**

Give us this day our daily bread.

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What does it mean for you?

Many of us have the Lord's Prayer memorized. Its one of those prayers we're taught as children and then continue to use in church. Sometimes we dig deep into it for its meaning. Sometimes we say it by rote. Sometimes we get caught up in the rhythm of the words and forget they have meaning at all outside of trying to match the cadence in the room.

We could spend months pulling it apart line by line. Today, we're sticking with this one line. *Give us this day our daily bread.*

For Jesus audience this was not an idle request. They had stories of God providing for the people throughout history. They knew the stories of the manna, the bread recipes. They may have seen feeding miracles. Asking God for daily bread means asking for exactly enough. Exactly sufficient provision. No more, no less.

Actually, the word for “daily” is only used one time in all of scripture. One context! Only in the Lord’s Prayer in Matthew and Luke. And it means more than just “daily,” as in “every day.” It means “the bread of our necessity” or “the bread that suffices for each day.”

This is more than just asking for what they need or want. Its also putting the whole solution into God’s hands. Its trusting that God will provide everything needed. Anything beyond the basics is abundance.

Really, it’s asking for **ordinary** provision. Nothing extravagant.

Can you imagine being satisfied with your basic needs met?

I struggle with this! I look at my clothing, my book collection, even my dog walking gear!, and I wonder what it **looks like** to be fully satisfied with “enough.” Satisfied with “the bread that suffices for each day.”

My husband and I recently learned a song together. It’s called, “It’s Not Enough” by Dustin Kensure. Listen to some lines:

Though all the wealth of men was mine to squander and towers of ivory rose beneath my feet. Were palaces of pleasure mine to wander the sum of it would leave me incomplete.

And the chorus:

its not enough. Its not enough. I could walk the world forever till my shoes were filled with blood. Its not enough. Its not enough.

How can we pray “give us this day our daily bread” when we live in a world that is “not enough”?

How much will it take to be enough?

Give us this day our daily bread is about more than just food. More than just bread.

Its about sufficiency. Its about *enough*.

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Do you ever struggle with “enough”?

Do you ever find yourself eating more than your body needs? You know, when you’re eating chips and they’re so wonderfully salty. So you’re eating and start to notice the salt taste less and less. So, you think, “oh, well the next one will be salty like the first.” So, you keep going? You kind of know that you don’t need any more chips and that you won’t taste the salt any more... but you just keep going anyway.

Perhaps you exercise more than your body wants. Watch TV longer than you're actually interested. "Are you still watching?" Netflix asks. "Well, yeah, I guess I am."

Staying in bed when you feel you really need to get up? Staying up late reading one more page, watching one more episode? Needing one more thing to make your system work-new tools, new containers.

Friends, if you resonate with any of this, you are not alone.

Jesus was teaching his friends and disciples how to pray. This isn't the only possible way to pray, but it's certainly a good way.

"Give us this day our daily bread" can also mean, "God, help me to be satisfied with what I need. Teach me to see need the way you do. Teach me to appreciate sufficiency the way you do."

One of the beautiful things about this prayer is Jesus taught it to us. This means it's a prayer God endorses! Jesus and God are ONE! What one wants, the other wants! This is a great prayer to learn about God!

God wants us to be *satisfied*. God wants our needs to be met. God has been giving us this day, each day, our daily bread for more years than we can count.

God's provision is enough.

God is enough.

God is **enough!**

Only God is enough.

That's the secret.

In the song, "It's Not Enough," we have to deal with the world's insufficiency. The world will never be enough. Only God is enough.

As long as we seek more, nothing will ever be enough.

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"But, Pastor, what about Texas?"

"What about people starving all over the world? What about children who can't afford lunch in our own country? What about the fires, the shootings, the poverty? What about the -isms and prejudice? What about the people who really don't have enough?"

Yeah. [sigh] What about them? That doesn't sound like God's kingdom, does it?

"your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread."

The kingdom of God is **linked** to having enough. Until everyone has enough, we are not in the kingdom.

In Eden there was enough for everyone to eat. Sure, there were just two people, but because it was perfect, I imagine it would have continued to provide enough.

Here's the deal. This prayer, "give us this day our daily bread" is not just about us. Its not just us saying it together. This is an all-inclusive prayer. "Our daily bread." There's no limit to this "our." It doesn't end with our family units, our church families, our states, countries, continent. This inclusive "our" means we are praying it for the people starving, freezing, dying **anywhere**. We are praying for their enough-ness every single time. For them to have enough, too.

I imagine we can only offer a need to God for so long before we start to see ways we can help. The prayer doesn't say, "give us manna." It just says give us our daily bread. Not *how* we'll get it. I could get my daily bread from you. You could get yours from your neighbor. We could all get our daily bread from Coop's Soup!

Perhaps part of what we learn is to buy less, consume less, and give more.

Texas grocery stores look a lot like early pandemic grocery stores did. Remember the empty shelves? Remember the fear? Remember not knowing when the meat would be restocked? Or the toilet paper? Remember learning that there were vegetables rotting in the fields because there was nobody to harvest? Remember seeing empty shelves and realizing those rotting vegetables were the worst kind of waste?

We were afraid. People in Texas are afraid. When our fear of scarcity kicks in... look out world. Our perspective vanishes. Our logic evaporates. We forget that if we take more than we need there won't be enough for everyone else.

From what I've heard, the people who were not afraid were the people who had already survived disasters. People who had come through the depression, the different flus, rationing. They recognized the signs, and they remembered that they had come through this before.

Give us this day our daily bread.

Perhaps this year during Lent you are called to wonder about "enough." Enough for you, for the world. What does this prayer look like for you today?

If you're feeling called to think about our daily bread, write it down or call someone to talk about it. What can you do during this preparation time before Holy Week to explore "enough?"

Wherever you are today, breathe. God is enough. There is enough.

Amen.