

Rolling in Dough: Yeast and Bread in the Gospel of Luke

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Abstract: *The Parable of the Yeast in the Gospel of Luke challenges its hearers' perspectives on the reign of God, inviting them to perceive the transformation produced by the yeast as vital to God's ways. This story of bread-making also provides insight into several Lukan pericopes which feature bread, including those where Jesus breaks bread and gives it to others to eat. This study explores how the challenges of the parable inform our reading of these bread stories and highlights the link between Jesus' table fellowship and justice. It also considers the implications of the Lukan use of bread-making and bread for our Eucharistic celebrations today.*

Key Words: yeast; bread; Gospel of Luke; Eucharist; parable; reign of God

At the forty-first International Eucharistic Congress in Philadelphia in 1976, Pedro Arrupe SJ made the challenging statement that "if there is hunger anywhere in the world, then our celebration of the Eucharist is somehow incomplete everywhere in the world."¹ Arrupe's words focus our attention on the interconnection between justice and Eucharist. While anyone in our world hungers for food or justice the potential and power of the Eucharist to nourish the whole of creation is diminished. Arrupe's message challenges us to look closely at our actions: Is work for and embodiment of justice at the heart of our Eucharistic celebrations? What areas of injustice in our world today render our Eucharistic celebrations incomplete?

Arrupe's statement accords well with themes that emerge within the Gospel of Luke, particularly in relation to Jesus' inclusive table fellowship. Throughout the Gospel of Luke, food is an important vehicle for Lukan theology, as Jesus shares meals with a variety of companions, including Pharisees, tax collectors, sinners and disciples (5:29-30; 7:34; 7:36; 9:10-17; 11:37; 14:1; 15:2; 22:14; 24:28-30; 24:41-42). In Luke's infancy narrative, as in Matthew's, Jesus is born in Bethlehem (2:4-7, 11; cf. Matt 2:1), literally "house of bread." Mary lays the newly born Jesus in a manger (2:7), a uniquely Lukan feature. At this early stage of the Lukan narrative, Jesus in a feeding box is characterised as "food for the world."² The significance of food in Luke is signalled from the beginning.

¹ Cited in Julia A. Upton, *Worship in Spirit and Truth: The Life and Legacy of H. A. Reinhold* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2009), 97.

http://books.google.com.au/books?id=Hl3ptNjJS0C&pg=PA97&dq=julia+upton+eucharist+incomplete&hl=en&ei=udnyTlVuDo2muAPgm8XGDQ&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=1&ved=0CCUQ6AEwAA#v=onepage&q=julia%20upton%20eucharist%20incomplete&f=false (Accessed November 29, 2010).

² Robert J. Karris, *Invitation to Luke: A Commentary on the Gospel of Luke with Complete Text from The Jerusalem Bible* (Garden City, NY: Image Books, 1977), 48. See also, Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke*. Anchor Bible, 2 vols (New York, NY: Doubleday, 1981-85), 1:394, who refers to the manger as "the sign of God's sustenance of [God's] people."

In particular, the staple food, bread, features prominently in both Lukan narrative and teaching. This study will begin by focussing on a story of bread production – the Parable of the Yeast (13:20-21) – before exploring some key pericopes featuring bread. The aim will be to discover how the Parable of the Yeast informs our reading of these Lukan bread stories and to consider the implications for our own times. What insights can we glean from the yeast and bread stories and how do these insights speak to our Eucharistic practices today?

The Parable of the Yeast (13:20-21) is one of two parables that immediately follow the story of a healing of a woman with a spirit of infirmity (13:10-17). The words in 13:18, “He said therefore ...”, link the Parable of the Mustard Seed (13:18-19) to the healing. The opening words of 13:20, “And he said again ...”, link the Parable of the Yeast as well. Thus the two parables offer teaching that comments on the healing.³ Jesus understands the healing of the woman as setting her free from bondage (13:16) and he labels the synagogue leader who objects to the healing taking place on a Sabbath as a hypocrite (13:15). This healing is an example of the release (*aphesis*) which Jesus proclaims at the beginning of his ministry (4:18),⁴ and we see from this healing that Jesus’ proclamation of release creates conflict, just as it did at the beginning of his ministry (4:22-30).

According to Dodd’s classic definition, a parable uses familiar imagery but contains an unexpected element and is designed to tease the hearers into drawing out its implications.⁵ The two Lukan parables which immediately follow the healing of the woman in 13:10-17 compare the reign of God to a mustard seed and yeast respectively. Mustard is a weed which is difficult to eradicate and Barbara Reid argues that this comparison implies that the reign of God may be considered dangerous by some:

The weed-like reign of God poses a challenge to the arrangements of civilization and those who benefit from them. This interpretation poses a disturbing challenge to the hearer: Where is God’s reign to be found? With what kind of power is it established? Who brings it? Who stands to gain by its coming? Whose power is threatened by it?⁶

It would seem that the synagogue leader who confronts Jesus (13:14-16) is one of those who may be threatened by Jesus’ proclamation of the good news of the reign of God.

In the Parable of the Yeast, the reign of God is likened to yeast (*zumē*) that a woman took and hid (*[en]ekrypsen*) in three measures of wheat flour until the whole was leavened (13:21). One of the surprising features of this parable may be the quantities with which the woman works. A measure (*saton*) was a dry weight equivalent to approximately a peck and a half, and the three measures of flour would require about three Roman pounds of yeast for it to be leavened.⁷ Luke Timothy Johnson does not consider the size of the three

³ Holly Hearon and Antoinette Clark Wire, “Women’s Work in the Realm of God (Mt. 13.33; Lk. 13.20, 21; Gos. Thom. 96; Mt. 6.28-30; Lk. 12.27-28; Gos. Thom. 36)” in *The Lost Coin: Parables of Women, Work and Wisdom*, ed. Mary Ann Beavis (London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002), 136-57, at 153.

⁴ Turid Karlsen Seim, *The Double Message: Patterns of Gender in Luke-Acts* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1994), 42.

⁵ C. H. Dodd, *The Parables of the Kingdom*, rev. ed. (London: Collins, 1961), 16.

⁶ Barbara E. Reid, *Parables for Preachers: The Gospel of Luke Year C* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2000), 297.

⁷ See Susan M. Praeder, *The Word in Women’s Worlds: Four Parables* (Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, 1988), 23, 28. Praeder identifies a Roman pound as “a little less than” the pound measure used today (23). For the equivalence of a *saton*, see also Fitzmyer, *Luke*, 2:1019.

measures to be significant.⁸ It is clear, however, that the woman is working with very large quantities, literally rolling in dough! According to Susan Praeder, the quantity of flour described in the parable would produce enough bread “for more than a hundred people at one sitting”.⁹ Such abundance is reminiscent of the story of the seed which falls into good soil and produces one hundred fold (8:8).

The parable’s reference to three measures of flour may also be an allusion to a story in the Hebrew Scriptures of another woman who kneads three measures of flour (Gen 18:6). Sarah is directed to use three measures of flour in her baking for the three guests who have visited Abraham. The story describes a revelation of God and, with the quantities of flour, incorporates imagery of abundance.¹⁰ The Parable of the Yeast uses similar imagery of excess in its depiction of the reign of God.

Of key importance in the parable is the woman’s use of yeast. Directions for the observance of Passover in Exodus 12:15-20 instruct in the eating of unleavened bread. Leviticus 2:11-12 decrees that no grain offering to be burnt will be leavened. Two Pauline references portray yeast as a corruptive element affecting all the dough (1 Cor 5:6; Gal 5:9).¹¹ Within the Gospel of Luke itself, Jesus warns his disciples to beware of the yeast of the Pharisees which he identifies as their hypocrisy (Luke 12:1). It is clear, therefore, that several biblical references to yeast have pejorative connotations. Amy-Jill Levine comments on the negative imagery which she identifies in the parable: “yeast, in the symbolic vocabulary of Judaism and the early church, represents moral corruption; the woman’s hiding (*krypto*) rather than kneading leaven suggests that her manual labor is underhanded, and the process she cooks up is one of decay”.¹² As we shall see below, however, it is possible to interpret the woman’s actions differently.

The Lukan parable likens the reign of God to yeast. As in the comparison with the mustard seed, such a correlation would be confronting to the parable’s hearers teasing them to think through the implications. As suggested earlier, this is what a parable is designed to do. Hearers are challenged to expand their understanding of the reign of God and to think differently about the ways in which God operates. The reign of God is like yeast which transforms the whole. Like mustard, this image highlights that the reign of God will be threatening for some. Some would consider that it corrupts, contaminates, and challenges the established order.¹³

Throughout his ministry, the Lukan Jesus proclaims good news for the poor (4:18, 43-44; 7:22; 8:1; 20:1). His welcoming of sinners and tax collectors causes conflict with some (for example, 4:29-32; 19:7). It is no surprise, then, that those with a limited perspective of God’s reign might consider Jesus’ proclamation to and welcome of the physically and socially destitute to be contaminating. Reid argues that the parable invites

⁸ Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Gospel of Luke*, Sacra Pagina 3 (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1991), 213.

⁹ Praeder, *The Word in Women’s Worlds*, 28.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 28-29.

¹¹ Reid, *Parables for Preachers*, 298. See also Praeder, *The Word in Women’s Worlds*, 23-25.

¹² Amy-Jill Levine, “Second Temple Judaism, Jesus, and Women: Yeast of Eden” in *A Feminist Companion to the Hebrew Bible in the New Testament*, ed. Athalya Brenner (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), 302-31, at 321.

¹³ The Parable of the Good Samaritan (10:25-37), in which a Samaritan, rather than a Jew, models the compassion (*splanchnizomai*) displayed by Jesus and God (10:33; cf. 7:13; 15:20) would be similarly confronting for a Jewish audience.

hearers to understand that the element which some may perceive as corruptive is actually “the active ingredient for the growth of the community of God’s people.”¹⁴ Furthermore, reflecting on the context of Luke’s community, Reid contends that the parable speaks to the inclusion of Gentiles into Christianity which for some Jewish Christians of the first century was considered a corruption.¹⁵ It is also significant that the parable portrays a woman as the protagonist of the parable. Working with flour to produce bread was traditionally a woman’s role in domestic settings.¹⁶ The woman introduces the leaven into the flour and so is essential to the transformation. According to Reid, the woman images God whose reign is transformative.¹⁷

While, as noted above, Levine identifies the portrayal of the woman hiding the leaven rather than kneading it as negative, there may be another way of perceiving the action. The verb *kryptō*, to hide, occurs in 18:34 and 19:42, while compounds of the verb occur in 10:21 and 13:21. In each of the three uses other than that in the Parable of the Yeast, the context is a lack of understanding by some because things are hidden from them. In each case, too, it can be understood that it is God who is hiding these things.¹⁸ Thus, the mystery of the reign of God not being fully understood is a motif in the Gospel of Luke. The woman hiding the yeast in the dough may be considered another example of this motif. At the same time, the adjective *kryptos* occurs in two Lukan statements (8:17; 12:2) which convey the message that everything that is hidden will become known. Such an understanding nuances any negative overtones of the hiding of the yeast. The mystery of the reign of God will be made known.

We have seen that it is the inclusion of the yeast which makes the comparison of the woman’s bread-making and the reign of God controversial. Bread features in several pericopes in the Lukan gospel. The only times unleavened bread is explicitly mentioned, however, is in Luke 22:1 and 22:7 in the context of the feast of Unleavened Bread (22:1) and the day of Unleavened Bread (22:7). When Jesus gathers for a meal with his disciples before his arrest, Luke clearly portrays this as a Passover meal. In 22:8, Jesus sends Peter and John to prepare the Passover meal and, when they gather for the meal, Jesus expresses his desire to eat this Passover with them (22:15).

At the meal, Jesus takes bread (*artos*), gives thanks (*eucharisteō*), breaks the bread and gives it to his disciples (22:19). Since Jesus is a faithful Jew, the bread at a Passover meal would be unleavened (*azumos*), in keeping with the ritual of Passover (Exod 12:15-20). Luke makes no reference to unleavened bread at the meal, however.¹⁹ In 1 Samuel 28:24-25 (LXX), we find the story of a woman who makes unleavened bread (*azuma*) for Saul and one might have expected to see similar language used or notion implied for the bread of the Passover meal, but in this Lukan meal with its Eucharistic overtones, *artos*

¹⁴ Reid, *Parables for Preachers*, 300. See also Praeder, *The Word in Women’s Worlds*, 32.

¹⁵ Reid, *Parables for Preachers*, 300.

¹⁶ See Hearon and Wire, “Women’s Work in the Realm of God”, 141; also Praeder, *The Word in Women’s Worlds*, 14.

¹⁷ Reid, *Parables for Preachers*, 300-303.

¹⁸ For 18:34 and 19:42, the use of the passive voice suggests the divine passive, with God as agent. See *Ibid.*, 301.

¹⁹ This is also the case in the other synoptic gospels (Mark 14:22-25; Matt 26:26-29).

rather than *azuma* is identified. In line with the Parable of the Yeast, it may be that the use of *artos* would be more applicable to the Gentiles in the Lukan community.²⁰

Bread (*artos*) features several times within the Gospel of Luke (4:3, 4; 6:4; 7:33; 9:3, 13, 16; 11:3, 5; 14:1, 15; 15:17; 22:19; 24:30, 35). The first appearance of *artos* is in relation to the testing of Jesus in the desert (4:1-13). Filled with the Spirit following his baptism (3:22), Jesus is led by the Spirit into the wilderness, and is put to the test for forty days (4:1-2). The wilderness context and the number forty are reminiscent of the story of Israel's forty years in the wilderness (Exod 16:35; Num 32:13; Deut 8:2). The mention of bread is another link to Israel's story, with God providing bread (*artos*) for the people in the wilderness (Exod 16:4 LXX). God tests the people in the wilderness (Exod 16:4; Deut 8:2) just as Jesus is tested. While Israel fails its test, however, (Num 14:26-35), Jesus passes each test given to him in the wilderness. Jesus is portrayed as the faithful prophet.

Bread also features in the story of the feeding of the five thousand (9:10-17). While Mark and Matthew both have two feeding stories, Luke includes only one. As in the testing story, the context for the feeding of the five thousand is a deserted place (9:12).²¹ The feeding story evokes once again Israel's story of God feeding the people in the wilderness. The Lukan feeding story follows information that Herod has beheaded John and is trying to see Jesus (9:9). Taking his apostles with him, Jesus withdraws to a deserted place, effectively distancing himself from Herod's oppressive practices.²² Jesus teaches the crowd about the reign of God, heals, and feeds them (9:11-17). His actions of healing and feeding the hungry (cf. 6:21) provide a contrast with the unjust actions of Herod. Jesus proclaims and brings about God's reign, a very different reign from that of Herod.

In the Lukan feeding story, Jesus takes the bread (*artos*) and fish, looks up to heaven, blesses and breaks them, and gives them to the disciples to distribute (9:16). These last two actions of breaking bread and giving it to the disciples are reminiscent of Jesus' actions at the last supper (22:19),²³ highlighting the Eucharistic overtones of the feeding story. When the crowd has been fed, twelve baskets of leftovers are collected (9:17). An abundance of food is depicted, in line with the abundance evident in the Parable of the Yeast, as mentioned previously.

The crowd that gathers in the feeding story is described as five thousand men (*andres*). The exclusively male language used for the crowd is also present in Mark's version of this story (Mark 6:44).²⁴ Mark, however, includes a second feeding story where the crowd is described as four thousand with no gender specified. Mark's second feeding story, therefore, allows for the inclusion of women in the crowd in a way that Luke's feeding story does not.²⁵ The description of the crowd as five thousand men does not

²⁰ Mark's use of *artos* in the parallel passage (Mark 14:22) may also have been directed towards the Gentile element of Mark's community.

²¹ The Greek word *erēmos* is used in both 4:1 and 9:12.

²² This distancing from Herod is more explicitly portrayed in Matthew's version (Matt 14:12-13).

²³ These actions at the last supper are described in 22:19a and so are unaffected by the textual difficulties of 22:19b-20.

²⁴ Matthew's version is more inclusive, describing the crowd as "about five thousand men, besides women and children" (Matt 14:21).

²⁵ Women's presence in the Markan feeding stories is explored in Elizabeth Dowling and Veronica Lawson, "Women, Eucharist, and Good News to All Creation in Mark", forthcoming in *Eucharist: Embodied and*

register the presence of women or children. The experience of adult males is considered normative.

While those who come to Jesus and speak to him about sending the crowd away are identified as “the twelve” (9:12), the terminology used later in the pericope is “the disciples.” Jesus speaks to the disciples and gives them the bread to set before the crowd (9:14, 16). Since it is clear in the Lukan gospel that the group of disciples is wider than the twelve (6:13), the Lukan feeding story allows for the inclusion of a wider group of disciples with Jesus at the feeding.

Inconsistency in regard to terminology for participants is also evident at the Lukan last supper. In 22:11, Jesus states that he will be eating the Passover with his disciples, while it is the apostles who are described as taking their place at table with him (22:14). Moreover, in 22:35, Jesus speaks to those assembled by alluding to the earlier sending out of a larger group of seventy or seventy-two (10:1-12).²⁶ Quentin Quesnell argues that this suggests that more than the twelve are present at the last supper.²⁷ Kathleen Corley, in contrast, comments on the “inexactitude of his [Luke’s] language at this point”, but limits the participants at the last supper to the male apostles with Jesus.²⁸ Corley does not adequately account for the inconsistent terminology, however. Veronica Lawson suggests that the group present at the last supper may not exactly correspond with any one of the previously named groups, instead being a mixture of groups. This would explain the inconsistent reference to those present. While there is a focus on the twelve, the group is wider than the twelve.²⁹

In both the Lukan feeding story and the Lukan last supper, stories with Eucharistic overtones, the participants in the story are not consistently labelled. Therefore, while the twelve have a key role in both pericopes, the text allows for a broader interpretation of the participants than the twelve exclusively.

The participants in another *artos* story are also not clearly defined. The post-resurrection appearance of Jesus to two disciples on the road to Emmaus leads to Jesus at table with them and once again taking bread, blessing it, breaking it and giving it to them (24:30). Since they recognise Jesus in the breaking of the bread (24:35), one could presume that they have seen Jesus do this action before.³⁰ Within the Lukan narrative, this places the pair either as participants in the feeding story or at the last supper. One of the

Embedded in the Land—Interdisciplinary Perspectives, (eds.) Kim Power, Claire Renkin, Anne Elvey and Carol Hogan (Equinox Publishing, 2012).

²⁶ Textual evidence is divided as to which of the two numbers is correct. See Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 2nd ed. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1994), 126.

²⁷ Quentin Quesnell, “The Women at Luke’s Supper”, in *Political Issues in Luke-Acts*, ed. Richard J. Cassidy and Philip J. Scharper (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1983), 59-79, at 65-67. In particular, Quesnell argues for the presence of women at the last supper in Luke (67-71).

²⁸ Kathleen E. Corley, *Private Women, Public Meals: Social Conflict in the Synoptic Tradition* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1993), 112, 115.

²⁹ Veronica Mary Lawson, “Gender and Genre: The Construction of Female Gender in the Acts of the Apostles” (PhD thesis, Trinity College Dublin, 1997), 138.

³⁰ Justin Taylor contends: “I would argue that the breaking of bread was a rite practised by Jesus and his disciples and by groups of a similar type. By a rite, I mean a gesture that is habitual and recognised and capable of conveying meaning, and as such, an element constitutive of the community that practises it.” Justin Taylor, “Bread that is Broken—and Unbroken” in *A Wandering Galilean: Essays in Honour of Seán Freyne*, ed. Zuleika Rodgers with Margaret Daly-Denton and Anne Fitzpatrick McKinley. Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism 132 (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 525-37, at 527.

disciples is named Cleopas (24:18). The other is not named. They are introduced to the story by the phrase “two of them” (24:13), presumably two of those who have heard the good news of the resurrection – the women who are the first to be informed of the resurrection when they go to the tomb, and the eleven and “all the rest” to whom these women tell the news (24:1-10). Cleopas, at least, is a disciple who is not one of the twelve, (or the eleven). Quesnell wonders whether the other disciple is the wife of Cleopas.³¹ The Johannine gospel includes a Mary who is linked to Clopas as one of those at the foot of the cross (John 19:25). From the Lukan text, however, the other disciple cannot be identified.

The breaking of the bread at Emmaus is another Lukan story with Eucharistic overtones. In this post-resurrectional context, the Emmaus story points forward to the period of the early church where Christians will gather together in table fellowship, breaking bread and sharing life. As in the Emmaus story, the early church will continue to experience Jesus’ presence with them in the breaking of the bread. The implications of these three Eucharistic stories having participants who are not clearly identified will be discussed further below.

The Parable of the Yeast, the context of which is bread production, challenges our understanding of the way God operates. It speaks to our interpretation of the breaking of the bread in the Lukan gospel as well as the breaking of the bread in our own times. The yeast in the parable (13:21) provides a contrast with the yeast of the Pharisees mentioned by Jesus in the previous chapter. Jesus uses the term “yeast of the Pharisees” to refer to what he describes as their hypocrisy (12:1). These words follow Jesus’ condemnation of Pharisees for, among other things, their lack of justice (11:42). Jesus’ comments are made in the context of a meal to which he has been invited by a Pharisee (11:37-52). A lack of justice, which Jesus identifies, compromises the table fellowship.

On another occasion, Jesus is once again portrayed as going to a house of a Pharisee to eat a meal, literally to eat bread (*artos*, 14:1). Jesus challenges expectations here by instructing the host to invite the destitute—the poor, the crippled, the lame and the blind (14:13)—to a meal. One of the guests announces, “Blessed is one who will eat bread in the reign of God” (14:15). Jesus’ response is to tell the Parable of the Great Dinner (14:16-24) in which those invited to the dinner do not take up the invitation. Instead, the poor, crippled, blind, lame and outsiders are compelled to attend. In a sense, this parable describes the implications of the Parable of the Yeast. As suggested above, the Parable of the Yeast confronts its hearers, challenging them to think in new ways about how God operates. What may have seemed corruptive to some may in fact be an essential aspect of the reign of God. The table-fellowship that Jesus shares with outsiders embodies the good news that he proclaims to the poor, both physically and socially destitute. Furthermore, Jesus challenges the table-fellowship of those whom he considers unjust, and while at table with some of his disciples, he instructs them not to lord it over others but to serve them (22:25-26).

The Beatitudes in 6:20-22 reinforce the good news that the reign of God is for the poor, those who mourn, those who are hated and excluded, and that the hungry will be filled. The satisfying of all those who hunger is reminiscent of the bread stories (in particular, 9:10-17). The woes (6:24-26) that follow the Beatitudes challenge and confront

³¹ Quesnell, “Women at Luke’s Supper,” 68.

the rich and those who have their fill. Once again, Jesus' hearers are invited to perceive the reign of God with new eyes.

The reign of God and bread are also linked in the prayer that Jesus teaches to his disciples in 11:2-4. "May your reign come" (11:2) is followed by a request for bread in 11:3. This verse is notoriously difficult to translate as most commentators attest. The difficulty lies in the translation of *epiousios* in describing the bread (*artos*). Johnson offers three reasonable options – daily, future and necessary. Within the Lukan context, he argues that the most appropriate translation relates to necessity so that he translates 11:3 as "Give to us every day the bread we need!"³² This can be understood in terms of food necessary for survival so that all, including the hungry, are fed. Such an understanding correlates with Jesus' concern for the poor and destitute in the Lukan gospel. It is also in accord with the instructions to the twelve to take nothing, including no bread, on their journey (9:3), and to the seventy to take no provisions with them, relying on the food that is provided for them (10:3-7). In terms of the Lukan community, however, "the bread we need" may relate to the breaking of the bread in which the community partakes. The interweaving of these understandings of bread for survival and breaking of the bread connects the community celebration with a justice element, ensuring that all have enough bread.

These sentiments are consonant with the words of Arrupe with which this study began – "if there is hunger anywhere in the world, then our celebration of the Eucharist is somehow incomplete everywhere in the world".³³ The Lukan Jesus breaks bread on a number of occasions, as we have seen. In these meals with Eucharistic overtones, the Lukan Jesus models the behaviour that is emulated in the early church. The gospel is also replete with examples of Jesus proclaiming release for those who are oppressed. Other bread stories and meals are often the context for this proclamation of release. Luke interweaves Jesus' Eucharistic actions with his actions for justice. These are two sides of the same coin of proclaiming the reign of God.

As previously discussed, in each of the stories in the Lukan gospel where Jesus breaks bread, those with Jesus are not clearly identified. This would appear to be a deliberate ploy by Luke. Such an ambiguity makes it possible to broaden our perspectives on who is with Jesus on these occasions, who receives bread and who distributes bread. The portrayal of Jesus also eating other meals with a wide range of people, from Pharisees to outcasts, encourages an inclusive understanding of his table fellowship. While some of the recipients of the bread might be considered corruptive by other Lukan characters, the dynamic of the Parable of the Yeast and the bread pericopes leads to an understanding that Jesus' embrace of the outsiders is a vital aspect of his proclamation of God's reign.

A consideration of these yeast and bread stories in Luke also challenges us today to consider our own Eucharistic practices. This study began with some questions. Is work for and embodiment of justice at the heart of our Eucharistic celebrations? What areas of injustice in our world today make our Eucharistic celebrations incomplete? These questions can be expanded in the light of the Lukan yeast and bread stories. Are there elements of the community, considered "corrupt" by some, which may in fact be the

³² Johnson, *Luke*, 177-78. In a similar vein, Fitzmyer's translation is "Give us each day our bread for subsistence." Fitzmyer, *Luke*, 2:896.

³³ See n.1 above.

necessary ingredients for transformation and new life? Are our table fellowship and table practices inclusive? Are the experiences of some considered normative while others are overlooked?

Following the dynamic evident in the Gospel of Luke, we are challenged to recognise that action for justice and Eucharistic practices must be congruent as proclamation of God's reign. We are also challenged to expand our understanding of the reign of God and how God operates, and to encourage the yeast to rise and transform in the way of God. While such an understanding will be confronting for some, it will lead to an abundance which is characteristic of God's reign.

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