

Luke 11:1-4  
Our Daily Bread

Prayer

Where have you eaten bread?

(Photo) I've eaten naan bread in India, seated in a Sikh Temple with 4,000 people. I've eaten bread in Jerusalem, at dusk, on the Mount of Olives.

I've eaten brown bread in Ballyvaughn, Ireland, on the church's Celtic retreat in 2016.

(photo) I've eaten bread with many of you before our 2019 stream clean up....

I've eaten "dog bread" made by my great aunt Lorraine, served up beside slices of fresh red tomatoes and a pot of pinto beans.

(photo) I've eaten bread at Borderlinks in Arizona with others from RS, after spending time walking through the desert between Mexico and the US, and hearing stories of migrants who took that journey.

I've eaten bread in isolation with breakthrough COVID and at dinner the night before running a race.

(photo) I've eaten communion bread with you over Zoom when we had our pandemic "communion and community..." In our conversation following communion, Dracula made an appearance. We always say whoever you are on your life's journey, you are welcome in this place—and that includes Dracula!

(photo) And my dog Finn ate and loved his hamburger with a bun at a Dogtopia picnic....

Think for a moment about the memorable places and times where you shared bread....

Feel free to share that today on the facebook feed or to talk about it after the service....

Jesus ate his bread in Galilee and Jerusalem. He broke it at the Last Supper. He ate it in boats and made more of it when the crowds showed up, hungry. He shared it with Mary and Martha, ate it with Zacchaeus. The devil tempted him with it.

Luke's Gospel is known for being a "foodie gospel," with all its talk of meals. And it's known for being a gospel full of prayer. Jesus prays more in Luke than in any

other Gospel. In Luke's telling, unlike Matthew's, the disciples ask Jesus to teach them how to pray.

They are, in this Gospel, a receptive audience.

But I couldn't help but think what if Jesus shared the Lord's Prayer for the first time right now, posting on the internet, summer of 2022?

He might get comments like this:

*Daily bread? You're thinking too small! Where's the 10 year bread? Where's the 50 year bread?*

*Should it even be bread we're talking about? What about something more exciting? Bread is too.... traditional.*

*Or*

*Your kingdom come isn't specific or measurable. What are the deliverables on it?*

Does this sound familiar?

And I say, to our overscheduled, overreaching, over breaking-newsed 2022 selves—this Lord's Prayer is exactly what we need to hear.

It was what the disciples needed to hear as their prayer instruction, and it's what we need to hear today.

They needed to hear it then, in a fragile time that was marked with random acts of violence and political uncertainty.

And we need to hear it now, in a fragile time marked with random acts of violence and political uncertainty.

They needed to hear it then, in a time when leaders served their own egos and finances more than the needs of the poor.

And we need to hear it now, when a corporation gets more protection than a sixty-year-old woman who lacks health care.

They needed to hear it then, when religious leaders would try to trap Jesus, when John would lose his head to satisfy a whim.

And we need to hear it now, when Christian leaders pray under star-spangled banners for an empire that hates women.

The disciples needed to hear it then, when they didn't know when war might arrive, when they had seen fishing villages ruined for profits, when people worked all day and still didn't earn enough to get by.

And we need to hear it now, when summers are hotter, weather more extreme, and teachers and firefighters and social workers cannot afford housing in our community.

Then, and now, we need to hear these words.

To all of this, I say—the Lord’s Prayer can give us direction and handholds for the living of these days.

New Testament theologian John Dominic Crossan describes it like this, saying when we pray “thy kingdom come...” we are saying we want to bring the values of heaven to our daily lives and our nation’s priorities.

Bruce Epperly focuses in on “our daily bread,” writing, “Scholars debate the exact meaning of “give us this day our daily bread.” Some scholars believe that Jesus is referring to our daily need for sustenance and security. Others prefer the translation, “give us today the bread we need for tomorrow,” suggesting that Jesus was referring to our need to place the future and its uncertainty in God’s care, rather than succumbing to anxiety about what is out of our control. I believe both answers are right.”

In the book *Sleeping With Bread: Holding What Gives You Life*, the authors describe how thousands of children were left orphaned and hungry during World War II’s bombing raids. Some were rescued and put into refugee camps.... But still they couldn’t sleep at night for fear and trauma. They were afraid that they would be hungry and alone again the next day. Someone suggested giving each child a piece of bread to hold at bedtime. The bread was a promise—“Today I ate and I will eat again tomorrow.”

Today I ate and I will eat again tomorrow.

*Sleeping With Bread* is based on a modern interpretation of the Examen, an ancient prayer practice developed by St. Ignatius. At its essence, the Examen invites us to reflect on where, in a day, we felt gratitude, and where we felt the absence of it.

In the book, Dennis describes moving into housing on the Rosebud Sioux reservation. It was the custom to have soup for most meals, so he invited eight students for a soup dinner. He boiled bones and then added a cup of rice, which

quickly disappeared into the broth. So he added another cup, and the same thing happened. He dumped in the rest of his rice, then went to two other neighbors for more rice.... And, having poured all that in, he left the soup to simmer while he went to teach.

Dennis describes how “the rice met us at the front door” when he returned home, as he didn’t realize that rice would expand when cooked.

That night, instead of feeding eight people, he fed most of those living on the reservation and the dogs. People still joke with him years later and ask if he has more rice soup.

After dinner, he put down the written plan that he had for the group’s time together and instead he shared from his heart. He talked about his frustration when he found all of that rice, and the beauty of sharing it. Both. And he invited the others to share their own gratitude and places of pain.

Sheila, another of the authors, describes how, as a child, she was not encouraged to trust herself. She was ashamed of her needs and desires and learned to deny them to accommodate what others seemed to expect of her. The examen helped her learn to trust her needs and desires.

Both pessimists and optimists describe value of the practice. For those who focus too much on the negative, the Examen opens up beauty. And for those who tend to gloss over the hard parts, the Examen calls attention there. Where there is bread and where there is no bread.

Others come with a question—should I change jobs? How can I feel better about my life?

The practice of the examen can respond to that. To these questions, the examen says, spend a month focusing on what gives you life each day/what drains life.

What should I move closer to? What should I put down?

And this personal examen practice is important.... But it’s not all Jesus is saying here.

Jesus doesn’t tell us to pray for individual bread.

But OUR bread.

Sathi Clarke, a professor of mine at Wesley Seminary told us, “It is just as important to speak to the absence of God’s realm as God’s presence.... That is, to name the places where justice and love are not made visible.”

The Alliance for Housing Solutions was founded by Rock Spring members Ellen and Bill Bozman, and today RS member Pam Quanrud and I serve on the Board, and Martha Bozman is interim ED. AHS is working with a range of partners to preserve and expand the supply of affordable housing in Arlington. Housing prices in Arlington have escalated to the point where even those earning moderate incomes struggle to find safe and comfortable housing, including essential workers. Expanding Missing Middle Housing will bolster the supply of naturally lower cost housing in our community and make Arlington a more inclusive, more sustainable, and more desirable place to call home.

Our daily bread

I can better understand the “our” in daily bread when I turn to translations of the Lord’s Prayer in different cultures and contexts and times. There’s so much we could explore today. I could show you three Ukrainian girls singing the Lord’s Prayer as war began in their country. We could listen to a choir singing the Lord’s Prayer in Swahili. These translations widen our lens of understanding and interpretation. I’d like to share three of my favorites now.

First from the New Zealand prayer book:

New Zealand

*Eternal Spirit, Earth-maker, Pain-bearer, Life-giver,  
Source of all that is and that shall be,  
Father and Mother of us all,  
Loving God, in whom is heaven:*

*The hallowing of your name echo through the universe!  
The way of your justice be followed by the peoples of the world!  
Your heavenly will be done by all created beings!  
Your commonwealth of peace and freedom sustain our hope and come on earth.*

*With the bread we need for today, feed us.  
In the hurts we absorb from one another, forgive us.  
In times of temptation and test, strengthen us.  
From trials too great to endure, spare us.  
From the grip of all that is evil, free us.*

*For you reign in the glory of the power that is love, now and for ever.  
Amen.*

*~ New Zealand Prayer Book*

Then there is this version called Earth Dance by Karen Loveland, a member of a Unity Church.

Our mother,  
which art the earth,  
Nurturing are thy ways.  
Thy web of life be woven  
Thy way be found within,  
As it is all around.

Thank you this day for our daily bread and sweat  
and forgive us our misuse of you,  
as we forgive others their misuse of us.

And lead us not into exploitation,  
But deliver us  
From lording it over you,  
And over each other,  
And over all our other fellow creatures.

For thine are the waters of life,  
The hills, valleys and plains of home,  
The breeding, seeding, feeding ground,  
For now, and for as close to forever

As we will ever come.

And

Finally, we will hear Josh read "Our Kitchen Mother."

Our Kitchen Mother "Prayer" by George Ella Lyon

Our Mother Who Art  
in the kitchen  
cooking us up  
hallowed may we see  
all that is  
Your kingdom here  
delivered into our hands  
Your will in children  
and trees leaping out  
on earth  
as if it were Heaven.

Give us this day  
bread we could feed  
the world  
and snatch us bald-headed  
if we try to swallow it all.

Don't forgive us  
till we learn it is all for giving.  
That salve you've got in a pot  
on the back of the stove  
only heals when everybody has some.

And heed us not  
if we believe You look like us  
and love us best  
and gave us the True Truth  
with a license to kill Others

writ inside.  
Deliver us from this evil.

for it is Yours,  
this kitchen we call Universe  
where you stir up our favorite treat,  
the Milky Way,  
folding deep into sweet  
our little sphere  
with its powerful glory  
of rainforests and oceans and mountains in feather-boa mist forever  
if we don't blow it up and ever  
if we don't tear it down Amen  
(Ah women Ah children Ah reckon She's about fed up.  
We better make room at the table  
for everybody before She yells - OUT! and turns our table over,  
before She calls it off this banquet we've been hoarding  
this paradise we aim to save with bombs.)

Which one is your favorite?  
What words do you hear freshly in these translations?  
I invite you to hold close whatever version of the Lord's Prayer speaks to you.  
Keep it close in the weeks and months ahead. When the news is heavy,  
When the day seems lost, Look for the presence of bread,  
And its absence. Know that every night, you too are given bread to hold in your  
hands as you fall asleep, And bread to share  
As you wake up and rise....  
For now, and as close to forever  
As we will ever come.

Amen

Benediction:

Our Mother/Father, source of life and love,

You who dwell with us and among us.

May we reach out to hold your name, encircled in love.

Let the lights of heaven be seen on earth.

May we manifest your love in the world.

As we gather as one or all,

Grant us each a simple measure of that which we need to live:

shelter or home

water or wine

safety or protection

noodle or naan.

When we err, may we be overwhelmed by your generosity of spirit

And may we extend that spirit to others.

Guide us through the maze of temptations, distractions, and excesses.

Help us to make wise choices

Not only as we see them, but giving space for what others might see.

The world is your garden--

The abundance of life

The blossoms that never fade

May it be so.