

Elizabeth Propst:

Good morning.

Congregation:

Good morning.

Elizabeth Propst:

Please rise and join me in our responsive reading Psalm 46 found on page 23 of your Black African Psalter.

Elizabeth Propst:

God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.

Congregation:

Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea.

Elizabeth Propst:

Though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof.

Congregation:

There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the most High.

Congregation:

Will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea.

Elizabeth Propst:

God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved: God shall help her, and that right early.

Congregation:

The heathen raged, the kingdoms were moved: he uttered his voice, the earth melted.

Elizabeth Propst:

The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge.

Congregation:

Come, behold the works of the Lord, what desolations he hath made in the earth.

Elizabeth Propst:

He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth; he breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder; he burneth the chariot in the fire.

Congregation:

Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth.

Elizabeth Propst:

The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge.

Choir:

(singing)

David von Behren:

Remember to smile, brother. Live in this moment, breathe in this beautiful life.

In June of 2021, I decided to try something out of my comfort zone and get certified in scuba diving. I flew down to Cozumel, Mexico to do my open water training from the back of a dive boat in the Caribbean sea. This is where I met Omar. Omar is one of the best teachers I've ever had. He smiles and encourages his students with such light and positivity. He's one of the reasons that I want to be a teacher so that I can have the same impact on my students as he had on me.

Omar has saved my life on two occasions, sharing air when my regulators malfunctioned, and another time when I got caught in a current having issues with my BCD, buoyancy control device, causing me to ascend too quickly. He's kept me safe in both situations.

But the greatest lesson that Omar has taught me comes from that line in the Lord's prayer that I never quite understood. Give us this day our daily bread. Omar lives in an apartment with a dirt floor. A mattress sits on top of some plywood. He has two cats, Mafia and Bea, and Omar has fashioned a little home for them made out of cardboard in his apartment.

In June of this summer, I went to dive with Omar again. When I went to the dive shop, I requested that he'd be my dive guide. He appreciates the work so that he has money for rent and food. On my trip in June, I noticed that he was not being treated well in the dive shop where he worked. He wasn't being paid for the work he was doing, and sometimes not being paid at all. Omar left the position with no other job prospects. I was concerned for him, but he said, "Brother, I'll be fine. God provides."

I left Omar after a few days of diving together. August rolled around and Omar hadn't been able to attain a new position. I told him I was flying down to Cozumel to try to help him find a job. I fortunately met a guy named Adams sitting next to me on the plane who owned a dive shop. When I expressed my concern to Omar and his needing work, he said to me, "Don't worry. God provides."

The next day. The dive shop owner Adam had Omar lead the dive and hired him as a sub. I was amazed how Omar's faith remained steady, whether he works or not. He tells me that some days are harder than others, but that he never loses hope or faith that God will provide. This past Friday, Omar wrote to me saying, "I've been hired full-time. God has provided."

As I look at my own life, I think about how fortunate I am not to worry if I can eat, if I have shelter. Yet, I still concern and fret about the future. Omar tells me to greet each day with a smile and welcome each beautiful new day. Omar lives that line of the Lord's prayer, give us this day our daily bread. Maybe we could stand to worry less about tomorrow and spend more time in the present, steadfast in our faith in Christ. Worry less, smile more. As Omar says, "Remember to smile, brother, live in this moment, breathe in this beautiful life."

Let us pray beginning with the words of the hymn for this morning.

Oh Lord, my God, when I, in awesome wonder consider all the worlds thy hands have made, I see the stars, I hear the rolling thunder. Thy power throughout the universe displayed.

Then sings my soul, my Savior God to Thee, how great thou art, how great thou art. Then sings my soul, my Savior God to thee, how great thou art, how great thou art.

Jesus, we ask you as we begin this day to give us our daily bread, to not worry about tomorrow, but to be present in the here and now, and to trust and have faith in you, even as we walk in uncertainty. Amen.

Congregation:

Amen.

Elizabeth Propst:

Please rise if you are able and join me in saying the words that Christ taught us.

Elizabeth Propst:

Our Father, Who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name; Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

Elizabeth Propst:

Now, let us sing the hymn How Great Thou Art, number 342 in your Crimson Hymnal.

Congregation/Choir:

(Singing).

Elizabeth Propst:

And now, as you move out into the world, may the love of God be a light in your heart, a song in your words, and the work of your hands on this day and all days to come.