

# Bread for the World Sunday 2018

Bread for the World Sunday is an opportunity to join others in praying for those who struggle with hunger—and to rededicate ourselves to efforts that create hope and opportunity for those in need. In the Gospel of Mark, Jesus tells his disciples that “for God all things are possible” (Mark 10:27). In this spirit of God-given possibility, we invite your prayers and your actions for an end to hunger.

## A Lectionary Study on Mark 10:35-45

By Rev. Amy Reumann

The shortest sermon I know is only ten words. It was preached by my grandfather to a small, country congregation on the story of the Good Samaritan. He read the account of an outsider who demonstrates true neighbor love by stopping on the road to care for a bleeding and badly injured man. This Samaritan’s compassion stands in stark contrast to religious types who passed by without offering aid. After reading the text, my grandfather mounted the pulpit and said, “We all know what this means. Just go do it.” Then he sat down, sermon over.

I’ve heard the story of my grandfather’s sermon from several people over the years. Each described the impact it made on them in its brevity and directness. The simplicity of “just go do it” reminds us that sometimes all the words we use to describe and explain Jesus may get in the way of his core message. We really do know what he means. Love God by serving your neighbor. It is that clear. It is that simple. It is that hard.

It appears to be a hard lesson for James and John to learn. When the brothers sidle up to Jesus to put in a word for themselves as “Disciples of the Year,” Jesus tells them they don’t know what they are talking about. We are used to the disciples being bumbling, perennially two steps behind their Lord. They are slow to understand Jesus’ motives, words, or mission. The brothers’ request to sit in places of honor flies in the face of everything Jesus has been modeling and teaching about servant leadership. James and John may have heard Jesus, but they really had not listened.

In a society that values achievement, rewards ambition, and elevates strivers, we can become confused like James and John about the real rewards of discipleship. The brothers believed that following Jesus should get them something big and important. There must be a prize, a promotion, or some sort of power to compensate for the long hours, dusty miles, insistent crowds, and hostility from the religious elites.

The status James and John seek is the prestige of being elevated to Jesus’ right (and left) hand for eternity. That is not the kind of promotion Jesus gives. He tells them they have received all they need from him for their ministry ahead. He then points them in the opposite direction, away from himself and toward the needs of the world—to those

who are hungry, poor, oppressed, victimized, abused, or abandoned by the side of the road.

In Jesus’ kingdom, greatness is achieved by stopping to attend to the wounds of those around you and by addressing the hunger and hurts of our world. And when faith moves into action alongside those who are hungry or hurting, then we already are by Jesus’ side. To be with him in his glory, we open ourselves to his path of service, justice, compassion, and love beyond measure.

Jesus turns their impossible request into a teachable moment with his own short sermon saying, “Whoever wishes to become great among you must be your servant.” He contrasts his way of service to the way of the powerful of his day—and ours. He presents an alternative to rulers who “lord it over” the weaker. His kind of power is made perfect in weakness, informed by deep relationship, ready to sacrifice—and, as a result, is absolutely unstoppable.

Ending hunger requires charity and justice—binding the wounds of those who are hurt but also addressing those with the power to lord it over others. The role of those who govern is to make sure the needs of all are met for the sake of the common good. Sometimes those who govern need a firm reminder of this responsibility. And if we do not remind them, then who will?

We can’t afford the luxury of passing by or pretending a policy that would increase hunger has nothing to do with you or me. When bad policies will deepen poverty or make it harder to feed a family, we need to “just go do it”—by serving, yes, but also by speaking up and speaking out. When we do, we may find ourselves a bit closer to Jesus and his glory.

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Rev. Amy Reumann

# A Responsive Prayer

by Rev. Dr. John Crossin, OSFS

Loving God, we are grateful for your blessings to us. We pray for our community and for those in need. We pray especially for those who lack food and lack loving family and friends. We offer our petitions as we recognize our complete dependence on you. We pray

that we may learn to listen with our heads and our hearts, that we may come to understand one another more deeply, and that we may strive to act on those divine inspirations that lead to the healing of our divisions. We pray

## Holy Spirit guide us.

that by sharing meals with our neighbors and treating each other with patience, gentleness, and humility, we can build relationships that last and provide a community of mutual support and love for all. We pray

## Holy Spirit guide us.

that we may continue to open our hearts to divine guidance as we seek to serve those who are poor and malnourished—in our neighborhoods and in the nations of our world. We pray

## Holy Spirit guide us.

that people who suffer from the deep wounds of poverty may be healed. We pray

## Holy Spirit guide us.

that in serving others we may help to build peace-filled communities—compassionate communities that have a deep concern for those most in need—and that we might encourage others to be peace-builders. We pray

## Holy Spirit guide us.

that public officials may accept their responsibility for all members of the community, especially the vulnerable and the poor. We pray

## Holy Spirit guide us.

that we open ourselves to deeper conversion of our own hearts so that we may imitate Jesus in embracing service to others, even others far from us—psychologically, spiritually, or geographically—and that we encourage our public officials to do the same. We pray

## Holy Spirit guide us.

Loving God, we ask your blessings this day on those who are poor, hungry, and alone. We ask that your Spirit of Peace dwell more completely in all hearts. We ask you to bless these petitions, which we offer in the name of Jesus, our merciful Savior. **Amen.**



Rev. Dr. John Crossin, OSFS

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## 2018 Offering of Letters

As part of your Bread for the World Sunday celebration, you may want to conduct an Offering of Letters—taking time to write brief letters to members of Congress, urging them to continue our nation's investments in programs that provide hope and opportunity for people living with hunger. For a sample letter and more information, visit [bread.org/ol](http://bread.org/ol).

## About Bread for the World

Bread for the World is a collective Christian voice urging our nation's decision makers to end hunger at home and abroad. God's grace in Jesus Christ moves us to reach out to our neighbors—whether they live next door, in another state, or on another continent. Bread for the World's work is made possible by contributions from tens of thousands of individuals and thousands of churches across the country. We invite you to join us by visiting [bread.org/join](http://bread.org/join) or calling 800-822-7323.



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