

**ENDING
HUNGER**
**ONE STEP
AT A TIME**
CROP HUNGER WALK

WORSHIP *resources*

- Sermon Starter
- Responsive Reading
- Prayers
- Walk Day Send-off

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SERMON *Starter*



BIBLE READING

2 CORINTHIANS 9:6-15 (NRSV)

⁶The point is this: the one who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and the one who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. ⁷Each of you must give as you have made up your mind, not regretfully or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. ⁸And God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that by always having enough of everything, you may share abundantly in every good work. ⁹As it is written,

*“He scatters abroad; he gives to the poor;
his righteousness endures forever.”*

¹⁰He who supplies seed to the Sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness. ¹¹You will be enriched in every way for your great generosity, which will produce thanksgiving to God through us, ¹²for the rendering of this ministry not only supplies the needs of the saints but also overflows with many thanksgivings to God. ¹³Through the testing of this ministry you glorify God by your obedience to the confession of the gospel of Christ and by the generosity of your partnership with them and with all others, ¹⁴while they long for you and pray for you because of the surpassing grace of God that he has given you. ¹⁵Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!



COMMENTARY

YOU CAN'T OUT-GIVE GOD (2 CORINTHIANS 9)

In urging the Corinthian believers to give generously, Paul is aware that he must address a very human concern in a world of limited resources. Some of his hearers must have been thinking, “If I give as wholeheartedly as Paul is urging me to give, there may not be enough to meet my own needs.” Making use of an extended agricultural idea, Paul assures them that in God’s economy things work differently. He has already mentioned a principle from the book of Proverbs, noting that the “one who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and the one who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully” (compare [2 Cor. 9:6](#) with [Prov. 11:24–25](#)). He followed this up by quoting a proverb from the Greek version of [Proverbs 22:8](#), that “God loves a cheerful giver” ([2 Cor. 9:7](#)). From this he infers a promise that for the one who gives generously, God can and will cause all sorts of blessings* to abound.



Paul, therefore, assures the Corinthians that their generosity does not come at the risk of future poverty. On the contrary, generosity is the route to prevent future deprivation. “God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that by always having enough of everything, you may share abundantly in every good work” (2 Cor. 9:8). In the next two verses he assures those who sow (or “scatter”) generously to the poor that God will provide them with enough seed for that sowing and for bread for their own needs. He underscores this when he says, “You will be enriched in every way for your great generosity, which will produce thanksgiving to God through us” (2 Cor. 9:11), a promise that encompasses and goes beyond material blessings.

Although Paul is clearly speaking of material generosity and blessing, we must be careful not to turn an assurance of God’s provision into an expectation of getting rich. God is no pyramid scheme! The “abundance” Paul speaks of means “having enough of everything,” not getting rich. The so-called “prosperity gospel” profoundly misunderstands passages like this. Following Christ is not a money-making scheme, as Paul has been at pains to say throughout the letter.

This has obvious applications in giving away the fruits of our labor, that is, in donating money and other resources. But it applies equally well in giving of ourselves during our labor. We need not fear that by helping others succeed at work we will compromise our own well-being. God has promised to give us all that we need. We can help others look good at work without fearing it will make us look dull by comparison. We can compete fairly in the marketplace without worrying that it takes a few dirty tricks to make a living in a competitive business. We can pray for, encourage, support, and even assist our rivals because we know that God, not our competitive advantage, is the source of our provision. We must be careful not to distort this promise into the false gospel of health and wealth, as many have done. God does not promise true believers a big house and an expensive car. But he does assure us that if we look to the needs of others, he will make sure that our needs will be met in the process.

[You Can't Out-Give God \(2 Corinthians 9\)](#), [Theology of Work Project](#), Copyright © 2014 Theology of Work Project, Inc. Also find this article in [Theology of Work Bible Commentary, Volume 5: Romans through Revelation](#). For additional resources, please see [The Theology of Work Project Series](#).

WHAT?

We are called to be generous givers, whether out of abundance or lacking - knowing that God’s promises will sustain us (though as noted in the interpretation above- not in the sense of a gospel of health and wealth, but as we state at CWS in a world where there’s enough for all).

SO WHAT?

As Christ-followers, Paul has pointed out that not only in the present-time, but in the time of the Hebrew Bible (hence his quoting of Proverbs) that God’s children are called to give abundantly. There are vulnerable neighbors both near and far who will benefit from this call to generosity, such as Juharni and her husband Kasman from Central Sulawesi, Indonesia: Most families in North Pakuli village in Indonesia make a living through agriculture. They primarily grow rice, corn, cocoa, and coconut. There are two main rice harvests each year, and the other crops are harvested based on their respective growing seasons.

This way of life has been under threat for some Indonesians since September 2018. A massive earthquake and tsunami struck Central Sulawesi, which is the Indonesia island where North Pakuli is located. A tremendous amount of the community’s land was buried under sand, rendering it unusable for farming. On top of that, there have been a series of floods since the earthquake, damaging even more agricultural land. Crop yields were down again in the last rice harvest of 2020. As farming families struggle to cope with these acute challenges, they are also facing the looming threat of climate change. Weather conditions have become unsteady, and the rainy and dry seasons are unpredictable. Pests and diseases are thriving and attacking rice crops.

In the last several years, many families have lost their way of life and are now looking for other ways to earn an income.



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Juharni and her husband Kasman are among them. Several years ago, Juharni's income from farming was enough to provide for her family. Today, this isn't true. That's why Juharni jumped at the chance to join a CWS program in her community that focuses on building resilient livelihoods to adapt to climate change. She decided to join two groups in the program: a women's savings group and a farmers group.

"I am interested in joining the women's savings group because there are many benefits for me," Juharni explained. Each member of the new group contributes a little bit each month into a shared fund. Then they can take out loans from the group at a reasonable interest rate to build businesses or get through emergencies. If they have a bad harvest, for example, they can use a loan from the group to buy seeds for their next harvest or to put food on the table in the meantime. "I can share knowledge with other members and motivate them. The result in the form of money may not exist yet, but this is one of the efforts to overcome the economic problems of farmers who are often uncertain about their harvests," she said.



Juharni also joined CWS-hosted workshops on organic fertilizer and pesticides. She says she was happy to participate. "I can get the ingredients easily, and making my own organic fertilizers and pesticides helps me cut costs," she explained. As our world grapples with the ever-increasing cost of climate change, it is more important than ever that farmers like Juharni have the skills and resources they need to adapt. Your hearts of generosity through participating in the CROP Hunger Walk have helped CWS team up with Juharni and her neighbors as they build resilience!

NOW WHAT?

As a congregation that participates in the local CROP Hunger Walk, we have a way to help neighbors in our community and around the world. Through our personal gifts of generosity as well as inviting generosity from others – both within our congregation and outside of it – we are fulfilling the commission of having a heart of generosity as a true confession of the Gospel of Christ.

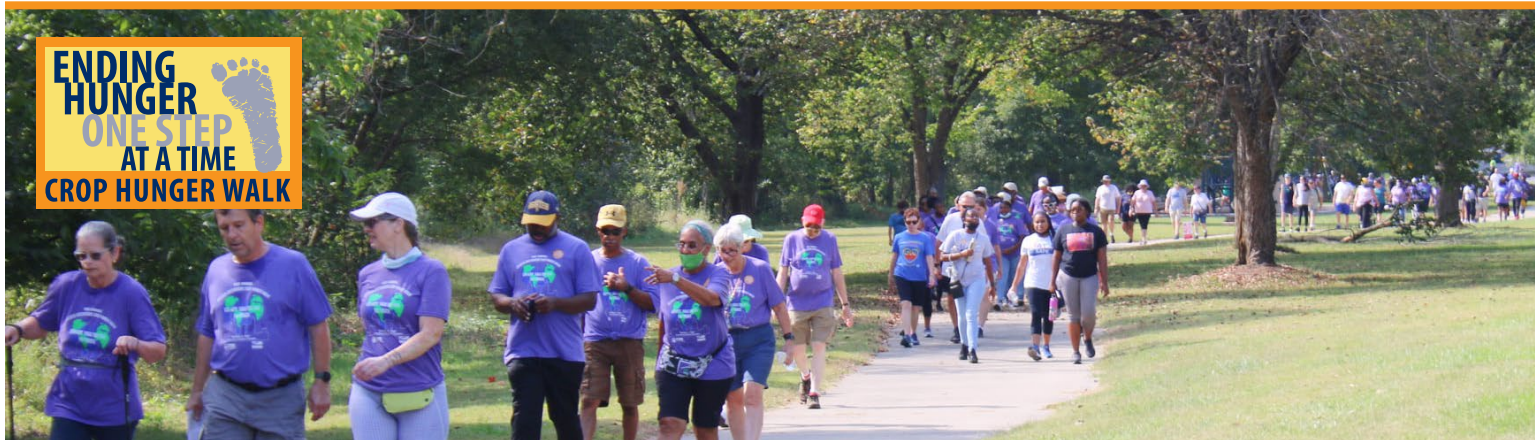


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Responsive READING

LEADER: When tyrants rule and wars rage,

RESPONSE: We are there with comfort, food, water, shelter, safe passage, and tools to build a new life or to return and rebuild when peace prevails.

LEADER: Where storms surge, droughts persist, and fires burn across this warming earth,

RESPONSE: We are there with comfort, food, water, shelter, safe passage, and tools to build a new life or to return and rebuild when possible.

LEADER: Where people need energy, to heat their homes and to cook their food,

RESPONSE: We are there with education, tools, and equipment to install and maintain renewable energy production, including solar and wind power.

LEADER: Where food is needed,

RESPONSE: We are there with food today and tools and skills to grow food for tomorrow.

LEADER: Where fresh water is needed,

RESPONSE: We are there with clean water today and tools and skills to build wells for clean water tomorrow.

LEADER: Where my neighbors need food,

RESPONSE: We are there, helping put food on the Food Shelf.

LEADER: Today we sow seeds of hope, new life, and possibility.

RESPONSE: May the steps we take and the money we raise today lead us to take more steps and give more of our resources and ourselves to create a community and a world in which everyone has healthy food, clean water, secure shelter, and the tools and education needed for life.

With thanks to the Champlain Islands CROP Hunger Walk



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MATTHEW 25:40 (THE MESSAGE BIBLE)

"Then the King will say, 'I'm telling the solemn truth: Whenever you did one of these things to someone overlooked or ignored, that was me - you did it to me.'"

We thank you, God, for the bountiful harvest you have generously given us on this earth.

Your harvest of food, clothes, clean water, and a decent place to call home is meant to bless all the children in all the nations on earth. Yet, many of your children go unfed, unclothed, and unhoused.

We are your vessels, your hands, and your feet on this earth and we stand against the injustice of hunger and poverty.

We offer ourselves to be used as your instruments to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and house the unhoused as commanded in your Word.

May our gifts through the CROP Hunger Walk restore healing and hope to your children and inspire others to join us so that together we can transform lives and communities.

And we can all enjoy your harvest here on earth.

Amen!

DEUTERONOMY 30:16 (MSG)

"And I command you today: Love God, your God. Walk in his ways. Keep his commandments, regulations, and rules so that you will live, really live, live exuberantly, blessed by God, your God, in the land you are about to enter and possess."

God of grace and mercy, hear the cries of your children who are poor, hungry, and afflicted all around our world, and have mercy on them.

Hear the cries of families who without access to nutritious food and clean water cannot provide sustenance to nourish the bodies of their children. Have mercy on them.

Hear the cries of women who without access to good health care are unable to bring forth healthy babies, your gift of life. Have mercy on them.

Hear the cries of young children, in whose lives the future of our world depends, who without a decent education will lose the opportunity to fully develop their minds. Have mercy on them.

Hear the cries of your people whose lives have been upended because of war and natural disasters. Calm their fears, ease their anxiety, bring peace to their spirit, and have mercy on them.

Most merciful God, forgive us for all the ways we have desecrated your beautiful earth and failed to sustain that which you have generously provided us. Have mercy on us.

Each day you give us a new beginning, a chance to walk in the newness of life.

Grant us your grace, to lift our hands and our hearts to the needs of the poor so that we prosper together and experience the blessings of your creation together.



WALK DAY *Send-Off*

Welcome to the (Name of the CROP Walk)! We are here today as a community to say NO to hunger, poverty, and injustice. Thank you for joining this movement.

Please join me in a brief chant for our neighbors and repeat after me:

We believe in a world
Where there is enough for all
Today, we join our hearts and hands
Lifting our united voices
And praying with our feet
As we say
NO to HUNGER!
NO to POVERTY!
NO to INJUSTICE!

Thank them for joining in the chant.

As you walk today, spend time talking with a fellow walker(s) or reflecting on your own and praying for our neighbors. Think about those who have no food and access to clean water. Think about our neighbors who are fleeing violence and persecution through no fault of their own. Think about your own lives and the challenges you may have experienced. Our life experiences may be different, but our shared humanity connects us all.

It is the belief in our shared humanity that drives us to join in partnership with Church World Service to transform communities through just and sustainable solutions to hunger, poverty, displacement, and disaster.

To our volunteers who plan the CROP Hunger Walk, our local agency(ies), sponsors, walkers, and donors – THANK YOU! When this day ends, keep walking, keep praying, and remain steadfast in reaching out to friends, family, neighbors, co-workers, and business owners. Continue to ask for donations on the walk website and your Facebook fundraiser. The more funds WE raise, the more families WE help, and the more communities WE transformed.

ARE YOU READY!

Repeat after me!

READY! SET! WALK!



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