

## Enough 9.24

Let the words of my mouth and the meditations of our hearts be pleasing to you, Holy One.

Today, on our journey through the season of creation, we encounter the word advocāte. As some of you may know, the word Advocāte comes from the Latin root Advocaré, meaning to call, or call to one's aid. So to pair the word Advocate with our Hebrew Scripture and Gospel text worked well for us today.

When I worked in Higher Education, I supervised and mentored a large staff. One of the staff members I mentored struggled with over-commitment. They volunteered for everything and sat on several department as well as campus committees. One day they walked into my office and just plopped down on the chair I had for guests in my office.

They just looked exhausted. I asked what they had been up to that day and they listed off about 6 meetings and it wasn't even noon. I asked what they might be able to let go of or have taken off their plate. They looked at me and just burst into tears. I knew this was more than exhaustion, so once they gathered themselves a little, I asked what was behind their tears, and they said, "I don't know how to let go of anything without feeling like I'm failing or that I'm not enough." I took a deep breath, having felt very similar feelings in my own journey in Higher

Education, and let them know I heard them and wanted to hear more about where they thought some of those expectations might be coming from. I wanted to make sure we hadn't set up unrealistic departmental expectations as well as hear where this pressure was coming from.

After a very long talk, we both walked away with a new understanding of each other, and they walked away with a different path forward, a better understanding of their own energy buckets and paths of joy, something they had learned in one of our departmental workshops.

They also moved forward with fewer meetings and some new questions to ponder, knowing that no matter how many committees they were on, they were absolutely enough.

In our reading from the Hebrew Scriptures and the story from Exodus, we see the story of the manna in the wilderness.

The text begins with the Israelites complaining to Moses and Aaron about their hunger and the current conditions of their journey. As God replies to Moses, what unfolds is more than a promise of food but a routine to gather it. Meat in the morning and mana in the evening. There is also an instruction that they shall have their fill. They will not need to worry they will have enough. The response of God to the complaints of the people is to provide them with structure for their day and enough food for their journey. The people of Israel call upon God,

and God responds in kind with no more or less than what is needed for their upcoming journey.

In our Gospel text, we find the parable of the landowner. While this text has been interpreted, pulled apart, and put back together many times over, I want to ask a question. What is it saying to us today in our context today? What does it say to us that day laborers facing wage inequality are still very much a part of our modern landscape?

And truly the bigger picture of this text is the upending of norms as the text concludes with “So the last will be first, and the first will be last,” yet we can’t gloss over how this text might make us feel. When you hear the end of this text and see that those who work an hour are paid the same as those who have been working all day, what feelings came up for us? Were we happy that this was their lucky day? Were we upset for those folks who had been working longer maybe thinking they should get more? There’s no right or wrong answer here, just a noticing of what this text brought forward for us. In Jesus’ time, he was challenging the systems of power and cultural norms. For the last to be first and the first to be last is a radical concept then and now.

What Jesus is calling us to lean into and understand is that in the kingdom of heaven, sometimes we have to upend things. Sometimes, we have to realize that we had things in the wrong order. We were serving the first, first. Or serving people in ways we wanted to serve them

instead of the ways they really needed. This becomes a call to re-evaluate our priorities.

Just as the person I worked with found their way to a deeper understanding of themselves and their capacities and limitations, we too are being asked to understand our own humanity in this way.

While God walks alongside us on this journey, we are reminded that we are enough as we are. We don't need to do more or give more than we have.

While God provides, God provides enough, no more, no less.

In community we can spread the needs out amongst many to help ensure no one person bears too much. Yet are we asking each other if that is true? Do we know what the needs of our neighbors are, those next to us in the pews, down the street, and down the road? These are not questions we answer alone. We answer them in community with one another and as a congregation as a community. To be a people focused not only on our lives within the walls of this church on Sunday but also on the communities we are a part of all the other days of the week.

Both our Hebrew scripture and Gospel remind us that we are given enough to do the work we are called to do. Sometimes that means we need to do less, and sometimes it means we can do a little more.

Regardless of what we do, we must remember that we are always enough in the eyes of God. Beloved creations of God loved without condition. Our texts remind us that God is our greatest advocate. While

God may not answer the way we always expect we are assured God accompanies us on the journey, providing food and guidance along the way.

My prayer for us all is that we find ways to advocate meaningfully and rest in the loving reminder that God has created us to be enough. **Amen**