

Harvest Thanksgiving 2016

Where do you find your food?

Where do you go to find food when you're hungry? To the fridge? Is there a food cupboard in your house? Is there always something there that you like?

When the fridge is empty, where do you go? Tesco, Sainsbury's, Waitrose or another supermarket? Is there always something there that you like?

Do you ever dig in ground? How many of you have a garden where you grow food? Do you grow your own potatoes, peas, beans, tomatoes, apples, or plums?

All these wonderful things on our table, people have gone out to find: where do you find rice? Where do you find apples? Where do you find jam? Where do you find pasta? Answer to all of these questions is "growing in the ground!" The pasta is made from dough, made from flour, made from wheat, grown in the ground and harvested for us.

Today, we celebrate; we say 'thank you' to God for making all these things grow so that we can harvest them and have food to eat. God gives us everything we need; we say 'thank you' to God for all His love in providing our food for us.

Where do find food if don't have money to buy food? People find food at food banks, and are given enough food for 3 or 4 days till they are able to go and buy food again, till they have money again to buy food. Food banks are all over the city to help people who can't afford to find food in the shops! More later!

Where did Jesus find food? There was a big crowd of people who were hungry, needing food; His friends told Him that they'd need an awful lot of money if they were to buy enough food to feed this crowd. Where did Jesus find food? In a little boy's packed lunch of 5 loaves and 2 fish, that the little boy was happy to give to Him.

Does anyone fancy a game to find some chocolate? *There are 2 buckets full of shredded paper on a plastic sheet! Inside the buckets there are sweets hidden; all you have to do is see how many sweets you can find in 30 seconds! There were 2 groups so it became a little bit of a race!*

This is Jumana: she is mum to her family and works hard to try to find food for her children; she lives in Chad in Africa. She makes baskets to sell in the market to buy food; but it takes 5 days to make a basket and gives her only enough money for 2 family meals. Harvest hasn't come because there is no rain and her crops have dried up, so she has to try to find food elsewhere. She digs for food in the ground, in ants' nests. Ants find grains of millet and bury them underground, in their own little food store. Jumana digs in the ground to find these food stores, digs them up and cooks the grain for her children; it's not very much, but it is all she has!

"Hungry people have no ears"

In a jam jar, there are 2 tablespoons of rice. Imagine if this was the food you had to feed your family for a day, every day, for 2 adults and several children? You'd be very, very hungry. There is a proverb from Chad that says "hungry people have no ears!" – hungry people don't listen to anything because all they think about is their next meal; 'all you can think about is food!' and they are not interested in anything else.

Jesus met a crowd of people who were hungry. They were hungry for spiritual food and had wanted to listen to Jesus' teaching and learn about God; but now they were physically hungry, and needing fed, so maybe they'd stopped listening to Jesus because they were hungry. Jesus' friends didn't know what to do; they didn't have enough money to buy food for all these people. But there was a little boy who had his packed lunch with him; it was not much, just 5

small loaves and 2 fish, but he gave his lunch to Jesus and Jesus took this little food and fed 5000 people with this little food. Everyone had enough to eat and there were 12 baskets of scraps left over.

Would Jesus feed Jumana and her family? Does Jesus want us to help transform her hopes? I hope we'd all say yes as the answer to these questions. We can make a difference in this world of ours! I'm not sure we always believe that and sometimes the question is 'how'? Martha Collinson is using her skills as a baker to make these little videos with her little bakers to show us how to make cupcakes and flapjacks and at same time raise money for Tearfund and raise awareness of the issues of hunger across the world. In turn, Tearfund is at work with others in Chad to teach Jumana new ways of watering the ground and new ways of farming to help their village grow food for themselves. At the same time, because the people are hungry, Tearfund is providing food to help them stay alive now. We can support Tearfund: £15 to Tearfund could feed Yasmin (Jumana's 6-year old daughter) a nutritious meal for 3 months!

Pastor Netho: he is the church leader, the pastor of a small, rural, isolated church in a village in Chad where people are hungry. "Hungry people don't have ears" so the first thing to do is feed people who are hungry; the church prays for the people in these villages; then they help them with water – there is a reservoir built by local people that keeps the water they do have and helps the people in the village grow crops again. Seedlings are grown on the watered land and then later planted on in the village land and later are harvested to provide food. The Church is working with schools to plant trees in the school grounds, all to help improve the land so that farming is better. Small things...

Closer to home, we have a food box. We've had this box for years, but it has been tucked away in room by the door; we are going to bring it out so that people can see it more; the tins and packets in it have gone to Bethany, but now we're going to give food to our local foodbanks, so if want to give even a small thing regularly, then that will be most welcome; there are lots of people in the city who depend on foodbanks from time to time.

Small things. Can we support Tearfund? Or put some tins or packets in our food box once in a while to give people in our city hope. Our gifts today help some people on the road to a new kind of life. Pray for Yasmin and her family, for the church in Chad, for Bethany and the people they help. We can do these small things and change the world! We can make a difference; sometimes it just takes small things!