

The Pipe Line

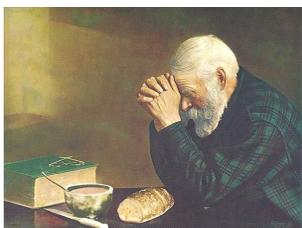
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May 26, 2021

He was a poor old man. It was a long time ago, near the end of World War I, and money was scarce and so was food. The old man walked door-to-door through the small town of Bovey, Minnesota, selling foot scrapers.



Most roads were dirt back then, and they became muddy when it rained. A foot scraper was a metal blade that people would use to clean their shoes. And the old man knocked on door after door trying to make a living by selling people something to scrape the mud off the soles of their shoes.

He knocked on the door of a photography studio in town, and a photographer named Eric Enstrom let him in. Mr. Enstrom noticed something about the old man's face that immediately impressed him. "I saw that he had a kind face," Mr. Enstrom said later. And that gave him an idea. Enstrom was putting together a series of photographs that he would take to a photography convention. He thought about how to make a photograph that could convey the message that even though people had to do without a lot of things because of the war, they still had much to be thankful for.

He put out a small table, and placed a book there, a pair of spectacles, a bowl of oatmeal, a loaf of bread and a knife. He asked the man to ask grace for the meal.

The man, whose name was Charles Wilden, folded his hands and bowed his head. It seemed to the photographer that he did that with a natural ease, like he was used to doing it.

Maybe you've seen it before, hanging in a home or a restaurant or a church.

The photographer thought the photo seemed to say: "This man doesn't have much of earthly goods, but he has more than most people because he has a thankful heart."

But no one took much notice of the photograph at the photographer's convention. It was seen and forgotten. When Enstrom returned to his studio in Minnesota, he hung the photo in the window. It wasn't long before someone asked to buy it. He sold it, and placed another copy. And someone bought it. And as soon as one framed print was sold, he'd put another up there. Then his daughter began making oil paintings of the photograph and people bought those too. So many people wanted copies of this picture of an old man bowing in prayer that they couldn't even keep up with demand. The photograph, taken by chance by an ordinary man doing his job, of another ordinary man, a poor peddler going door to door, now hangs in the office of the Secretary of State of Minnesota, because it was adopted as the official state photograph. It hangs in thousands of homes, including mine.

I think of that picture sometimes when we pray to God each week for our daily bread. It's a reminder, for one thing, that all we have comes from God. Our food comes from God. Our blessings come from God. The Bible tells us that every good thing is from God above. "Every generous act of giving, with every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights," says James 1:17. And here we have a demonstration of thankfulness. With grateful hearts, we acknowledge our dependence on God. We thank God for our many blessings.

Jesus was well aware of the Jewish tradition that God

cares deeply about the physical needs of his people. When there were five thousand people who were hungry, Jesus divided the loaves and the fishes to feed them. But Jesus taught people that there is so much more to our lives than just satisfying our physical needs. The next day, people came to seek Jesus out and Jesus told them they were only seeking him out because he fed them the loaves of bread. Jesus told them that they should instead worry about the food that endures for eternal life. They didn't know what he meant. They reminded him that their ancestors had eaten the manna in the wilderness, the bread from heaven. Jesus told them, "Very truly, I tell you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is that which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world." They said to him "Sir, give us this bread always." And Jesus told them this, in John 6:35 and following: "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty... anyone who comes to me I will never drive away... This is indeed the will of the Father, that all who see the Son and believe in him may have eternal life; and I will raise them up on the last day."

These words, of the bread of life and the living water, point to a time when the kingdom of God comes. It's a vision of a great messianic banquet, where all God's people sit down and there is food enough for every man, woman and child. My friends, we are not in those days yet. We have people who will be hungry this week, maybe today.

The church I served in Virginia hosted a gathering twice a week of about 40 or so senior citizens from the area who came together in fellowship to enjoy each other's company and a hot lunch. Someone had just asked me to say the blessing one day, when all of a sudden people started pounding on the tables. I wasn't familiar with this custom, and they explained to me that they did that to let everyone know to quit talking so we could have the blessing. It seemed a joyful sound to me, this pounding on the tables, a call to quiet ourselves for a moment, to bow our heads in gratitude and remember that all good things come from God above. It is a call to step out of our individual conversations and worlds, to lend our thoughts and ears to a common thought that God loves us and to ask for God's continued providence.

God bless you!
Monte



CHURCH PICNIC

Mark your calendars for our annual church picnic.

SUNDAY, JUNE 13th
at DANIEL VINEYARD
11:00 AM

Worship in the beauty of nature and the enjoy potluck with fried chicken, rolls, and drinks provided by the church. Divided by the alphabet please bring the following :

A-H Salads I-P Desserts Q-Z Vegetables

Please invite a friend or relative to join you ...we will have plenty. Sharing our service and fellowship is a wonderful way to introduce someone to the Beckley Presbyterian Church.

-Congregation Care Ministry



ELDERS ON CALL

May 30-June 5

June 6-12

Dan Calvert and Clyde Smith

June 13-19

Paulette Buzbee

June 20-26

Marcia Fairlie and Bob Mestrovic

June 27-July 3

Bill Hartling and Nancy Kissinger

Beckley Presbyterian Church
203 South Kanawha Street
Beckley, WV 25801

Return Service Requested



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EMILY WILLIAMS graduated from WVU on May 16 with a BS in Child Development and Family Studies. She is the daughter of David and Ashley Williams and the granddaughter of Dave and Nancy Sotak.

JOEY BLANKENSHIP is a 2021 graduate of Hillgrove High School in Powder Springs Georgia. Joey is pursuing a career as a Personal Trainer.

MEGAN BLANKENSHIP is a 2021 Graduate of Florida State University. Megan spent her first year in Europe studying in London and Spain. Megan and Joey are the children of Joseph and Allison Blankenship and the grandchildren of Marlene Blankenship.

ROGAN BLANKENSHIP is a 2021 graduate of West Virginia University Business School. Rogan is the son of David and Angie Blankenship and the grandson of Marlene Blankenship.



JUNE

- | | |
|----------------------|-----------------------|
| 01 George Wilson | 14 Susan Shaffer |
| 02 Andrew Reed | 14 Betsy Gilmer |
| 04 Rachel Feldhake | 26 Cathy Smith |
| 05 Madison Van Meter | 26 Patrick Sniadowski |
| 07 Robin Van Meter | 28 Ryan McGuire |
| 07 William Richmond | 30 Addison Mullins |
| 08 John Keyser | |
| 09 Sarah Mestrovic | |

LECTIONARY READINGS

June 6

1 Sam. 8:4-11 (12-15)
16-20 (11:14-15)
and Ps. 138; Gen. 3:8-15
and Ps. 130;
2 Cor. 4:13-5:1;
Mark 3:20-35

June 13

1 Sam. 15:34-16:13
and Ps. 20;
Ezek. 17:22-24 and
Ps. 92:1-4, 12-15;
2 Cor. 5:6-10(11-13)
14-17; Mark 4:26-34

June 20

Father's Day

1 Sam. 17:(1a,4-11, 19-23)
32-49 and Ps. 9:9-20; or
1 Sam. 17:57-18:5, 10-16
and Ps. 133

June 27

2 Sam. 1:1, 17-27
and Ps. 130;
Lam 3:22-33 and
Ps. 30; 2 Cor. 8:7-15;
Mark 5:21-43

NURTURING FAITH IDEAS

June 6 – Second Sunday after Pentecost/Proper 5: Read Mark 3:20-35 Jesus' own family thought he had lost his senses. He left the security of a carpenter's business to become a wandering preacher. No one, they thought, could take on the Scribes and Pharisees and come out a winner! And, he could not care less about "What will people say?" Sometimes the voice of our neighbors is louder than the voice of God! What risks are you willing to take for the sake of building God's kingdom?

June 13 – Third Sunday after Pentecost/Proper 6: Read Mark 4:26-32 Jesus compares the growth of the Kingdom of God to that of a mustard seed. There is nothing so powerful as growth. Just as the smallest of seeds grows into a great bush, we, too, can sow seeds that help God's kingdom to grow. Think of "seeds" you or your church family have planted that have produced amazing results in your church or community.



June 20 – Fourth Sunday after Pentecost/Proper 7: Read Mark 4:35-41 The disciples were afraid and worried when the storm threatened to overtake their boat on the lake. They asked Jesus, "Teacher do you not care that we are perishing?" In response to their fears, Jesus calmed the storm. What are the storms in your life? Worry, sorrow, fear? In the presence of Jesus, we can have peace even in the wildest storms.

June 27 – Fifth Sunday after Pentecost/Proper 8: Read Mark 5:21-43 The Ruler of the Synagogue and the woman with a hemorrhage, when all else failed and they were at their wits' end, turned to God. These stories, found in Mark, give us hope in times of despair. Many years ago, during VBS, there was a song with the words "With God, all things are possible." Five-year-old Chloe heard the words "With God all things are Popsicles!" What brings more happiness and excitement to a child than a popsicle? Can you feel that excitement knowing that God is there for you when you reach out in faith?