

It is Enough: God Will Provide

Communion Service

“Is it enough? Is it enough?” That is a question that constantly haunts us as humans. It takes many forms in many settings.

- Will I have enough money – for basic needs, for unknown circumstances, to enjoy life, for retirement?
- Do I have enough energy and commitment and perseverance? For my job, for my volunteer work, for my many projects, for my church involvements?
- Do I have enough love and patience and kindness – as a parent, a grandparent, a spouse, a friend?
- Do I have enough gifts and talents for what I am invited to do or involved in? school, community, church?
- Am I getting enough out of life, living up to my potential, doing what I should be doing?
- Do I share enough – of myself with others – my time, my compassion, my money, my gifts?

Is it enough? So often our basic approach to life is one of scarcity – there will not be enough money, energy, talents, resources, love. There is only so much to go around. We worry about shortages, about not measuring up, about failing. We can be full of anxiety. It can be paralyzing. There are so many questions of ‘enough?’

As we prepare to receive the bread and cup of communion, we are invited to listen to a number of Scriptures that contain the question “Is it enough?” Three readers will share these Scriptures, and share different wondering questions and comments. Allow your mind and your spirit to hear and listen deeply, to take them in, to connect to your own questions of ‘enough’ and your own longings and desires. May the Scriptures truly feed us. (Three readers come forward and sit on three stools)

Wilderness and Manna (Exodus 16:2-5; 13-15)

Voice 1: The whole company of Israel complained against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness. The Israelites said,

Voice 2: "Why didn't GOD let us die in comfort in Egypt where we had lamb stew and all the bread we could eat? You've brought us out into this wilderness to starve us to death, the whole company of Israel!"

Voice 1: GOD said to Moses,

Voice 3: "I'm going to rain bread down from the skies for you. The people will go out and gather each day's ration. I'm going to test them to see if they'll live according to my Teaching or not. On the sixth day, when they prepare what they have gathered, it will turn out to be twice as much as their daily ration."

Voice 1: There's no way that's going to work.

Voice 2: I liked things better the way they used to be. I want to go back! Transitions are so hard.

Voice 3: I'm going to gather more than I need and hoard it for a rainy day. I need to take care of myself.

Voice 2: We can't count on a steady supply in such limited quantities. Food would be too scarce. I'm filling up my freezer. Don't we need some sort of food distribution system – on a large scale!

Voice 3: What about the lack of rain? Crops have failed. Food prices are going to go up.

Voice 1: Is there really enough food for everyone in our world? How come so many go hungry?

Voice 2: I'm not sure if I have enough trust? Can I truly trust in God each and every day?

All: Is it Enough? Is it Enough?

Voice 1: That evening quail flew in and covered the camp and in the morning there was a layer of dew all over the camp. When the layer of dew had lifted, there on the wilderness ground was a fine flaky something, fine as frost on the ground. The Israelites took one look and said to one another:

Voice 2: man-huhwhat is it? Man-na.

Voice 3: They had no idea what it was.

Voice 1: So Moses told them, "It's the bread GOD has given you to eat."

(Pause for some silence before beginning the next story)

A Handful of Flour, a Bottle of Oil (1 Kings 17:10-14; 15-16)

Voice 1: So Elijah got up and went to Zarephath. As he came to the entrance of the village he met a woman, a widow, gathering firewood. He asked her,

Voice 3: "Please, would you bring me a little water in a jug? I need a drink."

Voice 1: As she went to get it, he called out,

Voice 3: "And while you're at it, would you bring me something to eat?"

Voice 2: "I swear, as surely as your GOD lives, I don't have so much as a biscuit. I have a handful of flour in a jar and a little oil in a bottle; you found me scratching together just enough firewood to make a last meal for my son and me. After we eat it, we'll die."

Voice 3: "Don't worry about a thing. Go ahead and do what you've said. But first make a small biscuit for me and bring it back here. Then go ahead and make a meal from what's left for you and your son. This is the word of the GOD of Israel: "The jar of flour will not run out and the bottle of oil will not become empty before GOD sends rain on the land and ends this drought.""

Voice 1: This is serious business. Lives are at stake. The future is unknown.

Voice 3: Don't worry about a thing? Don't be scared? I can't live like that.

Voice 2: My life feels empty. My jar has nothing left. I'm running on fumes.

Voice 1: Go and share what little you have with others. Offer hospitality, even when the well of your life seems to have dried up.

Voice 3: I have deep hungers and longings, things that seem missing in life. How do I go deeper? How do I fill up my jug?

Voice 2: It sure is easier when it rains, when I see and feel God's refreshing spirit sinking deep into my soul.

Voice 1: What is it about sharing – sharing food, sharing struggles, sharing joys, sharing in community? God seems to show up.

All: Is it Enough? Is it Enough?

Voice 1: And she went right off and did it, did just as Elijah asked. And it turned out as he said—daily food for her and her family. The jar of meal didn't run out and the bottle of oil didn't become empty: GOD's promise fulfilled to the letter, exactly as Elijah had delivered it!

Hymn 474 HWB – I hunger and I thirst

Two Fish and Five Loaves (Matthew 14:12-17; 18-21)

Voice 1: When Jesus got the news that John the Baptist had been killed, he slipped away by boat to an out-of-the-way place by himself. But unsuccessfully—someone saw him and the word got around. Soon a lot of people from the nearby villages walked around the lake to where he was. When he saw them coming, he was overcome with pity and healed their sick. Toward evening the disciples approached him.

Voice 2: "We're out in the country and it's getting late. Dismiss the people so they can go to the villages and get some supper."

Voice 3: "There is no need to dismiss them. You give them supper."

Voice 2: "All we have are five loaves of bread and two fish,"

Voice 3: "Bring them here."

Voice 1: Then Jesus had the people sit on the grass.

Voice 3: That's not very much for 5000 people! There's never enough is there?

Voice 1: So much for the deserted place, for getting away from it all, for dealing with a time of grief. Why is that always the time when you seem most bombarded by the needs and requests of others?

Voice 2: How hungry they must have been for the words of Jesus! For the teaching of Jesus! For the compassion of Jesus!

Voice 3: 'You give them something to eat???' Our resources, our energies, our programs, our efforts are so small, so insignificant in the larger picture. Give them something to eat when we too are so hungry?

Voice 1: Hunger is great in our world – Food-banks and shelters, hand-outs and hampers, broken lives and hurting souls - so much need.

Voice 2: There is no need to go away, to look elsewhere, to go outside of ourselves - all we need is here. All we need is right in our midst!

Voice 3: Jesus tells us to sit down. To wait and see what God might do.

All: Is it Enough? Is it Enough?

Voice 1: Jesus took the five loaves and two fish, lifted his face to heaven in prayer, blessed, broke, and gave the bread to the disciples. The disciples then gave the food to the congregation. They all ate and were filled. They gathered twelve baskets of leftovers. About five thousand were fed.

(Pause for some silence before beginning the next story)

The Bread and the Cup (Luke 22:14-23; 24:28-30)

Voice 1: When it was time, Jesus sat down, all the apostles with him, and said,

Voice 3: "You've no idea how much I have looked forward to eating this Passover meal with you before I enter my time of suffering. It's the last one I'll eat until we all eat it together in the kingdom of God."

Voice 2: Taking the cup, he blessed it, then said,

Voice 3: "Take this and pass it among you. As for me, I'll not drink wine again until the kingdom of God arrives."

Voice 1: Taking bread, he blessed it, broke it, and gave it to them, saying,

Voice 3: "This is my body, given for you. Eat it in my memory."

Voice 2: He did the same with the cup after supper, saying,

Voice 3: "This cup is the new covenant written in my blood, blood poured out for you. Do you realize that the hand of the one who is betraying me is at this moment on this table? It's true that the Son of Man is going down a path already marked out—no surprises there. But for the one who turns him in, turns traitor to the Son of Man, this is doomsday."

Voice 1: They immediately became suspicious of each other and began quizzing one another, wondering who might be about to do this.

Voice 2: A common, ordinary act of eating and drinking, around a table, in a time of trial, that means so, so much more. So many layers.

Voice 3: Betrayal is part of each of our lives. Failure, disappointing others, falling short. We all come to the table in confession.

Voice 1: The bread and the cup – sustenance and hope - given right in the midst of uncertainty, danger, and trouble.

Voice 3: This bread was broken for me, for you, to bring to mind the very memory of this moment when Jesus last ate with those who followed him.

Voice 2: It's all about covenant isn't it? Covenant, relationship, community, promises – all marked by the sacrificial love of Jesus.

Voice 1: So we really will eat together with Jesus in the Kingdom of God!

Voice 3: Do not our hearts burn within us when we recognize Christ in our midst, in the breaking of bread for our world?

All: Is it Enough? Is it Enough?

Voice 1: They came to the edge of the village where they were headed. The stranger acted as if he were going on but they pressed him:

Voice 2: "Stay and have supper with us. It's nearly evening; the day is done."

Voice 1: So he went in with them. And here is what happened: He sat down at the table with them. Taking the bread, he blessed and broke and gave it to them. At that

moment, open-eyed, wide-eyed, they recognized him. And he vanished from their sight.

All: IT IS ENOUGH!

Celebration of Communion

Invitation to Communion – from Preparing Sunday Dinner, Herald Press, 2005, p. 275.

Following Distribution of communion elements:

Leader 1: (once distributed) Was there enough for everyone? Look, there are even left-overs! Take and eat. Strength for your soul!

Leader 2: Taste and see the goodness of the Lord!

(give servers the trays of cups. During the serving the congregation sings 86 STJ – Taste and see (with verses by soloists)

(once distributed)

Leader 1: Has everyone been served? Take and drink. The sign of new life!

Leader 1: Jesus says, “I am the vine, and my Father the vine-grower. Abide in me as I abide in you. I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit. As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you. Abide in my love.” (from John 15:1-8)

Leader 2: Jesus says, “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. For the bread of God is that which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.” They said to him, “Sir, give us this bread always.” 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.” (from John 4:32b-35)

Closing Hymn 475 HWB Become to us the living bread

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