

The Bread Of Bethlehem

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Preacher: Harry Robinson

[0 : 00] I'd like to tell you, to share with you the little fantasy that I'm working out of.

I feel like I have this night had considerable cost to myself, given up, sleeping quietly on a park bench in Victory Square, and have come up to confront this congregation made up of entirely beautiful people, and to tell you what you haven't got.

And I'm quite overwhelmed by the possibility that understanding that you haven't got it, it would be extremely unlikely that it was possible that I did have it, and that I could give to you what you don't already have.

And there I am. And I have these few minutes to try and convince you of the almost unutterable poverty that you suffer from, and the immense wealth that is available to you.

And so if you will listen, I will try and tell you that story in a way that I hope God will use to help you understand, and to help us all to understand the news, the wonder of the annual remembrance of the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ.

[1 : 38] And so, Bethlehem is a word which in Hebrew means house of bread. Now, somehow we go to Bethlehem because we need bread.

Bread, as you know, has some different connotations. Sometimes it's money, and sometimes it's other things, but it's bread that we need. In the heart of the Lord's Prayer, we pray, give us this day our daily bread.

And one famous president of the United States once said, The reason that that petition is in there is so that businessmen will know that the kingdom of God is dependent on the provision of daily bread, and they better provide it.

I don't think that's why it's there. And here I am trying to outguess the president. Well, he said, No one can worship God or love his neighbor on an empty stomach.

And in fact, the truth problem is that if your stomach is full, you don't bother to do either of those things. And that's the human dilemma.

[3 : 02] Well, somebody who was somewhat more cynical about it said, When people ask for bread, don't give them crackers as the church does.

Don't, like the state, tell them to eat cake. Explain to them that man does not live by bread alone, and then give them stones.

Well, that kind of cynicism I find very helpful. Partly because I suspect in my mind that there are cynics capable of even such statements gathered tonight in this congregation.

And sometimes the perception of cynics can identify more clearly than anyone else the essential problem that we have. And that is that the one who suggested that men should turn stones into bread was the devil.

And it was never successfully done, as far as we know. In fact, there may even be a conspiracy of what today.

[4 : 22] There's a new recipe from which bread is sometimes made. Well, you get the point. I won't go on. Well, one of the most terrible man-inflicted wounds on the face of the globe is the Sahara Desert.

And I call it a man-inflicted wound. Wound with, I think, some backing. I think that's true. That's how it happened. And out of the Sahara Desert this past year came the most terrible famine that the world has known recently.

Probably the most terrible simply because of the population of the world now. And a rock concert recognized that people need bread.

And I think, frankly, the church is in a lot of trouble whenever it says what Christ said in reply to Satan's temptation when he said, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that

proceeds out of the mouth of God.

And the usual dismissal is like Woodrow Wilson. Nobody's going to pay any attention to the word of God until they've got bread. So let's get bread out. And it's very probable that there is enough bread in the world for everybody to have some.

[5 : 53] You just need some systems of delivery. You need some better communication. You need some exchange of money. You need a number of things. And that's where the process breaks down and people don't get bread.

And it's because we have it, but somehow we can't share it, that the wisdom of Christ's statement quoted from the book of Deuteronomy bears in upon us that men cannot indeed live by bread alone.

But there is something which must affect him much more deeply than that. Bread, you see, can be poison.

The scripture talks about poison bread. It talks about the bread of wickedness and the wine of violence, which some people partake of.

It talks about the bread of idleness. It talks about the bread of anxious toil. It talks about bread that is gained by deceit.

[7 : 00] But even that, you see, is not helping people, but poisoning them. Something to heal people is required. What Christ says is that that is the word from God.

And so while we watch in a distant continent the working out of a terrible famine that has afflicted this planet, who will probably continue to afflict it, there may be among us a more dreadful famine, famine that you and I suffer from.

Because Amos talked about such a famine when he said, he said, the Lord spoke to Israel and said, I will send a famine on the land.

Not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord. They shall wander from sea to sea.

That's the motto of Canada. They shall wander from sea to sea, from north to east. They shall run to and fro and seek the word of the Lord.

[8 : 26] Well, that is probably the deepest famine that we long for. Can I tell you a very simple story?

I was told you'd never understand it, but I'm sure you will. I was talking to a friend of mine named Fred yesterday, and Fred goes back a long way in history, and I go back a long way in history, and we were trying to remember the name of a mutual acquaintance, and we couldn't think what his name was.

And Fred said, my memory for names is failing very rapidly. And I said, well, so is mine. And we fished around and tried to get it. Now, we knew that if we heard the name, we would know it.

We knew that if we heard another name, we would know that it was the wrong name. We knew that there was such a person and that he had a name, even though we couldn't remember it.

We knew all these things about the name of this person, but we could not get it. And Fred suggested that we start with the alphabet and go A, B, C, D until we found the name.

[9 : 36] And I thought perhaps the afternoon was too short for that, and that the probability would be that that name would come to us, one of us, during the night when we woke up and our subconscious mind had been working on it, and the name would be delivered to us.

I think that name is somewhat like the Word of God. We know we need it. We know we would understand it and recognize it if we heard it.

We can talk about the meaning of it and the implications of it without hearing it. But somehow, until in some way that Word is delivered to us, we remain without it.

And that remaining without that Word of God, even though our bellies are full of bread, means that we as a people are denied the one thing that we need most because we can't live by bread alone, but by the living Word of God.

And so you see the remarkable coincidence that takes place when Jesus, in accordance with a long history, is brought by his expectant mother and prospective father to Bethlehem, to the house of bread.

[11 : 11] That's where the bread, which is the living Word of God, comes from. Bethlehem, the house of bread.

And that's the bread for which we long, which we desperately need. You will remember the story that there were three wise men who came and brought gold and frankincense and myrrh, the best gift they could, because they knew this bread, because they knew this bread, which was the living Word of God, was there, and that's what they needed.

And I would like you to think, that in this Christmas of 1985, three wise men might again go to Bethlehem, to the house of bread, and take there with them the very best gifts they have, and offer those gifts, in exchange for that bread, which is the living Word of God.

And I would like to think that one of those wise men has well-polished black shoes, and a dark and perhaps pinstripe suit, and a silk tie, and a tailor-made shirt, and we could add a gold watch chain, and that he would represent the business community, and he would bring to Christ the best gift of that community, for the service of Christ.

You know that the London Stock Exchange has over its door, the London Stock Exchange has over its door, the earth is the Lord, and the fullness thereof.

[13:23] Come and trade him. Well, that's what I would like to see, such a wise man, coming to Christ, and offering all the ability of modern business, not just for the acquisition of property, but to see those gifts used in the coming of the kingdom.

And secondly, I'd like to see a man in a white lab coat, a research scientist, coming and bringing the best gift of wisdom, and understanding, and knowledge that he has, to the child of Bethlehem. that those gifts might be received, and might be used, in exchange, as it were, for that word of God, that wonder word of God, by which the ultimate healing of the diseases of man, would be affected. One wise man in a business suit, one wise man in a lab coat, and the third wise man, would have boots, and parkies, and a machine gun over his shoulder, and a beer, and a forage tab, and he would be the revolutionary.

And he would come, offering the whole of his heart's desire, to see that revolution, initiated, which would bring in the kingdom.

[15:18] And he would be willing, to give the best gifts that he has, in his restlessness, to see the therapy, changes that are needed, in our hungry world, in order that men might find justice.

That he would be able, to trigger, that revolution. Which Mary speaks to God, in the Magnificat, when she says, hungry will be filled, with good things.

And this will be sent empty away. That revolution, which begins, not at the point of a machine gun, but in men's hearts.

those would be the wise men, that I would like to see, come to Christ, with the best gifts that they have.

Not just for a better world, but for a world in which, the kingdom of God, was recognized as a mother. And then you, and all of you, in one sense tonight, come to the house of bread, that you may partake of, the living word of God.

[16:49] That living word of God, which alone can satisfy, the deepest longings, and hungers of your heart. You can talk about, all the artificiality, of Christmas, and all the canned music, and all the tinsel, and all the, superficiality of Christmas, if you want.

But it does express, express, I think, a deep longing, on the whole of mankind, that they might see, peace on earth. That they might see, the reality of the reign, of the Prince of Peace.

And though they will not, let his name cross their lips. Ultimately, the salmon can see, the salmon, until he is acknowledged, and he becomes for us, the living word of God, by which we are to live.

Without which we die. You are invited, and I am invited, by our risen Lord, Jesus Christ, the child of Bethlehem, he birthday.

He treats you. He treats you.

[18:23] He treats you. He treats you. He treats you. He treats me. He treats you. He treats me. He treats me. Dêptilies.

hanya ■■■ you, and wisdom of the reality of the kingdom. Maybe just a ritual and sacramental act you would say, but in that is the promise and the hope which belongs to us in Christ, and the word of the living God by which alone we can live.

And we invite you in Christ's name to partake of that living world under the elements of bread.

Amen. Now we sing together our offertory hymn number 228.

Amen. Amen. Amen.

[19:44] Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[22 : 03] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[24 : 33] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[27 : 03] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[29 : 33] through Jesus Christ our Savior.

Christmas is indeed a time for families and for relatives and for friends. Would you join me in praying a prayer for relatives and friends at the bottom of page 732 in your prayer box.

Page 732. Amen. Together we pray.

O loving Father, we commend to thy gracious keeping all who are near and dear to us. Have mercy upon any who are sick. Comfort those who are of pain, anxiety, or sorrow.

Amen. Awaken all who are careless about eternal things. Bless those who are young and in health, that they may give the days of their strength to you.

[31 : 11] Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. continues on the bottom of page 76 with this invitation to each and every one of us you that do truly and earnestly repent you of your sins and are in love and charity with your neighbors and intend to lead the new life following the commandments of god and walking from henceforth in his holy ways draw near with faith and take this holy sacrament to your comfort and make your humble confession to almighty god meekly kneeling upon your knees almighty god so

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

[34 : 25] Thank you. Thank you. Hear also what St. Paul said. Hear also what St. John said. Hear also what St. John said.

If anyone sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and he is a propitiation for our sins.

The Lord be with you. And with my spirit.

Lift up your hearts. Give them unto the Lord.

Let us give thanks unto our Lord God. Give me and my love to the Lord.

[35 : 33] It is very meet, right, and our bounden duty that we should at all times and in all places give thanks unto thee.

O Lord, Holy Father, almighty everlasting God, creator and preserver of all things.

Because thou didst give Jesus Christ thy only Son to be born as at this time for us, who by the operation of the Holy Spirit was made very man of the substance of the Virgin Mary his and his mother, and that without spot of sin, to make us clean from all sin.

Therefore, with angels and archangels, and with all the company of heaven, we laud and magnify thy glorious name, evermore praising thee and singing.

a perfect that, yeah. It's a stand . wymsit af wyms ?

[37 : 12] Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Blessing and glory and thanksgiving be unto thee, almighty God, our heavenly Father, who of thy tender mercy didst give thine only Son, Jesus Christ, to take our nature upon him and to suffer death upon the cross for our redemption, who made there, by his one oblation of himself once offered, a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world, and in Institute and in his holy gospel command us to continue a perpetual memorial of that his precious death until his coming again.

Hear us, O merciful Father, we most humbly beseech thee, and grant that we, receiving these thy creatures of bread and wine, according to thy Son, our Savior, Jesus Christ, holy institution, in remembrance of his death and passion, may be partakers of his most blessed body and blood. Who in the same night that he was betrayed took bread, and when he had given thanks, he given thanks, he brinked it, and gave it to them, saying, Take ye, this is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me. Likewise, after supper he took the cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of this, for this is my blood of the new covenant, which is shed for you and for many for the remission of sins.

[39 : 24] Do this as oft as ye shall drink it in remembrance of me. And together, wherefore, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, we thy humble servants, with all our holy church, remembering the precious death of thy beloved Son, his mighty resurrection, glorious ascension, and looking for his coming again in the home, to make me worthy, disciple, Why giving them a restrained quirk, to exceed who is huge, nor the new covenant of my respect.

That the Father, O Father, may not know, or the memory of God, and the cause of sin, we should because we are in these 19, let us even sing, only they should dare Prime Minister ■■■ Re butterfly but he will sing for our adversity, we shall see them for how to engage in the Lord Satan, Lord of heaven parmys and his soul, ■■ for some way, which is based on him, Now we pray unto them for these, but cannot change in tactfully.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[41 : 48] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[44 : 18] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.