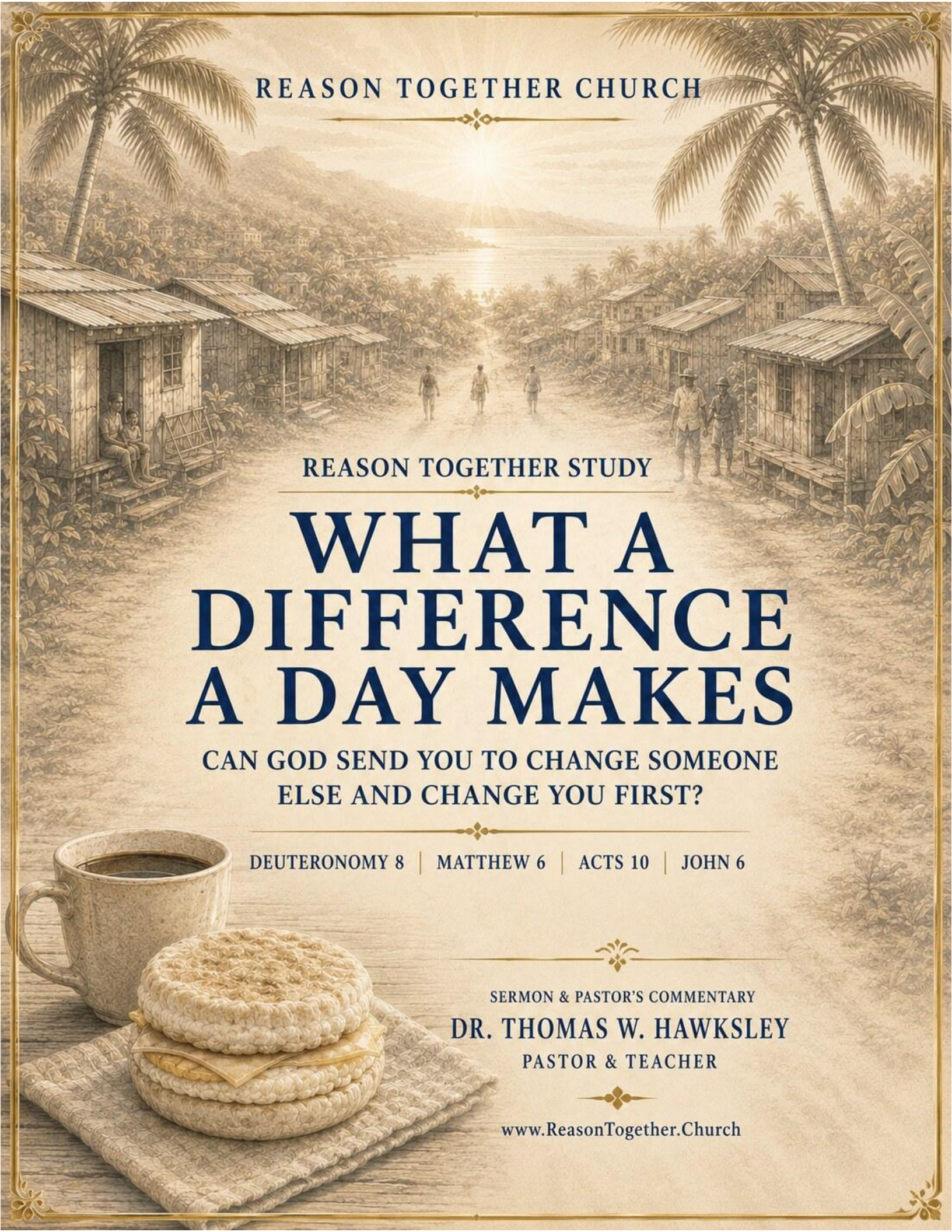




REASON TOGETHER CHURCH

REASON TOGETHER STUDY

WHAT A DIFFERENCE A DAY MAKES

CAN GOD SEND YOU TO CHANGE SOMEONE
ELSE AND CHANGE YOU FIRST?

DEUTERONOMY 8 | MATTHEW 6 | ACTS 10 | JOHN 6

SERMON & PASTOR'S COMMENTARY

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Aloha.

Welcome to Reason Together Church.

Whether you have been with us many times or this is your first time, we are grateful that God has brought you here today.

Our invitation is simple.

Bring your questions.

Open your Bible.

Let's Reason Together the Word of God.

If you are visiting with us, please know that we will not embarrass you, single you out or pressure you in any way.

We want you to feel at home.

After the service, I hope you will join us in the Reason Together Cafe for coffee, conversation and perhaps a few questions that we did not have time to answer during the message.

At Reason Together Church, coffee is free and so are the refills on conversations.

Let us pray.

Heavenly Father, thank You for bringing us together today.

Thank You for every person in this room and every person who may hear this message later.

Open our Bibles, open our hearts and open our eyes.

Help us to recognize Your provision without taking it for granted.

Help us to see the people whom we have learned to pass without seeing.

Give us humility when Your Word exposes something in us that needs to change.

Give us courage to respond when You place a need within our reach.

Most of all, help us to see Jesus Christ clearly and to understand the salvation He freely offers.

In Jesus' name we pray.

Amen.

Our Scripture reading today comes from Deuteronomy chapter 8.

Beginning in verse 2, the King James Version says:

"And thou shalt remember all the way which the LORD thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments, or no."

Verse 3 continues:

"And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the LORD doth man live."

Then verse 10 says:

"When thou hast eaten and art full, then thou shalt bless the LORD thy God for the good land which he hath given thee."

Verse 11 warns:

"Beware that thou forget not the LORD thy God."

And verse 18 says:

"But thou shalt remember the LORD thy God: for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth."

Before we enter today's subject, let me say a brief word about giving.

Guests are never expected to give to Reason Together Church.

If you are a member of another church, we encourage you to support your home church.

We do not pass an offering plate.

For those who consider Reason Together Church their church home and feel led to give, a giving box is available in the back.

The Bible teaches that God loves a cheerful giver.

Giving is not a payment for God's blessings.

It is one way we remember where our blessings came from and one way we allow what God placed into our hands to bless someone else.

That giving note leads naturally into today's subject.

Everything we possess came from somewhere.

Today, I want to tell you about a day when God taught me that lesson in a way I have never forgotten.

It was a day when almost nothing around me changed, but nearly everything I saw began to look different.

I had just arrived on an island in the Philippines.

The journey had taken approximately twenty-six hours.

I had barely rested on the airplane.

I was tired.

I had jet lag.

It was not my first time in the Philippines, but it was my first day serving there alone as a missionary.

A pastor friend met me at the airport and brought me to an old building that appeared to have been a hotel at one time.

It was called a pension house.

It was inexpensive and close to a few American-style restaurants.

It was nothing like the comfortable home I had left only hours earlier.

But for that season, it was going to be home.

The pastor showed me the area, we ate lunch and then he left me to get a little sleep before church.

I was the guest speaker that evening.

After the sermon, several people remained to ask questions and talk about how the Biblical teaching applied to everyday life.

By the time I returned to my room, it was after 11:00 at night.

I was exhausted.

Unfortunately, some sort of celebration was taking place in the courtyard outside.

People had gathered after a nearby work shift ended.

They were drinking, talking and getting louder.

Sleep did not come easily.

The next thing I clearly remember was my telephone ringing at approximately 10:00 the next morning.

The pastor who was going witnessing with me apologized for running a few minutes late.

He told me he would arrive in fifteen minutes.

I jumped out of bed and headed toward the shower.

Then I remembered that what I called a shower was not what was waiting for me.

I had paid extra to have a private bathroom, but the bathing area consisted of a large pail of water and a scoop.

The temperature outside was already between 90 and 100 degrees.

The pail sat where sunlight came through a small window.

Yet somehow that water was still ice cold.

I never figured out how they managed that.

I finished as quickly as I could, got dressed and reached the lobby shortly before the pastor arrived.

We began walking toward the neighborhood where we would spend the day.

The walk took approximately thirty minutes.

Partway there, my stomach reminded me that I had not eaten breakfast.

I was hungry.

Very hungry.

Then I saw one of the most comforting sights an American can encounter in an unfamiliar country.

The Golden Arches were about a block ahead.

There was a McDonald's.

Those arches represented familiarity.

They represented comfort.

They represented breakfast.

They represented an immediate end to my hunger.

I began preparing in my mind to walk inside and order a couple of breakfast sandwiches.

Then God opened my eyes.

For the first time, I noticed the hundreds of people around me who were genuinely hungry.

I realized that the money I was preparing to spend on two breakfast sandwiches was more than many people in that city earned in an entire day.

The restaurant had not moved.

The people had not suddenly appeared.

The street had not changed.

What changed was what I was able to see.

I had been looking at breakfast.

God caused me to see hunger.

For the first time I could remember, I voluntarily chose not to eat because I wanted to experience at least a little of the hunger the people I would meet regularly faced.

But I knew immediately that my hunger was not the same as theirs.

I had chosen mine.

I could end mine.

I had money in my pocket.

I knew that later that day I would eat.

Many people walking around me did not know when their hunger would end.

For a few hours, hunger did not teach me what it was like to be poor.

It taught me how much I did not understand.

That distinction matters.

It would have been arrogant for me to miss one meal and announce that I now understood chronic hunger.

I did not.

I still do not fully understand it.

But God used a temporary discomfort to expose how much my comfort had allowed me not to see.

That brings us back to Deuteronomy chapter 8.

God told Israel to remember all the way He had led them through the wilderness.

He did not tell them to remember only the pleasant moments.

He told them to remember all the way.

That included the uncertainty.

That included the thirst.

That included the hunger.

Deuteronomy 8:2 says God led them through the wilderness "to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart."

The wilderness revealed things that comfort could conceal.

It is easy to say that we trust God when the refrigerator is full.

It is easy to speak confidently about provision when there is money in the bank.

It is easy to thank God for daily bread when we already know what we are eating tomorrow.

But hunger has a way of stripping away the illusion that we are completely self-sufficient.

Verse 3 says that God "humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger."

God allowed Israel to experience need.

Then He fed them with manna.

They could not take credit for manna.

They did not plant it.

They did not cultivate it.

They did not harvest it from fields they owned.

They woke in the morning and discovered that God had provided what they could not produce.

The lesson was not that bread is unimportant.

Hungry people know that bread matters.

The lesson was that bread is not ultimate.

The God who provides bread is greater than the normal means through which bread arrives.

The power to sustain life does not originate in our cupboards, our paychecks or our cleverness.

It comes from God.

That is why the verse concludes:

"Man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the LORD doth man live."

Many years later, Jesus entered the wilderness.

Matthew 4 tells us that after fasting forty days and forty nights, Jesus "was afterward an hungred."

His hunger was real.

Satan tempted Him to turn stones into bread.

Jesus answered by quoting Deuteronomy 8:3.

"Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."

Jesus refused to use divine power selfishly.

He trusted the Father even while His body felt the sharp reality of hunger.

We must be careful with this passage.

We should not look at every hungry person and announce that God made that person hungry to teach a lesson.

Deuteronomy explains Israel's particular wilderness experience.

It does not give us the right to invent a divine explanation for every family's suffering.

When God allows me to see another person's hunger, my first question should not be, "What is God teaching them?"

My first question should be, "What is God revealing in me?"

What does my response reveal about my heart?

Does another person's need awaken compassion?

Does it produce irritation?

Do I look away?

Do I explain it away?

Do I thank God that it is not my problem?

Or do I ask whether God placed that need within my reach for a reason?

Jesus placed hunger directly inside the prayer He taught every Christian to pray.

Matthew 6:11 says:

"Give us this day our daily bread."

We know the sentence so well that we may repeat it without hearing it.

Give us this day our daily bread.

That prayer sounds one way when it is spoken beside a stocked refrigerator.

It sounds different when there is nothing in the cupboard.

It sounds different when tomorrow's meal is genuinely uncertain.

The word translated "daily" is an unusual Greek word.

Scholars have discussed whether it means bread necessary for the day, bread for the present day or bread for the approaching day.

We do not need to pretend that the linguistic question is completely settled.

Every reasonable understanding still directs us toward dependence upon God for what is necessary.

Israel learned that dependence through manna.

Exodus 16 tells us that manna came in the morning.

They gathered what they needed.

They were not permitted to turn daily provision into an independent stockpile that made trust unnecessary.

They awakened the next day still needing God.

There is another detail in the Lord's Prayer that deserves our attention.

Jesus did not teach us to pray, "Give me this day my daily bread."

He taught us to pray, "Give us this day our daily bread."

The prayer is personal, but it is not private.

It includes the person beside me.

It includes the neighbor outside my door.

It includes the widow in a small room without running water.

It includes the father working seven days a week who still cannot provide everything his family needs.

We cannot sincerely pray for our daily bread while remaining indifferent to whether our neighbor has any.

Sometimes God answers someone else's prayer for bread by placing enough bread in our hands to share.

Proverbs 30:8 gives us another beautiful prayer:

"Feed me with food convenient for me."

The writer asks for neither poverty nor riches.

He does not want desperation to tempt him to steal.

He does not want abundance to tempt him to forget God.

He asks for what is appropriate, sufficient and faithful.

That day in the Philippines, I had prayed for daily bread many times.

God allowed me to walk beside people for whom it was not a ceremonial phrase.

The pastor and I continued walking.

I had previously visited squatter villages where the poorest of the poor lived.

Words and photographs rarely communicate the full reality of such places.

But that day, I understood that we were headed toward a working-class neighborhood.

As we walked, the pastor pointed out small shops and restaurants.

He warned me not to leave the main road alone.

I thanked him and said that I would probably remain near my pension house and avoid squatter communities like this one unless someone accompanied me.

He looked at me and explained that we were not in one of the poorest communities.

This was considered the good neighborhood where working families lived.

I did not know how to respond.

To me, the differences were barely noticeable.

The community did not suddenly become poorer when he spoke those words.

My definition of poverty had been exposed.

Our first stop was the home of an elderly woman.

She was a widow who had suffered a stroke.

She was confined to what appeared to be a homemade wheelchair.

Her home was a one-bedroom dwelling of approximately 300 square feet.

It contained nearly all of her earthly possessions.

There was a mat on the floor for sleeping.

There were two old white plastic chairs.

A wooden crate had been turned on its side to hold a few dishes and one pan for cooking.
On top of it sat a two-burner electric stove and a small plastic container holding her food.
There was no sink.

There was no running water.

There was no bathroom.

One electrical outlet was near the stove.

A single light bulb hung from a cord overhead.

When we entered, the strongest sensation was the smell of urine.

I soon realized why.

The woman had been left unattended while her daughter and son-in-law were working.

She was sitting in her own waste because there was no one available to help her.

I do not tell you that detail to shock you.

I do not want that woman remembered as a smell in somebody else's sermon.

She was not an illustration first.

She was a human being.

She was a widow.

She was a mother.

She was a woman created in the image of God whose poverty had deprived her of care, privacy and dignity.

Our next stop was one street over and several houses down.

The dwelling was about the same size, but it was filled with activity.

A husband, wife and four children lived in that one room.

When we arrived, everyone except the husband was home.

Two children were watching cartoons on an old television.

The other two were singing into a karaoke machine.

Their mother sat in a chair reading a novel while sending a message on her phone.

The room was smaller than the master bedroom in the home I had left in America.

Yet it was not empty of life.

There was music.

There was laughter.

There was family.

There was ordinary activity.

There was faith.

There was hope.

A few months earlier, the mother and two of the children had accepted Jesus Christ and begun attending church.

The husband worked seven days a week.

He earned the equivalent of approximately twenty cents per hour at that time.

That was not enough to move his family into a better area.

By going without things such as toothpaste and toilet paper and by clothing the children in donated garments, he managed to keep a roof over their heads.

That roof was a luxury many people nearby did not have.

There is a danger when we tell stories about poverty.

We can reduce people to what they lack.

We can turn them into scenery for someone else's spiritual experience.

We can describe the size of the room and forget the size of the soul living inside it.

Poverty describes what someone lacks.

It does not describe what that person is worth.

Those families were not projects waiting for an American missionary to make them meaningful.

They were people made in the image of God.

They had names.

They had relationships.

They had responsibilities.

They had joys.

They had disappointments.

They had spiritual needs.

They had eternal value.

The Bible repeatedly warns us that looking and seeing are not the same thing.

In Luke 16, Jesus described a rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and who fared sumptuously every day.

At his gate lay a poor man named Lazarus.

Lazarus was not hidden.

He was laid at the rich man's gate.

The rich man could physically see him while remaining morally and spiritually blind to him.

The passage does not teach that every rich person is condemned simply for possessing resources.

Abraham himself had possessed considerable wealth.

The rich man's life revealed self-indulgence, spiritual hardness and indifference.

He could feast every day while a suffering man remained at his entrance longing for crumbs.

Our gate may look different.

It may be a sidewalk we travel regularly.

It may be a coworker whose difficulty we avoid.

It may be a family member whose need has become inconvenient.

It may be a neighborhood outside the route we normally take.

It may be a person we have encountered so often that we no longer truly notice.

Sometimes God does not change what is before our eyes.

He changes what our eyes are finally willing to see.

The Bible contains another missionary who became hungry and then discovered that God needed to change the way he saw people.

His name was Peter.

Acts 10 says Peter went onto a housetop to pray.

While a meal was being prepared, Peter became very hungry.

Then he fell into a trance.

He saw heaven opened and a vessel descending like a great sheet.

Inside were animals that Peter regarded as unclean.

A voice told him:

"Rise, Peter; kill, and eat."

Peter objected.

He said he had never eaten anything common or unclean.

The voice answered:

"What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common."

While Peter wondered what the vision meant, men sent by a Gentile named Cornelius arrived.

God was preparing Peter to enter a home he ordinarily would not have entered.

God was preparing Peter to sit with people whom his inherited categories had taught him to avoid.

God was preparing Peter to carry the Gospel across a boundary Peter had not yet crossed.

When Peter entered the house, he explained what God had shown him.

Acts 10:28 says:

"God hath shewed me that I should not call any man common or unclean."

Notice the wording.

God had shown Peter something about animals, but Peter understood that the lesson concerned people.

Peter went to speak to Cornelius.

God was also speaking to Peter.

Cornelius needed to hear the Gospel.

Peter needed his vision corrected.

Cornelius and his household received the truth about Jesus Christ.

Peter received a larger understanding of God's mission.

God was working on both sides of the meeting.

That does not mean missions exist primarily to enrich the missionary.

People in need are not instruments for our personal growth.

Cornelius mattered.

His household mattered.

Their salvation mattered.

But Peter could not serve them faithfully while clinging to assumptions God intended to remove.

God's work within the messenger did not replace God's work through the messenger.

It prepared and enlarged it.

Can God send you to change someone else and change you first?

Can God place you in someone else's home and expose something in your heart?

Can God send you to teach and then make you the student?

Can God use the very person you hoped to help to show you an area in which you have been blind?

Yes.

He did it with Peter.

He has done it with missionaries throughout history.
He did it with me that day.
The pastor and I spent the rest of the day going from door to door.
We stopped people along the way.
We spoke about sin, salvation, the Cross and the resurrection.
We invited people to trust Jesus Christ as Savior.
As far as we knew, no one accepted Christ that day.
There were no hands raised.
There were no decision cards completed.
There was no dramatic testimony to report that evening.
But I did witness one person's life change forever.
Mine.
I was already saved.
That statement is not describing my conversion.
It is describing a permanent change in my outlook, gratitude and sense of responsibility.
I never realized how much I possessed.
Things I had taken for granted only a week earlier became visible as gifts.
Someone might ask whether a day without a visible conversion was an unsuccessful day of ministry.
The Bible says no.
First Corinthians 3:6 records Paul saying:
"I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase."
One person plants.
Another waters.
God produces life.
John 4:37 says:
"One soweth, and another reapeth."
We must not reduce faithfulness to the results we can count before going home.
A conversation may return to someone days later.
A verse may remain in a person's memory.
A tract may be read after the missionary leaves.

A local pastor may harvest what a visitor planted.

We are responsible for obedience.

God remains responsible for the increase.

This is not an excuse for ineffective ministry.

We should prepare carefully.

We should communicate clearly.

We should pray earnestly.

We should invite people to respond.

But we must never confuse our faithfulness with God's sovereignty.

The absence of immediate visible results does not mean God was absent.

God may be working in the hearer in a way we cannot observe.

God may be preparing another servant to continue the conversation.

God may also be working in us.

If the only person visibly changed that day was me, that change needed to become more than an emotional memory.

Feeling sad for an afternoon would not be enough.

Feeling grateful for my room would not be enough.

Missing breakfast would not be enough.

Isaiah 58 describes people who fasted and wondered why God did not appear impressed.

They afflicted themselves.

They bowed their heads.

They wore the outward appearance of religious devotion.

Yet their treatment of others remained unchanged.

God asked in Isaiah 58:6:

"Is not this the fast that I have chosen?"

Then verse 7 describes the fast God desired:

"Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house?"

The fast God chose did not merely make the worshipper hungry.

It helped make the poor less hungry.

What good is taking bread from my mouth if it never places bread into someone else's?

An early Christian writing called The Shepherd of Hermas contains a striking instruction about fasting.

It is not part of Scripture and we do not treat it as inspired authority.

But it shows how some early Christians attempted to apply Biblical teaching.

The writing instructed a fasting believer to eat simply, calculate the cost of the meal that would normally have been eaten and give that amount to a widow, an orphan or someone in need.

That is a beautiful principle.

Do not merely miss the meal.

Let the missed meal become someone else's meal.

James 2 asks what profit there is if a brother or sister is naked and without daily food and we merely say, "Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled," without supplying what is needed.

James concludes:

"Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone."

First John 3:17 asks:

"Whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?"

Then verse 18 says:

"My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth."

The lesson is not that eating breakfast is sinful.

The lesson is not that owning a refrigerator is sinful.

The lesson is not that a comfortable home is sinful.

The lesson is that every blessing carries responsibility.

Deuteronomy 8 did not tell Israel that abundance was automatically evil.

God described a good land.

He spoke of water, wheat, barley, vines, fig trees and pomegranates.

He spoke of a land in which they would eat bread without scarceness.

He anticipated that they would build good houses.

He anticipated that their herds, flocks, silver and gold would multiply.

The danger was not that they would eat and become full.

Verse 10 commanded them to bless God when they had eaten and were full.

The danger was that fullness would produce forgetfulness.

Verse 14 warns:

"Then thine heart be lifted up, and thou forget the LORD thy God."

Verse 17 describes the language of pride:

"My power and the might of mine hand hath gotten me this wealth."

The correction comes in verse 18:

"But thou shalt remember the LORD thy God."

God does not ask us to apologize for every blessing.

He asks us to remember the Giver.

He asks us to receive provision gratefully.

He asks us to use it faithfully.

He asks us not to allow comfort to make us blind.

There is no virtue in manufactured guilt.

Guilt may make a person feel miserable for a few minutes while changing nothing.

Grace does something better.

Grace teaches us that everything we possess is a gift.

Grace loosens our grip.

Grace turns thanksgiving into generosity.

Grace asks not merely, "How much may I keep?"

Grace asks, "Why did God place this much in my hands?"

Deuteronomy 24 shows how remembrance was supposed to become mercy.

God told Israel not to distort justice for the stranger, the fatherless or the widow.

When they harvested a field, they were not to return for every forgotten sheaf.

When they beat the olives from a tree, they were not to strip it a second time.

When they gathered grapes, they were to leave something behind.

Why?

Deuteronomy 24:18 says:

"But thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in Egypt, and the LORD thy God redeemed thee thence."

Remember where God found you.

Remember what God provided.

Remember who redeemed you.

Then make room in your abundance for someone else.

Biblical remembrance is not nostalgia.

It changes conduct.

James 1 describes a person who hears the Word but does not act upon it.

He is like someone who looks into a mirror, walks away and immediately forgets what he saw.

That raises the most important question about my day in the Philippines.

The question is not merely, "What did I feel that evening?"

The question is, "What did I do differently after I could no longer say that I had not seen?"

The pastor and I eventually walked back toward the pension house.

Earlier that morning, the room had appeared meager.

I had thought about what I had surrendered to serve as a missionary.

I had noticed what the room lacked.

That evening, the physical room was unchanged.

The same limited furnishings remained.

The same bathing arrangement remained.

The same noise might begin again outside.

The same American comforts were absent.

Nothing in my room had changed.

Nothing in my suitcase had changed.

Nothing in my bank account had changed.

But the man who walked back into that room was not the same man who had walked out of it.

In one day, I saw breakfast differently.

I saw poverty differently.

I saw my room differently.

I saw ministry differently.

And because God changed what I saw, He began changing how I lived.

That is what a difference a day can make.

But there is one more truth we must understand.

The church must never force a choice between feeding a hungry body and offering the Bread of Life to a hungry soul.

Jesus did both.

Mark 6 says Jesus saw a great multitude and was moved with compassion toward them.

He taught them many things.

Then, when the hour grew late and the people were hungry, He fed them.

Jesus did not say physical hunger was irrelevant because spiritual truth was more important.

He also did not give bread and withhold truth.

His compassion addressed the whole person.

Physical bread can preserve earthly life for another day.

But physical bread cannot forgive sin.

It cannot reconcile a person to God.

It cannot conquer death.

In John 6:35, Jesus said:

"I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst."

Jesus is more than the giver of bread.

Jesus is the Bread of Life.

Second Corinthians 8:9 says:

"For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich."

Jesus did not observe human need from the safety of Heaven.

He entered our condition.

He experienced hunger.

He experienced weariness.

He experienced rejection.

He experienced thirst.

At the Cross, He was stripped and wounded.

He bore the guilt of our sin.

He died in our place.

He was buried.

On the third day, He rose again.

He now offers forgiveness and eternal life as a free gift.

There may be someone listening today who has enough food for tomorrow but does not possess eternal life.

You may have a comfortable house but no peace with God.

You may have a full refrigerator but an empty soul.

You may be religious but still separated from God by sin.

The Bible says:

"For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God."

Sin is not removed by generosity.

Good deeds cannot purchase salvation.

Church attendance cannot erase guilt.

Jesus paid the price we could never pay.

Romans 5:8 says:

"But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

Romans 6:23 says:

"For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

A gift is not earned.

It is received.

Romans 10:9 says:

"That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved."

If you have never trusted Jesus Christ as your personal Savior, you can do so today.

You do not need to wait until you have improved yourself.

You do not need to pretend that you have no questions.

Come to Christ as you are.

Turn from your sin.

Place your trust in His death and resurrection.

Receive the Bread of Life.

If that is the desire of your heart, you may pray with me now.

The words themselves do not save you.

Jesus saves you when you sincerely place your faith in Him.

Let us pray.

Lord Jesus, I know that I am a sinner.

I know that I cannot save myself.

I believe that You died on the Cross for my sins.
I believe that You were buried and rose again.
I turn from my sin and place my trust in You alone.
Please forgive me.
Come into my life.
Be my Lord and Savior.
Give me the eternal life You have promised.
Thank You for saving me.
In Jesus' name I pray.
Amen.

Before we leave, I want each of us to carry several questions into the coming week.
What has God placed before my eyes that I have stopped seeing?
What blessing have I begun treating as ordinary?
Who is presently within my reach?
What experience moved me emotionally but never changed me practically?
Could God be using someone I am trying to help to accomplish something in me?
If you are medically able, consider one simple exercise.
Miss or simplify one meal.
Calculate what that meal would have cost.
Give the full amount to a person in need or to a trustworthy ministry that serves people in need.
Use the hunger as a reminder to pray for people who cannot choose when their hunger ends.
Then ask God for one permanent change rather than one temporary feeling.
One missed meal will not teach us what chronic hunger feels like.
But it may remind us to see, pray, share and remember.
The difference a day makes is not measured only by what happened around you.
Sometimes it is measured by what God changed within you.
But when God truly changes something within you, the evidence eventually appears in how you live, how you give, how you serve and how you see the people He places along your road.
In one day, I saw breakfast differently.
I saw poverty differently.
I saw my room differently.

I saw ministry differently.

And because God changed what I saw, He began changing how I lived.

Aloha Nui Loa.

The Question Behind the Story

And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna... that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the LORD doth man live. Deuteronomy 8:3, KJV

The public title is What a Difference a Day Makes, but the Biblical question reaches beyond gratitude. A missionary went out expecting to speak to other people about Jesus Christ. No one accepted Christ that day. Yet the day was not empty. The person whose life visibly changed was the missionary himself.

The story begins with a skipped breakfast and ends with a changed measurement of wealth, comfort, need and ministry. Between those moments stand an elderly widow, a working family of six, a room without running water and a day of Gospel conversations without a recorded conversion. Scripture does not allow these scenes to become sentimental poverty tourism. It turns them into questions about memory, dependence, compassion, faithfulness and the transforming work of God in the messenger.

This commentary follows the sermon's narrative movement while allowing the Biblical texts to govern every conclusion. The magazine article supplies the lived experience. Deuteronomy 8 interprets hunger and fullness. Matthew 6 gives the prayer for daily bread. Acts 10 shows God changing a messenger while sending him to another household. First Corinthians 3 protects the ministry from manufactured results. John 6 brings physical bread to the Bread of Life.

GOVERNING ANSWER: God can send a believer to serve another person while also using the assignment to expose, humble and transform the believer. The servant's change does not make the people being served secondary. It should make the servant see them more truthfully, love them more deeply and serve them more faithfully.

A Personal Word from Pastor Tom

We spent the rest of the day going door to door and stopping people to share the Gospel. We did not see anyone accept Jesus Christ as Savior that day, but I did witness one person's life change forever: mine.

That is the most important sentence in the original article because it refuses to improve the ending. There was no dramatic response to report. There was no crowd gathering around us. There was no moment when I could return home and say that the day was successful because a certain number of people had prayed a prayer.

What changed was the way I saw. The pension house did not become larger. The pail did not become a hot shower. The noise outside did not become quieter. My possessions did not increase. Yet when I returned, the room I had judged as meager felt different because my measurement had changed.

I had started the day noticing what I had given up to serve as a missionary. By the end, I was noticing what I still possessed. I had started the walk thinking about breakfast. By the end, I was

thinking about people for whom tomorrow's breakfast was not guaranteed. I had gone out hoping God would open someone's heart. He began with mine.

PERSONAL CONFESSION: My hunger had an ending scheduled. Theirs did not. That difference prevented my skipped breakfast from becoming a heroic story and turned it into a lesson in humility.

The Day That Changed the Measurement

Fatigue, Familiarity and the Golden Arches

The day did not begin with spiritual heroism. It began with jet lag, little sleep, a noisy courtyard, a cold pail bath and a hurried appointment. During the thirty-minute walk, hunger sharpened the appeal of McDonald's. The Golden Arches represented more than food. They represented familiarity, predictability and a temporary return to an American baseline.

The sandwiches were not inherently sinful, nor would eating breakfast have been a moral failure. The spiritual moment came when a familiar appetite collided with an unfamiliar economic comparison. The price of two sandwiches represented more than many people nearby earned in a day. The restaurant did not change. The eyes looking at it did.

The Limit Built Into the Story

The original account immediately refuses a false equivalence. Choosing not to eat created hunger, but it did not create uncertainty. The missionary knew food would be available later. That knowledge preserved control. Chronic hunger is not merely an empty stomach. It can include fear, helplessness, shame, diminished choice and uncertainty about the next meal.

This distinction matters whenever churches use fasting, simulation exercises or short-term mission experiences. A temporary exercise can awaken attention, but it does not grant complete understanding of another person's life. The most faithful sentence after such an exercise may be, "I understand a little more, and I now understand how much I still do not know."

The "Good" Neighborhood

The Pastor described the destination as a good working-class neighborhood. The visitor assumed it was another squatter village. The conflicting descriptions reveal that words such as good, poor, adequate and normal are comparative. They depend upon the standard carried by the observer.

Biblical compassion requires more than importing our own categories into someone else's life. It asks us to listen, observe and learn what daily faithfulness looks like within that person's actual circumstances. The family of six possessed an old television, a karaoke machine and a telephone. Those objects did not create sanitation, adequate wages or spacious housing. Human life cannot be measured by a single possession.

Deuteronomy 8: Hunger, Fullness and Memory

God Led Them Through the Wilderness

And thou shalt remember all the way which the LORD thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness. Deuteronomy 8:2, KJV

Moses does not describe the wilderness as forty meaningless years between Egypt and Canaan. Israel was commanded to remember “all the way” God led them. The route included dependence, discipline, failure, provision and revelation. God was not merely transporting a population. He was forming a people.

Verse 2 names three purposes: to humble, to prove and to reveal what was in the heart. The proving did not supply God with information He lacked. It brought the heart into the open. Hunger stripped away the illusion of self-sufficiency and exposed whether Israel would trust God’s word.

He Suffered Thee to Hunger

The wording is difficult because modern hearers rightly recognize hunger as painful. Deuteronomy does not romanticize the pain. It places hunger inside a larger account of Divine provision. God permitted the need, then fed Israel with manna unknown to them and their fathers. The lesson was not that bread is unimportant. The lesson was that bread is never independent of the God who speaks, sustains and provides.

This text must not be used to assign a secret lesson to every hungry person. Scripture repeatedly commands the relief of hunger. A believer cannot appeal to God’s sovereignty over Israel’s wilderness as permission to ignore a neighbor. The same Bible that interprets hunger also commands bread to be shared.

Man Does Not Live by Bread Only

The word only protects the meaning. Moses does not say that human beings can live without food. Israel received actual manna. He says bread is not the final explanation of life. Food can sustain the body only because God sustains the world in which food exists. The creature depends upon the Creator before, during and after every meal.

Jesus quotes this verse in Matthew 4 when He is genuinely hungry. The tempter urges Him to use power independently to end the discomfort. Jesus responds as the faithful Son. He will receive the Father’s provision in the Father’s way rather than treat appetite as the highest authority.

The Greater Danger May Begin After Breakfast

When thou hast eaten and art full, then thou shalt bless the LORD thy God. Deuteronomy 8:10, KJV

Deuteronomy 8 does not end when manna appears. Moses looks ahead to good houses, multiplied herds, silver and gold. The wilderness contains one test, but abundance contains another. Hunger can make dependence obvious. Fullness can make dependence disappear from view.

Israel's danger was not possessing good things. The danger was a lifted heart saying, "My power and the might of mine hand hath gotten me this wealth." The Biblical answer is remembrance. Bless the LORD when full. Remember the God who gave power to obtain wealth. Let abundance produce worship and generosity rather than self-congratulation.

The personal story follows this exact movement. The skipped breakfast revealed dependence, but the deeper correction concerned fullness. A person can possess food, housing, plumbing and future options until those gifts feel like the natural background of life. A day among people with fewer choices made ordinary provision visible again.

Exodus 16: Bread One Day at a Time

A Certain Rate Every Day

Then said the LORD unto Moses, Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a certain rate every day. Exodus 16:4, KJV

Manna trained Israel to receive. The people gathered enough for the day. Except for the Sabbath provision, attempts to hoard the gift produced corruption. Tomorrow's meal required tomorrow's provision. God was not merely filling stomachs. He was disciplining trust.

Modern storage is a genuine blessing. A refrigerator, pantry and bank account allow wise planning. Yet those blessings can make prayer feel unnecessary. Exodus 16 reminds the well-stocked household that stored bread remains dependent bread. Weather, health, employment, transportation and life itself remain gifts sustained beyond human control.

Enough Without Equality of Accumulation

Exodus says that the person who gathered much had nothing over and the person who gathered little had no lack. Paul later quotes this principle in Second Corinthians 8:15 while encouraging generosity. The point is not enforced sameness in every possession. It is a community in which abundance is not indifferent to lack.

Daily provision therefore contains a social question. If God has placed more than today's necessity in one believer's hand, might part of that provision be intended to answer another believer's prayer? Gratitude begins by saying thank You. Biblical generosity asks what the gift is for.

Matthew 6: What Does Daily Bread Mean?

Give Us, Not Merely Give Me

Give us this day our daily bread. Matthew 6:11, KJV

The petition is short, but every word matters. Jesus teaches disciples to ask. Bread is received, not presumed. The request concerns this day, which resists anxious possession of an imagined future. Most importantly, the pronouns are plural. The disciple says us and our.

A person may pray the Lord's Prayer privately, but never individualistically. "Our Father" creates a family before "our daily bread" names a need. The prayer does not permit a believer to celebrate private abundance while remaining willfully unconcerned about another member of the human family who lacks basic provision.

The Rare Word Epiousios

The Greek adjective translated daily is epiousios. It appears in Matthew 6:11, Luke 11:3 and in the Lord's Prayer as repeated in the Didache. Its precise nuance is disputed. Serious proposals include bread needed for the day, bread necessary for existence and bread for the coming day.

The uncertainty should produce humility rather than novelty. The KJV's daily bread faithfully carries the prayer for God's sufficient provision. No major conclusion in this study depends upon selecting one debated lexical option. Every leading proposal leaves the disciple dependent upon the Father for bread that cannot be treated as self-originating.

Daily Bread in a House With a Refrigerator

For a person with several days of food stored at home, the prayer can become ceremonial. For a person who does not know where tomorrow's meal will come from, the same words are immediate. The difference does not make one prayer sincere and the other false. It reveals how easily security can conceal the urgency within the petition.

The appropriate response is not to feel guilty for having food. It is to receive provision gratefully, resist self-sufficiency and become available to God as part of His answer to another person's need.

Proverbs 30: Neither Poverty nor Riches

Give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me. Proverbs 30:8, KJV

Agur refuses to romanticize either extreme. Fullness may tempt him to deny the LORD and ask, "Who is the LORD?" Poverty may tempt him to steal and take God's name in vain. Both conditions contain spiritual danger. The prayer seeks faithful sufficiency.

This balances the sermon. The study does not teach that poverty makes a person righteous or that wealth makes a person wicked. It teaches that every condition must be lived before God.

Abundance calls for remembrance and generosity. Need calls for trust without making desperation morally beautiful.

The Widow, the Family and the Neighbor at the Gate

The Elderly Widow

The elderly widow lived in approximately 300 square feet without a sink, running water or bathroom. Her few furnishings and cooking supplies represented nearly all her possessions. After a stroke, she was confined to a homemade wheelchair and spent long workdays alone while family members labored.

The description must protect her dignity. She is not a shocking object placed into a sermon so comfortable hearers can feel fortunate. She is a neighbor bearing God's image. The smell in the room reveals hidden suffering, but it must never become the feature by which the woman is remembered.

The Rich Man and Lazarus

Luke 16 places Lazarus at the rich man's gate. The rich man fares sumptuously every day while Lazarus desires crumbs. The story does not condemn the rich man merely because he possesses wealth. It reveals a life that can feast repeatedly while a suffering person remains visible and unseen at the same time.

The gate is the moral location of the passage. Need is not abstract or impossibly distant. It lies within sight and reach. The day in the Philippines functioned like an opened gate. People who had blended into the background became neighbors whose lives could no longer be reduced to scenery.

The Family of Six

The second home contained activity and ordinary pleasure. Children watched cartoons and sang karaoke. Their mother read and sent a message. The husband worked seven days a week. The family's humanity cannot be summarized by the size of the room or the wage of the father.

This detail corrects two opposite errors. Poverty should not be romanticized as a pure life untouched by ordinary entertainment. Neither should the presence of a telephone or old television be used to deny hardship. A household can possess selected consumer items and still lack adequate sanitation, food security, space or wages.

Isaiah 58: The Fast That Opens the Eyes

*Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house?
Isaiah 58:7, KJV*

Isaiah confronts religious people who fast while continuing oppression, strife and indifference. Their hunger has not produced holiness because it remains centered upon themselves. God's chosen fast includes justice, freedom, shelter, clothing and bread shared with the hungry.

The skipped breakfast becomes spiritually useful only if it loosens self-centeredness. Hunger can become another achievement to admire, another story about the disciplined believer. Isaiah redirects the experience outward. Did the empty stomach open the eyes? Did the prayer change the hand? Did the fast make mercy more concrete?

This is why chosen hunger must remain humble. It cannot claim equality with involuntary hunger. It can, however, interrupt routine, make dependence visible and create space for prayerful action.

James and First John: Compassion Must Become Tangible

Be Ye Warmed and Filled

James imagines a brother or sister without clothing and daily food. Verbal blessing without things necessary for the body is empty. James is not attacking prayer or kind speech. He is attacking words used as substitutes for available obedience.

The phrase “daily food” connects naturally with the Lord’s Prayer. The church cannot ask God for our daily bread and then send a hungry brother away with a sentence when bread is within reach.

Love in Deed and in Truth

First John asks how the love of God dwells in someone who sees a brother in need, possesses this world’s good and closes compassion. The sequence is important: sees, has and shuts. Responsibility grows where awareness, ability and refusal meet.

No believer can solve every need. Scripture does not require omnipotence. It does require openness. Wisdom asks how to help well. Fear asks whether help might be misused. Love refuses to let those questions become a permanent excuse for doing nothing.

Deuteronomy 24: Memory Must Change Practice

Israel’s memory of slavery was built into harvesting law. Grain, olives and grapes were left accessible to strangers, widows and the fatherless. Remembrance did not remain an emotion expressed at a religious gathering. It altered the owner’s use of property.

This supplies a necessary test for the story’s ending. Appreciation is real, but appreciation alone is incomplete. If the memory of the widow and working family changes no habit, budget, hospitality or act of service, the day has become only a moving story. Biblical memory changes practice.

Acts 10: God Prepared Cornelius and Peter

A Mission in Two Directions

Acts 10 begins with God working in two locations. Cornelius is praying in Caesarea. Peter is praying in Joppa. Cornelius needs the Gospel. Peter needs his categories corrected. God brings the two men together without confusing their needs.

Cornelius’s devotion and almsgiving did not remove the need to hear Christ. Acts 11:14 explains that Peter would speak words by which Cornelius and his house would be saved. Peter’s transformation did not replace evangelism. It made faithful evangelism across a forbidden boundary possible.

What God Hath Cleansed

Peter sees a sheet containing animals and hears the command to rise, kill and eat. He resists. The voice answers, “What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common.” Peter later explains the human implication: God showed him not to call any man common or unclean.

The vision changes more than Peter’s menu. It changes whom he will enter, hear and address. God sends Peter to Cornelius while dismantling a barrier within Peter. The mission is genuinely for the household and genuinely transformative for the messenger.

The Closest Biblical Parallel

Acts 10 is the closest Biblical parallel to the governing question of this study. God can send someone to change another life and change the messenger in the process. Yet the parallel must remain precise. Cornelius and his household were visibly transformed and received the Holy Ghost. In the personal story, no conversion was recorded that day. The shared truth is that God’s mission can work in both directions, not that the outcomes were identical.

No Visible Conversion: Was the Day Fruitless?

One Planteth, Another Watereth

Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed... I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. 1 Corinthians 3:5–6, KJV

Paul refuses to let servants become owners of the harvest. Planting matters. Watering matters. Increase matters. The assignments differ, and God remains the One who gives life. A ministry report can truthfully say that no one accepted Christ that day without concluding that the day contained no faithful work.

This does not excuse unclear preaching, poor preparation or methods that should be improved. Faithfulness is not a shield against evaluation. It does protect the servant from inventing a result in order to justify obedience.

One Soweth, Another Reapeth

In John 4, Jesus tells the disciples that one sows and another reaps. They enter labor performed by others. The reaper cannot claim the whole story, and the sower may not see the eventual harvest. Christian ministry often crosses days, servants and generations.

The absence of a same-day profession therefore establishes only what was observed that day. It cannot prove that no word was remembered, no conscience troubled, no question awakened or no later conversation influenced. The honest conclusion is neither triumph nor despair. It is faithful uncertainty entrusted to God.

Mark 6 and John 6: Bread and the Bread of Life

Jesus Saw the Multitude

Mark says Jesus was moved with compassion because the people were like sheep without a shepherd. He taught them many things. Later, when the disciples wanted to send them away to obtain food, Jesus said, “Give ye them to eat.” Compassion addressed both truth and hunger.

The church must resist forcing these ministries into competition. Physical bread without Christ cannot give eternal life. Preaching that uses eternal life as an excuse to ignore reachable bodily need misrepresents the compassion of the One being preached.

The Sign Was Not the Destination

In John 6, the crowd seeks Jesus after eating the loaves. Jesus exposes their shortened horizon and directs them toward food enduring unto everlasting life. He does not deny that He fed them. He refuses to let a miraculous meal become the final meaning of His identity.

I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger. John 6:35, KJV

Jesus does more than distribute bread. He gives Himself. Every compassionate act in Christian ministry should remain honest about its limits. A meal can relieve hunger for hours. Housing can provide shelter. Medicine can treat disease. Only Jesus Christ reconciles sinners to God and gives eternal life.

Second Corinthians 8: The Grace Beneath Generosity

For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor. 2 Corinthians 8:9, KJV

Paul grounds generosity in grace. He does not begin with the donor’s moral superiority or the recipient’s ability to evoke sympathy. He begins with Jesus Christ. Christian giving responds to the Savior who gave Himself.

The verse must not be turned into a promise that Christ became poor so believers could become materially wealthy. The chapter concerns generosity and relief. The riches received through Christ include grace, reconciliation, righteousness and participation in His life. The cross does not baptize greed. It destroys boasting.

The missionary skipped one breakfast and knew another meal would come. Jesus entered our condition, bore our sin, died, was buried and rose again. The smaller sacrifice may illustrate dependence, but it cannot carry the weight of redemption. Salvation rests in Christ’s finished work, not in our empathy, fasting or generosity.

Early Jewish and Christian Witnesses

The writings in this section are not Scripture. They do not establish doctrine and must be tested by the canonical Word of God. They are useful because they show how ancient Jewish and Christian communities discussed prayer, generosity and responsibility toward the poor.

The Didache

Didache 8 repeats the Lord's Prayer and instructs believers to pray it three times a day. It demonstrates that early Christians treated the prayer as a repeated discipline. It does not explain the disputed word *epiousios* and therefore cannot settle its precise meaning.

The Shepherd of Hermas

Mandate 2 urges believers to give simply and not allow suspicion about a receiver's motives to paralyze generosity. It places accountability for deceit upon the deceptive receiver. As a noncanonical witness, it raises a valuable pastoral question: Has imagined misuse become our reason never to give? It does not eliminate Biblical stewardship or discernment.

Tobit and Sirach

Tobit strongly commends almsgiving. Sirach warns against turning away from a needy person. These writings reflect a Jewish moral world in which concern for the poor was central. Where a noncanonical statement appears to grant saving or atoning merit to almsgiving, the canonical Gospel supplies the boundary: salvation is by grace through faith in Christ, not purchased by charitable acts.

Objections and Biblical Responses

Did Skipping Breakfast Help Anyone?

Not directly, according to the published account. The story does not claim the sandwich money was donated or that another person ate because the missionary did not. The act mattered because it interrupted self-concern and exposed the limit of empathy. Its value must be measured by the humility and action that followed, not by the discomfort alone.

Did the Story Use Poor People as Spiritual Scenery?

That danger exists whenever a visitor's transformation becomes the only outcome that matters. The responsible response is to preserve the people's dignity, avoid invented motives and allow conviction to produce ongoing service. Their suffering did not exist for the visitor. God confronted the visitor's blindness when he entered a reality that already mattered to God.

If No One Accepted Christ, Did the Witnessing Fail?

Scripture distinguishes planting, watering and reaping. The Gospel must be communicated clearly and the servant should evaluate his work honestly. Yet same-day numbers do not belong to the

preacher. God gives the increase. The day can be described without exaggeration and entrusted to Him.

Does a Television Disprove Poverty?

No. Poverty includes more than the absence of every manufactured object. An old appliance may be donated, inherited, inexpensive or shared. The article describes wages, housing, sanitation and daily sacrifice. It does not provide enough information to reconstruct the family's finances. The family should be seen as human beings, not turned into either symbols of pure deprivation or targets of suspicion.

Does "Daily Bread" Mean Only Spiritual Bread?

The prayer naturally includes ordinary provision. Broader spiritual and future dimensions may enrich the phrase, but they should not erase food from a petition that says bread. John 6 then reveals that physical bread itself cannot satisfy the deepest need. Scripture holds both truths together.

Can Wisdom Become an Excuse Not to Give?

Yes. Discernment is Biblical, particularly when churches steward entrusted funds or address patterns that may harm a recipient. Yet hypothetical misuse can become a respectable disguise for a closed heart. Wisdom asks how to help faithfully. Indifference searches for a reason not to begin.

Pastoral and Interpretive Guardrails

Do not equate one chosen period without food with chronic hunger or food insecurity.

Do not imply that eating the breakfast sandwiches would itself have been sinful.

Do not invent a donation of the saved breakfast money.

Do not blame the elderly widow's relatives when the source does not reveal their full choices or resources.

Do not use sanitation details for shock value or make the widow's condition her identity.

Do not treat a telephone, television or karaoke machine as proof that hardship was false.

Do not turn approximate eyewitness comparisons into timeless national statistics.

Do not claim that God directly sends every instance of hunger for an individually knowable lesson.

Do not allow faithfulness language to excuse unclear Gospel proclamation or prevent ministry evaluation.

Do not manufacture a conversion to improve the ending of the story.

Do not use physical help as bait that requires a hungry person to purchase kindness with attention.

Do not use the Bread of Life as rhetoric for refusing physical bread when help is within reach.

Do not treat noncanonical writings as Scripture or use them without an explicit status label.

Do not let gratitude end as a feeling. Ask what remembrance will change.

Application Bank

Remembering Provision

Name one ordinary blessing that has become invisible through constant availability.
Thank God specifically for food, water, shelter, sanitation, health and the ability to work.
Ask whether fullness has produced the self-confidence warned against in Deuteronomy 8.
Practice blessing God after eating, not only asking Him before the meal.

Daily Bread

Pray the plural words us and our slowly enough to include people beyond the household.
Identify one person or ministry through whom part of another person's daily provision can be supplied.
Separate gratitude for stored provision from the illusion that the future is guaranteed.

Fasting and Empathy

If physically appropriate, simplify or miss one meal for prayer and use the time to listen to God.
Confess openly that chosen hunger is not equivalent to hunger whose ending is unknown.
Connect the exercise to a concrete act of mercy rather than personal achievement.

Compassion and Dignity

Learn a person's name and circumstances before turning the need into a story or solution.
Listen to local leaders who understand the neighborhood better than a visitor does.
Describe suffering truthfully without stripping the person of humor, family, faith, agency or ordinary life.

Ministry Results

Record visible outcomes honestly without enlarging them.
Evaluate preparation and clarity while leaving the increase to God.
Honor sowers, waterers and reapers without making any servant the owner of the harvest.
Ask what God may be correcting in the messenger during the assignment.

Gospel and Compassion

Meet physical need without coercion or hidden payment.
Speak clearly about sin, Christ's death, burial, resurrection and salvation by grace through faith.
Refuse both a compassion that never names Jesus and a proclamation that never opens the hand.

Memorable Language for Teaching

The room did not get larger. My gratitude did.
My hunger had an ending scheduled. Theirs did not.
Sometimes the first mission field God addresses is inside the missionary.

A full pantry can hide dependence more effectively than an empty one.
 Daily bread sounds routine only when tomorrow's bread feels guaranteed.
 The prayer says give us because God never intended bread to make us forget our neighbor.
 The absence of a harvest does not prove the absence of a seed.
 Faithfulness tells the truth about the day and leaves the increase with God.
 God did not show me poverty so I could admire my compassion. He showed me a neighbor I had not learned to see.
 Gratitude that never changes the hand is only a feeling.
 Bread can sustain a body for a day. Jesus Christ gives life that does not end.

Commentary Synthesis

What a Difference a Day Makes is not finally a sermon about a breakfast that was not eaten. It is a study of what God can reveal when routine is interrupted. The Golden Arches expose comparative wealth. Temporary hunger exposes the limit of empathy. A good neighborhood exposes the instability of our categories. The widow exposes suffering hidden inside a room. The family exposes the inadequacy of measuring poverty by selected possessions. The absence of a conversion exposes result-based definitions of ministry success.

Deuteronomy 8 provides the governing interpretation. Hunger can humble and reveal dependence. Fullness can lift the heart and erase memory. Exodus 16 teaches provision one day at a time. Matthew 6 turns bread into a plural prayer. Proverbs 30 refuses to romanticize either riches or poverty. Isaiah 58, James 2 and First John 3 insist that awakened compassion become tangible. Deuteronomy 24 requires memory to alter practice.

Acts 10 answers the central question. God genuinely sent Peter to Cornelius, and God genuinely changed Peter in the process. First Corinthians 3 and John 4 explain why a day without a visible decision need not be declared empty. Mark 6 and John 6 hold physical compassion and the Bread of Life together. Second Corinthians 8 grounds every act of generosity in the grace of Jesus Christ.

The final movement is therefore not from ingratitude to guilt. It is from blindness to sight, from possession to stewardship, from immediate numbers to faithfulness and from ordinary bread to Jesus Christ. The Savior entered our condition, bore our sin, died, was buried and rose again. The prayer, fast or gift does not save. Jesus saves.

FINAL ANSWER: Can God send you to change someone else and change you first? Yes. God may use the very act of going, seeing, listening and serving to reveal what is in the messenger's heart. When He does, the right response is not to make ourselves the hero of another person's suffering. It is to repent, remember His provision, serve our neighbor more faithfully and point both messenger and neighbor to Jesus Christ, the Bread of Life.