

WHITEHORSE UNITING CHURCH
 Reflections for Worshipping at Home -
 Rev Kevin Dobson
 Pastoral Care tips - Rev Tina Lyndon
 Sunday 24th September 2023
 Pentecost 17

Enough is Enough



As you focus on this time of worship.

Take a loaf of bread.

Reflect on its importance.

Remember its importance in the Bible stories you know. Remember people of stories of bread in the Bible, or times when people have been fed and with each break the bread.

Examples are: feeding the 5000, the stone themselves will turn to bread, the Last Supper, Mary and Martha, Passover, David in the Temple.

Remember times when you have broken bread and shared a meal with others.

Opening Prayer - Manna

Enough—simply enough, not too much, not an over abundance, but—enough.

Sufficient for the day, not for storing up or hoarding for the lean times, but—enough.

Seems fair that everyone should get just what they need regardless of status, just—enough.

Those are the resources supplied by God.

Song TiS 429

<https://youtu.be/F49OocNssQ?si=0lc5mPTqTvNAqwku>

Break now the bread of life,
 dear Lord to me,
 as once you broke the loaves
 beside the sea;
 beyond the sacred page
 I seek you Lord,
 my spirit longs for you,
 O living word.

Bless your own truth, dear Lord,
 to me, to me
 as you blessed the bread
 by Galilee;
 then shall all bondage cease,
 all shackles fall,
 and I shall find my peace,
 My all in all.

Mary Artemisia Lathbury
 1841-1913 altered.

Prayer of Confession

When our eyes are bigger than our stomachs...

When we imagine 'having' more means 'being' more...

When our security revolves around having more than others...

When power is about stuff and the more there is the more power we have...

Forgive us.

May we find bigness is having just what we need and leaving enough for others to have full lives.

May we find grace is letting others take first before we take what we imagine makes us comfortable.

May we find minimum isn't frugal, but generous enough to live fully.

May we recognise in keeping the kingdom to ourselves, there is nothing to grow in the world.

Forgive us.

This is the banquet of heaven, it is all there needs to be, a meal for the whole family of God, God's gift to the world. Now share in this gift of grace in whatever way you need for it is a symbol of what we do with the gifts that God has given us in life.

Scripture reading - Exodus 16:2-15 CEV

There in the desert they started complaining to Moses and Aaron, "We wish the Lord had killed us in Egypt. When we lived there, we could at least sit down and eat all the bread and meat we wanted. But you have brought us out here into this desert, where we are going to starve."

The Lord said to Moses, "I will send bread[a] down from heaven like rain. Tell the people to go out each day and gather only enough for that day. That's how I will see if they obey me. But on the sixth day of each week they must gather and cook twice as much."

Moses and Aaron told the people, "This evening you will know that the Lord was the one who rescued you from

Egypt. And in the morning you will see his glorious power, because he has heard your complaints against him. Why should you grumble to us? Who are we?" Then Moses continued, "You will know it is the Lord when he gives you meat each evening and more than enough bread each morning. He is really the one you are complaining about, not us—we are nobodies—but the Lord has heard your complaints." Moses turned to Aaron and said, "Bring the people together, because the Lord has heard their complaints." Aaron was speaking to them, when everyone looked out toward the desert and saw the bright glory of the Lord in a cloud. The Lord said to Moses, "I have heard my people complain. Now tell them that each evening they will have meat and each morning they will have more than enough bread. Then they will know that I am the Lord their God." That evening a lot of quails came and landed everywhere in the camp, and the next morning dew covered the ground. After the dew had gone, the desert was covered with thin flakes that looked like frost. The people had never seen anything like this, and they started asking each other, "What is it?" Moses answered, "This is the bread that the Lord has given you to eat."

Reflection: Enough is enough – Rev Kevin

What do we really need to live on? Health authorities say that we need 8000 to 8500 kilojoules of energy a day from our food.

What do we actually consume?

The average Australian consumes much more than that. Grossly excessive to what we actually need. Now, compare that to a country like Eritrea where the average consumption is a little over 1,500 calories per day. That puts our consumption into perspective.

All very interesting, but what has this to do with this week's Bible focus? After the traumatic release from slavery in Egypt, and the escape from Pharaoh whose army was destroyed in the process of trying to reclaim the Hebrew people as slaves, we now meet the community of Israelites on the move in the wilderness scrubland of around Sinai. There are a lot of them and water and food are scarce. This is a time to get acquainted with sustainable living, to be satisfied with what you need, not what you want.

And, as you might expect, the community is not happy. There are three stories in this part of Exodus relating to the physical needs of the community and their appeal to Moses and Aaron. Two short stories about the provision of water frame the larger story of the provision of manna and quail in the desert that is our focus.

All three stories depict God's gracious provision for his people and his patient response to their appeal.

It is a patient response because the community is in uproar with its grumbling and moaning against Moses and Aaron for having dragged them away from the riches of Egypt to the poverty of the wilderness.

We read that Moses and Aaron are at pains to remind the people that when they moan about them, they are actually moaning about what God has done for them.

It's all rather typical isn't it? Parents will know well the situation of taking the children out for the day spending a fortune to get into some fun place, having prepared a picnic for the journey, having taken a day off to dedicate to family time.

You think you have had a great day out with memories that will last for ever, only to hear in the car on the way home, "I'm bored! There's nothing to do!"

Yet, with eternal patience, despite the moaning of his people, God provides manna in the wilderness. What was manna?

Some suggest manna may have something to do with the honey-tasting resin dropped from the tamarisk trees well-known in the region.

Others suggest it might be honeydew produced by insects, a delicacy in the Middle East even today, and rich in energy.

We will never know.

What we do know is that it was a sign for the people of God that he will provide for them, but not to excess.

They are being taught to think only about their needs, not to hoard what they can pick from the ground, but rather to ensure day-by-day that each and every person has enough food for that day.

The ethics of food production today are fraught.

It only takes a cursory investigation into industrial food production to be shocked at the seeming unsustainability of what we are doing.

We are too often unaware of this in the food chain.

When the gluttony of the developed nations is compared with the impoverishment of many other nations the justification becomes ever harder to sustain.

When is enough enough?

Prayers of the people:

Prepared by Geoffrey Willis

Loving Lord, we pray for the trouble spots in our world, that compassion and justice will guide our leaders rather than power and greed. We pray for the people of Libya as they restore damaged lives affected by the floods and now face the additional challenge of contamination. Here is a prayer for Libya from the Christian Aid website. I quote:

Lord Jesus, you're familiar with grief, you know what it is to weep with those who are suffering.

You're close to the broken-hearted and comfort those who mourn.

Devastating flooding has led to losses beyond measure for the people of Libya.

With so many thousands affected, help us to see beyond the numbers to real communities and families whose lives have been upturned.

We pray that you would strengthen those who are still fighting to survive, and the rescue workers trying to save them.

We pray that you would console those who fear the worst as they wait for news.

We pray that you would be with all who are traumatised and deeply grieving.

Show us, Lord, how to serve you by helping our neighbours in Libya.

When we are daunted by the scale of the disaster, inspire us with your Spirit that we may know how to make a difference.

We thank you for the work of aid agencies on the ground and for all who give what they can to help save lives and support survivors.

You're close to the broken-hearted Lord. Be close to the people of Libya, we pray.

Amen

End quote.

[© Christian Aid website, 14 September 2023]

In other trouble spots we pray for the many refugees from Africa risking a boat trip across the Mediterranean Sea. May they travel with safety. We pray too for countries like Italy who are finding it difficult to accommodate such large numbers of refugees. As the war in the Ukraine continues, we pray for international pressure to stem the senseless motives by Russia. In the West Bank, our prayer is for the peaceful co-existence of the two factions.

At home, we pray for the people enduring unseasonal temperatures and for the devastating effects of climate change for farmers facing low yields and animal deaths. Lord, may wisdom prevail as solutions are suggested and may we each play our part in curbing the overuse of fossil fuels.

We pray for our country as we prepare for the Constitutional Referendum. May we not be divided by the various arguments, but seek to support our nation as we recognise the place of our First Nation Peoples as a significant part of our population.

Our prayers today are with families in Timor-Leste who are facing malnutrition. May our retiring offering next week help UnitingWorld assist families to overcome the food crisis in that country.

Dear Lord, we pray for the work of the Presbytery of Yarra Yarra and their leadership, especially of Standing Committee and Pastoral Relations Committee. May their decisions recognise the unique ministries of so many

congregations so that precious resources are used effectively.

Loving Lord, at home we give thanks for our Ministry Team as they help us grow together as effective witnesses to your love and care. We especially pray for Peter Cannon, that last week's operation will bring an improvement in his recovery from long COVID. We thank you for the return of Tina from holidays and for Kevin and Rod as they have continued to guide and inspire us.

Finally Lord we note with sadness the peaceful death last Sunday of Margaret Williams. We pray that John and the family will be comforted as they mourn the loss of Margaret after her long battle with heart complications and dementia. At her funeral on Tuesday, we will be able to say "well done, good and faithful servant".

And now let us together say the prayer which Jesus taught us:

*Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours
now and forever. Amen.* GMW 19/9/2023

Hymn: TIS 569

"Guide me O thou great redeemer."

<https://youtu.be/5j48TLIRb4Q?si=4V4cY7c-kxVYNgz8>

Guide me, O thou great Redeemer,
pilgrim through this barren land;
I am weak, but thou art mighty;
hold me with thy powerful hand;
bread of heaven, bread of heaven,
feed me now and evermore,
feed me now and evermore.

Open now the crystal fountain
whence the living waters flow:
let the fiery, cloudy pillar
lead me all my journey through
strong deliverer, strong deliverer,
be thou still my strength and shield,
be thou still my strength and shield.

When I tread the verge of Jordan
 bid my anxious fears subside;
 death of death, and hell's destruction,
 land me safe on Canaan's side:
 songs of praises, songs of praises
 I will ever give to thee,
 I will ever give to thee.

William Williams 1717—91
 tr. Peter Williams 1722—96 and William Williams alt.

Dismissal and blessing:

Go forth into God's world as God's own children.
 Let the love of Christ be reflected in your life and your deeds.
 Go with joy to serve the Lord.

Go to live under God's humble care.
 Seek simple joys.
 Love one another.
 Share kindness.
 Follow the way of Jesus.
 And take with you the quiet assurance that God's spirit
 will be always with you.

May almighty God bless you, the Father, the Son, and
 the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

In the name of Christ. Amen.

Pastoral Care tips – Rev Tina



Canola Field in the Mallee region

Psalm 105 - God's Faithfulness to us

¹O give thanks to the LORD; call on his name;
 make known his deeds among the peoples.

²Sing to him, sing praises to him;
 tell of all his wonderful works.

³Glory in his holy name;

let the hearts of those who seek the LORD rejoice.

⁴Seek the LORD and his strength;
 seek his presence continually.

⁵Remember the wonderful works he has done,
 his miracles and the judgments he has uttered,

Memories

I'm grateful for a miracle. I didn't die when I fell off the mountain. Now everything is a bonus and second chance to enrich relationships with loved ones.

My perspective has changed where I value time more and consider it a gift. I'm grateful for life, its beauty, and its terror.

Joan Chittister – Songs of the Heart, Reflections on Psalms (used with permission)

I invite you to read the entire psalm. It is a *“history psalm and a story of life's pain, mystery and God's salvation.”* When we read about the challenges faced by Abraham, Moses, Isaac, Jacob, and Aaron, we realise *“in the long run, whatever things God allows to happen to us are right. Every difficulty is an opportunity, a call, not for rescue but for personal growth. We learn to accept the will of God in our own lives and be faithful under all circumstances, good and bad. God works through both for our good and growth.”*

Joan offers a soul point.

“We don't create our destinies; we only shape them.”

A Psalm 105 Activity from Joan

On a sheet of paper write “I give thanks to you my God” ten times. Then thank God for five good events and five bad events in your life. If you feel comfortable, Joan suggests sharing your prayer of gratitude with a friend.

Perspectives

I believe perspectives are our filter on life. Sometimes other people's perspectives help us get outside our own perspectives and discover new ways of being that can enrich our soul and life.