

02.16.22 – A Weekly Word for Covenant Church

Title: “Give Us Today Our Daily Bread”

Scripture Reading: [Mark 8:13-21](#)

Reflection: Rev. Amy Schenkel

About this time two years ago there was a run on toilet paper. Costco, whose best-selling item is toilet paper, was completely out. People were scrounging for hidden rolls on the shelves at Meijer. But truth be told, many of us had stacks of TP in our basements, just in case there would come a day that we couldn't buy any more of Charmin's Ultra Soft Mega Rolls.

Armchair philosophers at the time mused that this run on toilet paper wasn't really about our bathroom needs at all. Rather, it was born out of a fear that, when the world around us was collapsing, we wouldn't have enough of our daily needs to keep living the way we were used to.

Pastor Doug shared with us the Syriac/Aramaic translation of “Give us today our daily bread,” which literally means, “Give us this day our bread which never runs out.” Out of God's grace, the Lord's Prayer recognizes our human need to know that we'll have our daily needs met.

Jesus' disciples even reveal this. In [Mark 8](#) we read the story of Jesus having compassion on the 4,000+ people who had been with him for 3 days, feeding on his teachings but having run out of food. He performs a miracle when he uses 7 loaves of bread and a few small fish to feed all of them- with seven large baskets of food leftover. Their daily bread wasn't just met- it was overflowing!

But immediately after this, the disciples get into a boat with Jesus and realize they had only taken one small loaf for the 13 of them. They began to argue because they had “no bread.” (Any math people out there? 7 loaves of bread feed 4000 people...how many people could Jesus feed with one loaf of bread?!?).

[Mark 8:17-21](#)

Jesus knew what they were saying, so he said, “Why are you arguing about having no bread? Don't you know or understand even yet? Are your hearts too hard to take it in? ‘You have eyes—can't you see? You have ears—can't you hear?’ Don't you remember anything at all? When I fed the 5,000 with five loaves of bread, how many baskets of leftovers did you pick up afterward?”

“Twelve,” they said.

“And when I fed the 4,000 with seven loaves, how many large baskets of leftovers did you pick up?”

“Seven,” they said.

“Don't you understand yet?” he asked them.

I confess that I am too often like the disciples. It isn't just about the stacks of toilet paper in our laundry room. When I see how exhausted our pastors are, I worry that there are not enough resources in the world to help them serve congregations today with what they need to learn and grow. When the churches I work with are crippled by fear and anxiety, I worry that there isn't enough hope to help them develop a missional

imagination to love their neighbors. When I consider the big issues that our CRCNA Council of Delegates and Synod will address this year, I worry there isn't enough spiritual wisdom, knowledge, and discernment to guide them.

But when I pray "Give us today our daily bread," I am acknowledging that all that we need is a gift from God. God, the creator of all heavens and earth. God, who fed 5000 people out of 7 loaves of bread and a few fish. God, who gave us God's only son as a perfect sacrifice for our sins. God, who conquered death and extends the promise of resurrection to each of us. God, who sends the Spirit to comfort, lead and guide us. God, who chooses to work through the church to share this love and grace with the world.

Prayer:

Lord, we confess that we can't imagine how you're going to fix some of the situations we find ourselves in. But in those moments, teach our song to rise to you, looking for the ways you are the Great Provider. Amen

Song for today:

[Lord, I Need You](#)

Action Item for the Day/Week:

Curiously, another trend emerged during the same season as the rush on toilet paper: in April 2020 Google searches for "Sourdough" hit an all-time high. Sourdough bread is a slow-fermented bread that doesn't require yeast. Instead, it is made with a sourdough starter. Once this starter is made, it must be fed flour and water to continue to work. You can get a starter from a friend or share a bit of your starter with someone else. I wonder if, in the midst of the pandemic chaos, the slow work of rising bread and the communal work of sharing sourdough starters with neighbors was part of the way we combatted the anxiety we felt.

Maybe you have time this week to bake a loaf of bread. Instead of grabbing a plastic bag of Aunt Millies off the shelf in the grocery store, enjoy the slowness of the bread-making process. Use the time to reflect on how God has provided daily bread for you. Reflect on how God has provided daily bread for your neighbors, your congregation, your community. And pray that God will provide daily bread for all of the messy situations we find ourselves in.

If you need a simple recipe, try this one:

Foolproof Cinnamon Raisin Pecan Artisan Bread Recipe

Foolproof cinnamon raisin pecan artisan bread. It's crusty on the outside, soft on the inside and loaded with plump raisins and toasted pecans.

Prep Time 50 mins

Cook Time 40 mins

Total Time 1 hr 30 mins plus 12-18 hour rise

Ingredients

- 3 1/4 cup all purpose flour OR bread flour
- 1 3/4 tsp coarse kosher sea salt
- 1 3/4 tsp ground cinnamon
- 1/2 tsp active dry yeast
- 1 1/2 cup +2 tbsp warm water
- 1/2 cup raisins fresh is best
- 1/2 cup toasted pecans coarsely chopped

Instructions

1. Whisk the flour, salt, cinnamon and yeast in a medium bowl. While stirring with a wooded spoon, gradually add the water, stir until incorporated. Toss in the raisins and pecans, mix the dough gently and form into a rough ball.
2. Transfer to a large clean (ungreased) bowl. Cover with plastic wrap and let dough rise in a draft-free area at room temperature until surface of dough is covered with tiny bubbles and the dough has more than doubled in size (This usually takes about 18 hours or so, however, it still turns out great with just 12 hours of rise time).
3. When the dough is ready, place a Dutch oven into the oven and turn it on to 450 degrees. Allow it to heat in the oven for 30 minutes.
4. Meanwhile, transfer the dough to a large square of parchment paper (big enough to cover the bottom of your Dutch oven). Lightly dust dough with flour, cover it with plastic wrap and allow it to rest for 30 minutes. Using a sharp knife, at a 90 degree angle, score an X in the top of the loaf. Each score mark should be about 3 1/2 inches long and about 1/4" deep. Using a mister, spray bottle, clean toothbrush or pastry brush, lightly mist (or brush) the top of the bread with water.
5. Carefully remove Dutch oven from the oven. Place the shaped dough into it, cover and return to the oven to bake for 30 minutes. Remove the lid and bake for an additional 8-12 minutes or until the top is nice and dark (but not burnt). Remove from the oven and transfer the loaf bread to a cooling rack. Allow it to cool for at least 30 minutes before slicing to prevent a gummy crumb.

Notes

- If you don't have a Dutch Oven, you can use the insert of a crock-pot (and the lid) or any deep enameled stoneware you might have (like a round baker or casserole dish), just cover it with foil.

(Recipe from [Life Made Simple](#))