



Wednesday Prayer

11th Sunday after Pentecost – How do we provide?

The whole congregation of the Israelites complained against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness. The Israelites said to them, “If only we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the fleshpots and ate our fill of bread; for you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger.” Then the Lord said to Moses, “I am going to rain bread from heaven for you, and each day the people shall go out and gather enough for that day. In that way I will test them, whether they will follow my instruction or not.

Exodus 16: 2-4

Many of us know this text and know what follows. God continues to provide what is needed, *even* given the way the people ask, with complaints and looking back to when they were enslaved – but at least had food. God only asks that they take what is needed for each day, not to store up or hoard more than what they need. But we are a hoarding people, then and now. As you read further in this Exodus story, we hear how some took more than what they needed, and the manna bred worms and spoiled. In today’s world, there are countless ways we hoard more than what we need. Our culture promotes this at every turn.

I’ve been in conversation with several people recently, getting to know their stories a bit. Many are stories of scarcity, pain and neglect. How do we provide?

~ A young woman who had experienced homelessness and now is working toward a better future for herself and her son. She’s looking to volunteer with Cherish All Children so she can make an impact on young people’s lives who are vulnerable to exploitation. She can provide her experience, compassion, and presence. What a blessed gift. We can provide connection, opportunity, and belonging.

~Another story from neighbors and small business owners around my church suffering due to neglect and the ensuing drug use and sales making it unsafe for many. How do we provide? What is the antidote to this kind of suffering? In this conversation, we were asked, “How do we bring the theology of abundance to the neighborhood?” What can we provide? We’re wrestling with these questions and offering what God has provided us – our presence, a food ministry, gathering with and listening to neighbors and business owners, partnering to work for the safety of young people and all.

~And then stories from international students, and some of our own experiences from our travels: stories of abundance and sharing with all, even when to our eyes things may look scarce. Trust in God’s word.

God our provider, fill our hungry hearts with your word so that we know there is enough not only for ourselves but also for the community. Help us to answer the question of how do we provide, *even* when those suffering may come with complaints and doubt. May we be the antidote and share your abundance. Amen.

Written by Joy McElroy, Cherish All Children Executive Director.