

Opening Prayer

Gracious Heavenly Father, we come before You today with open and thirsty heart.

Lord, in a world full of spiritual emptiness, we thank You that You are the God who sees our exhaustion, hears our quiet tears, and fills our deepest hunger.

Lord Jesus, as we open Your word today in Matthew chapter 15, quiet our hearts. Open our spiritual eyes to see Your inexhaustible compassion. Teach us how to serve in times of scarcity, how to cry out in times of weakness, and grant us the faith to trust that You always prepare a feast of grace for those who seek You.

May Your Holy Spirit move powerfully in every heart today. In Jesus' precious name we pray, Amen.

From Scarcity to the Banquet of Grace

in Matthew chapter 15, we witness a profound spiritual truth: God never leaves a hungry heart empty.

The chapter records two famous moments. First, a desperate Canaanite woman begs Jesus for help for her demon-possessed daughter. When tested, she humbly prays: "Even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their master's table." Matthew 15:27 All she asked for was a tiny "crumb" of mercy.

Immediately after, Jesus goes up on a mountainside near the Sea of Galilee. Great crowds gather, staying with Him for three whole days without eating. Jesus looks at them with deep affection and says:

I have compassion for these people; they have already been with me three days and have nothing to eat. I do not want to send them away hungry, or they may faint on the way. Matthew 15:32

The disciples look around at the barren landscape and ask, "Where could we get enough bread in this remote place to feed such a crowd?"

Jesus takes seven loaves and a few small fish, gives thanks, breaks them, and passes them out. Not only were over four thousand people filled, but they also gathered seven large basketfuls of leftovers!

This passage vividly brings back a memory from my youth that is etched into my soul forever.

When I was twenty years old, studying at my first seminary, I volunteered during my break to preach in remote rural villages. I remember taking a train, walking a long way, and finally

arriving at a small village house. The place was packed to the brim—people were sitting everywhere, on the bed platform kang, on the floor; there wasn't a single empty spot.

They knew I hadn't eaten, so they brought out a bowl of white rice and poured cold water straight into it. I wasn't used to eating rice soaked in cold water, and what made it harder was that everyone was silently watching me eat. Trying my best, I gulped it down quickly so we could begin.

That evening, I preached continuously from 6 PM until midnight. No one moved; no one spoke. They just hungered for the Word of God.

At 4 AM the next morning, they woke me up to ride bicycles to the county town for church. Exhausted, I thought, "At least I can sit in the pew and rest." But as soon as I sat down, the pastor announced: "A seminary student has arrived! We invite her to preach!" I couldn't say I was too tired, so I stepped up and preached again.

Afterward, we did hospital visitations. By 3 PM the next day, I had gone over twenty hours without real food or drink. I was twenty years old, utterly exhausted, and deeply hungry!

As we walked to visit another sister, I couldn't hold it in any longer. I walked fast ahead of the group, looked up at the sky, and vented to God in frustration: "Lord, I am starving! Don't You know? Even just a little piece of bread would be enough!"

My prayer in that moment was just like the Canaanite woman's—a desperate plea for just a "crumb" of bread in the wilderness.

We finally reached the sister's house. But the moment I stepped through the door, tears filled my eyes, and I immediately asked God for forgiveness. There, spread out before us, was not just a piece of bread—the sister had prepared two full banquet tables of delicious food for us!

Brothers and sisters, when I sat at that table at age twenty, crying and eating, God taught me a lesson I will never forget:

When we give our all to serve Him, He sees every hour of exhaustion.

When we cry out in our poverty, "Lord, just give me a crumb," God's answer is never just a crumb. He prepares two full tables of feast!

Look at Matthew 15 again:

The Canaanite woman asked for crumbs under the table, but Jesus gave her daughter complete healing and commended her great faith.

The crowds in the wilderness had only seven small loaves, but Jesus turned them into a feast that filled thousands with seven baskets overflowing!

Our God is not a God of stinginess; He is a God of overflowing abundance! He allows us to experience the wilderness so that we might taste the sweetness of His supernatural provision.

Dear friends, where are you today?

Are you serving faithfully, yet feeling completely drained, hungry, and exhausted?

Are you facing a situation where your resources feel like a bowl of "cold water on rice"—barely enough to sustain you?

Are you crying out to God, wondering if He sees your hidden sacrifices?

Hear His voice today: Jesus sees you. He knows you are hungry, and He will not send you away empty-handed.

Do not give up in your wilderness. Keep pouring out your love, keep holding on in faith. The God who transformed a plea for a piece of bread into two tables of banquet is the very same God holding your life today.

Let us step into this week with renewed trust, knowing that at the end of every faithful journey, His feast of grace is waiting for us. Amen!