

Lenten Study - The Lord's Prayer
Session 3 – 3/23/2022

SESSION GOALS

Through this session's Bible readings, discussion, reflection, and prayer, participants will:

- Estimate and reflect on how much of their eating is essential eating.
- Consider what the story of God giving manna in the desert can teach God's people today.
 - Reflect on what it means to call Jesus "the Bread of Life."
- Identify specific ways to be God's answer to other people's prayers for bread.

BIBLICAL FOUNDATIONS

Exodus 16:14-21

¹⁴ When the layer of dew lifted, there on the surface of the wilderness was a fine flaky substance, as fine as frost on the ground. ¹⁵ When the Israelites saw it, they said to one another, "What is it?" For they did not know what it was. Moses said to them, "It is the bread that the LORD has given you to eat. ¹⁶ This is what the LORD has commanded: 'Gather as much of it as each of you needs, an omer to a person according to the number of persons, all providing for those in their own tents.'" ¹⁷ The Israelites did so, some gathering more, some less. ¹⁸ But when they measured it with an omer, those who gathered much had nothing over, and those who gathered little had no shortage; they gathered as much as each of them needed. ¹⁹ And Moses said to them, "Let no one leave any of it over until morning." ²⁰ But they did not listen to Moses; some left part of it until morning, and it bred worms and became foul. And Moses was angry with them. ²¹ Morning by morning they gathered it, as much as each needed; but when the sun grew hot, it melted. New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)

John 6:30-35

³⁰ So they said to him, "What sign are you going to give us then, so that we may see it and believe you? What work are you performing?" ³¹ Our ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.'" ³² Then Jesus said to them, "Very truly, I tell you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. ³³ For the bread of God is that which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world." ³⁴ They said to him, "Sir, give us this bread always." ³⁵ Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty. (NRSV)

James 2:14-17

¹⁴ What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if you say you have faith but do not have works? Can faith save you? ¹⁵ If a brother or sister is naked and lacks daily food, ¹⁶ and one of you says to them, "Go in peace; keep warm and eat your fill," and yet you do not supply their bodily needs, what is the good of that? ¹⁷ So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead. (NRSV)

OPENING THE SESSION

Welcome

Highlights from the previous two sessions

Exercise

Record today's "bread," that is, "What did you eat today?"

Estimate the cost of today's "bread?"

What of today's "bread" was essential? Circle it.

Comments

"Daily bread" = "that is what is needed for us to be" or "that which is essential."

"When I pray the Lord's Prayer, I do so as one who has food in the cupboard....But there are many who pray this prayer for whom this petition is, quite literally, a request for God to help them to have enough to eat." (Hamilton)

Let us pray: **Loving and life-giving God, you placed humanity in a world full of food. You sent bread from heaven to feed your people Israel in the wilderness. You sent your Son to be the Bread of Heaven for those who believe. By your Spirit, teach us in this time of study how you are still feeding people who hunger today, and show us how you choose to satisfy their hunger and thirst through us. Amen.**

WATCH *THE LORD'S PRAYER* VIDEO – SESSION 3

REMEMBERING MANNA IN THE DESERT

"Unlike for the Israelites who found manna on the ground when they arose each day, God doesn't rain down food on our front lawn today." (Hamilton)

Read Exodus 16:14-21

- What does this story show us about God's care for the Israelites? If, as Hamilton writes, "God doesn't rain down food" now, what can the story show us about God's care today?
- Manna get its name from the people's failure to recognize it for what it is (verse 15). When and how, if ever, do you and/or your congregation fail to recognize what God provides for survival? How can we train ourselves to recognize God-given "manna" in its many forms?
- What happens when the people try to gather more manna than they need? How, if ever, have you seen literal or figurative rot when people (including, perhaps sometimes, you and your congregation) have tried to hoard more of what God gives for survival than is needed?
- How can this story motivate generosity among God's people?

THINKING ABOUT JESUS AS BREAD OF LIFE

“Throughout Scripture,” Hamilton notes, “bread is [also] a metaphor for far more than food.”

Read together John 6:30-35

Discuss:

- Who are the people asking Jesus for a “miraculous sign,” and why?
- Why does Jesus emphasize the ultimate source of the manna the Israelites ate?
- What does Jesus mean when he calls himself “the bread of life”?
- Noting the Fourth Gospel has no story about Jesus instituting what we call Communion or The Lord’s Supper, Hamilton states, “John intends for his readers to think about the bread and wine of Holy Communion here.” How does or how could reflecting on Jesus as the Bread of Life bring deeper meaning to your experience of Communion?
- Hamilton reminds readers that the Bread of Life also provided “real food for hungry people.” How do we remember that Jesus can meet our deepest needs without minimizing his concern for people’s immediate, physical needs—a concern he calls us to share?

GENEROUSLY ANSWERING OTHERS’ PRAYERS FOR BREAD

Read together James 2:14-17

Discuss:

- When is faith dead, according to James?
- Hamilton points to his congregation’s work collecting food, delivering nutritious snacks to children in low-income households, sponsoring children in low-income households, sponsoring children, and more as ways they answer the Lord’s Prayer petition for bread for other people. List the ways your congregation answers that petition. Are there other ways?

CLOSING THE SESSION

In the next week, consider one specific way you can show generosity to someone in need and do it.

Close with *The Lord’s Prayer*.