

ENOUGH BREAD FOR TODAY

And No Debt For Tomorrow

Acts 2.41-47—Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day. They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes daily and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

Acts 4.32-34—All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of their possessions was their own, but they shared everything they had. With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And God's grace was so powerfully at work in them all that there were no needy persons among them. For from time to time those who owned land or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales and put it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to anyone who had need.

Matthew 6.11-12—Give us today our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.

Matthew 14.15-17—As evening approached, the disciples came to him and said, "This is a remote place, and it's already getting late. Send the crowds away, so they can go to the villages and buy themselves some food." Jesus replied, "They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat." "We have here only five loaves of bread and two fish," they answered.

Matthew 5.45—He makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the righteous and on the unrighteous.

Matthew 19.21-23—Jesus said to him, "If you wish to be whole [Rehumanization], go, sell your possessions, and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in the kingdom of heaven; then come, follow me." When the young man heard this word, he went away grieving, for he had many possessions. Then Jesus said to his disciples, "Truly I tell you, it will be hard for a rich person to enter the kingdom of heaven."

Two Narratives Contrasted

Scarcity	More than Enough
Anxiety	Gratitude
Accumulation	Distributive Justice
Competition	Cooperation
Monopoly	Sharing
Violence	Peace:

Where no one has too much and everyone has enough.

Mahatma Gandhi—"The Earth provides enough to satisfy every man's [sic] need but not for every man's greed." (Quoted by Pyarelal Nayyar in *Mahatma Gandhi: The Last Phase* (Volume 10), page 552; 1958)

Matthew 6.12—And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.

Deuteronomy 15.9-10—Be careful not to harbor this wicked thought: “The seventh year, the year for canceling debts, is near,” so that you do not show ill will toward the needy among your fellow Israelites and give them nothing. They may then appeal to the LORD against you, and you will be found guilty of sin. Give generously to them and do so without a grudging heart; then because of this the LORD your God will bless you in all your work and in everything you put your hand to.

Deuteronomy 15.14 (REB)—At the end of every seventh year you must make a remission of debts. This is how it is to be made: everyone who holds a pledge shall return the pledge of the person indebted to him. He must not press a fellow-countryman for repayment, for the Lord’s year of remission has been declared . . . There will never be any poor among you if only you obey the Lord your God by carefully keeping these commandments which I lay upon you this day.

John Perkins (Confessions of an Economic Hitman)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j1lvMLTQ6ew>

Richard Wilkinson (How Economic Inequality Harms Societies)
https://www.ted.com/talks/richard_wilkinson

Michelle Alexander; *The New Jim Crow*

Noam Chomsky; *Requiem for the American Dream*

Rev Dr. Willam Barber II (Poor Peoples Campaign / Moral Mondays)
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Barber_II

Sam Wells—“The traditional way of understanding discipleship as one of taking people out of the world because it is a hostile place, promising them a better place in God’s heavenly kingdom, has been radically transformed by this insight. Jesus call us rather to change the world in such a way that it will cease to be the hostile place it is, as we construct the way for God’s reign on earth . . . The one thing everyone seems to agree on today is that there’s plenty wrong with the world. There are only two responses to this—either go and put it right yourself, or, if you can’t, make life pretty uncomfortable for those who can until they do. When we take stock of our relationship with the powerful, we ask ourselves, ‘Does the shape of my life reflect my longing to see God set people free, and do I challenge those who keep others in slavery?’” (Introduction to *Binding the Strong Man*: a political reading of Mark’s story of Jesus by Ched Myers)

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Q 11:2-4—“When you pray, say, Father – may your name be kept holy! – let your reign come: Our day’s bread give us today; and cancel our debts for us, as we too have cancelled for those in debt to us.

Matthew 6:12—“And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.”

Luke 11:2-4—“Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who sins against us.”

Matthew 5.42—Do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you.

Matthew 6:24—“No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money.”

James M. Robinson—“By using the ‘kingdom of God,’ Jesus put his ideal for society in an antithetical relation both to other political and social systems and to individual self-interest (‘looking out for number one’). The human dilemma is, in large part, that we are each other’s fate. We become the tool of evil that ruins another person as we look out for ourselves, having long abandoned any youthful idealism we might once have cherished. But if we each would cease and desist from pushing the other down to keep ourselves up, then the vicious cycle would be broken. Society would become mutually supportive rather than self-destructive. This is what Jesus was up to. Jesus’ message was simple, for he wanted to cut straight through to the point: trust God to look out for you by providing people who will care for you, and listen to him when he calls on you to provide for them. God is somebody you can trust, so give it a try. Jesus found his role models for such godly living in the world of nature around him. Ravens and lilies do not seem to focus their attention on satisfying their own needs in order to survive, and yet God sees to it that they prosper. Sparrows are sold a dime a dozen and, one might say, who cares? God cares! Even about the tiniest things—he knows exactly how many hairs are on your head! So God will not give a stone when asked for bread or a snake when asked for fish, but can be counted on to give what you really need. You can trust him to know what you need even before you ask. This utopian vision of a caring God was the core of what Jesus had to say and what he himself put into practice. It was both good news—reassurance that in your actual experience good would happen to mitigate your plight—and the call upon you to do that same good toward others in actual practice. This radical trust in and responsiveness to God is what makes society function as God’s society. This was, for Jesus, what faith and discipleship were all about. As a result, nothing else had a right to claim any functional relationship to him. Put in language derived from his sayings: I am hungry because you hoard food. You are cold because I hoard clothing. Our dilemma is that we all hoard supplies in our backpacks and put our trust in our wallets! Such “security” should be replaced by God reigning, which means both what I trust God to do (to activate you to share food with me) and what I hear God telling me to do (to share clothes with you). We should not carry money while bypassing the poor or wear a backpack with extra clothes and food while ignoring the cold and hungry lying in the gutter. This is why the beggars, the hungry, the depressed are fortunate: God, that is, those in whom God rules, those who hearken to God, will care for them. The needy are called upon to trust that God’s reigning is there for them “Theirs is the kingdom of God”. ((The Gospel of Jesus: A Historical Search for the Original Good News, Kindle Locations 64-77, emphasis added.)

