

“Bread for All”

Scripture: Exodus 16:2-4, 9-1; Mark 6:30-44

Rev. Lewis Galloway

March 1, 2026



There is never enough, or so we say. There is never enough time to do all the things we think we have to do; never enough talent to solve community and world problems; never enough food to feed a hungry world; never enough money to satisfy our needs. From household budgets to church budgets, from government agencies to public charities, and from health care institutions to community organizations, we say there is never enough of what we need to get things done. So, we operate out of a mentality of scarcity rather than abundance.

Dr. Douglas Hicks, the President of Davidson College, has written in his book, *Money Enough*, that people of all economic classes say that if they had 20% more money they would have enough. No matter what we have, we think we must have more to be satisfied (pp 43-44). Hicks notes that the problem with hunger in the world is not the lack of food. The world produces enough food to feed the earth's population an adequate diet. The problem is the lack of will to share and the lack of access to enough infrastructure and economic resources to receive the food (pp 57-58).

Long before the days of abundant harvests and distributions systems, the children of Israel found themselves in the wilderness without enough food. They had fled Egypt through the terrifying waters of the Red Sea only to encounter the even greater terror of starvation and

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death. As hunger grows, some of them wish that they had remained as slaves in Egypt – at least there was food to eat.

They murmur against Moses. Did he bring them all the way into the wilderness only to die?

What does freedom mean when your children are starving to death? Parents in Gaza, the Sudan and the Ukraine are asking this question. In the wilderness, God hears the cries of the people and sends them quail in the evening and manna in the morning. Even before God makes a covenant with the people at Mt. Sinai, God feeds them bread. God meets their most basic need.

The Lord knows that people cannot think about heaven when their minds are fixated on bread.

One church in a large city opened a soup kitchen. Every day in good and bad weather, the people lined up outdoors for food. When the doors opened, they sat at tables in the fellowship hall. Before the guests were allowed to eat, they had to listen to a long sermon – even longer than this one is going to be! Dangling food in front of hungry people may create a captive audience, but it is not much of a way to share the gospel. A person is far more likely to hear the gospel on a full stomach than an empty one. The good Samaritan didn't preach a sermon before he bound up the wounds of the man lying in a ditch. He first took care of his immediate need. Psychologist Abraham Maslow developed a theory about the hierarchy of human needs. Before

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a person can find spiritual or emotional fulfillment, or as Maslow named it, “self-actualization,” that person’s most basic needs for food, shelter, security, and self-esteem must first be met.

When God provides for our most basic needs, God does it in ways that remind us of our continual dependence on God. In the wilderness, God provided quail and manna each day. Anyone who tried to gather more than she needed found that she didn’t have any more than the one who had gathered less. When somebody, not trusting that the manna would be there the next day, tried to store some up, he found that the manna became rancid and full of worms.

In the prayer that Jesus taught, we ask God not for a lifetime of bread, but for our “daily” bread. Scholars may debate about the precise meaning of the word we translate as “daily,” but they agree it means the bread that is necessary for life or sufficient for this day. The prayer asks God for what we need to sustain us this day so that we may look to God for what we need tomorrow. The prayer invites us to put this day and our future days in God’s hands.

When Jesus feeds the hungry crowd in the wilderness, he meets their most basic need. The disciples want to turn them away to fend for themselves, but Jesus has them sit down on the *green grass*. Wait a minute! What is Mark telling us? There is no green grass in the wilderness. He is telling us who Jesus is by giving us an echo of the most familiar Psalm:

The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want.

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He makes me lie down in green pastures.
He leads me beside still waters, he restores my soul.

Jesus is the Good Shepherd who cares for the sheep, who has compassion for the crowd, and who provides for their most basic needs.

When Jesus takes the bread, blesses it, breaks it, and gives it to the crowd, we recognize in these acts that this is more than a picnic on the lawn. It is a sacred feast, a divine eucharist, a holy sacrament. In the life of the church, Jesus becomes the bread broken for us and given to us. In John’s Gospel, Jesus says, “I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me will never be hungry and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty (6:35).” Jesus feeds us – body and soul. He gives us our daily bread. When we are satisfied, he wants us to see that our most basic need is God. We have a hunger for God which nothing – no thing – on this earth can satisfy.

Sara Miles was raised by her parents to be an atheist with a social conscience. She was a chef, journalist, and social activist. In her book, *Take This Bread*, she tells about an experience she had when she was 46. For reasons she did not even understand herself at the time, she found herself in worship at St. Gregory’s Episcopal Church in San Francisco. When she heard the words, “Jesus invites everyone to this table,” she joined the others around the table. She writes that when she ate the bread and drank the wine, “something outrageous and terrifying

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happened. Jesus happened to me.” She went on: “I still can’t explain my first communion. It made no sense. I was in tears and physically unbalanced: I felt as if I had just stepped off a curb or been knocked over, painlessly, from behind. The disconnect between what I thought was happening – I was eating a piece of bread... and what I knew was happening – God, named... “Jesus” was real, and in my mouth – utterly short-circuited my ability to do anything but cry... For some inexplicable reason I wanted that bread again” (pp 58-60).

From that taste of bread, Sara began a food pantry in the church that served 250 folks a day. The pantry was not located in some out of the way place in the church, but around the communion table in the sanctuary. People came into that sacred space to select the food they needed to sustain life. There, she talked with them, prayed with them, and cared for their needs. She wanted them to see Jesus who said, “I am the bread of life.” He is the heavenly bread that feeds our minds, our bodies, and our souls. He is the bread that makes us whole.

The gospel teaches us that there is more than enough for all. It is about sharing what we have and trusting that God will provide. It is about moving from a mentality of scarcity to a mentality of abundance. Every time we take the bread, give thanks, break it, and give it to the gathered people, we remember and experience anew God’s abundance. When we provide for

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the basic needs of life like bread and shelter, justice and peace, we open the door to helping others find that our deepest need is perfect communion with God and with one another.

Well, you may ask, what does this have to do with bread for all? The church of Christ has labored too long with a spirit of timidity and scarcity; all the while Jesus is calling us to fearless generosity and to faithful trust in God’s provision for our need. Thinking there is never enough, we begin to live diminished lives. I am not just talking about material goods, but good feelings, and the good use of time. Hoarding our “bread” in all its material and spiritual forms, being parsimonious distributors of our time and resources, and casting a suspicious eye on our neighbors, lead us to deprive others of the bread they need to live an abundant life. Jesus, the Bread of life, the Good Shepherd of all, blesses breaks, and shares a few loaves of bread and they become a feast for thousands.

God’s abundance means that we can open our eyes to see the possibilities of abundant life not just for ourselves, but for our neighbors. There are undocumented immigrants, homeless families, and incarcerated individuals in our land who need the bread of life just as much as we who gather around this table today. When we provide the most basic needs of life for others – food, shelter, health, justice, and opportunities to work, learn, and grow – we open the door for our neighbors to come to know Jesus, the Bread of heaven. What we give away of ourselves

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enlarges our capacity to feel compassion, opens our minds to God’s ways, awakens our hearts to Christ’s presence, and makes us richer.

In truth, there is more than enough for all.