

December 11, 2022

## 2. Choosing Righteousness Rather than Personal Honor — **Matthew 1:18–25, NRSV**

This summer, I had a dream in which a stranger approached me at a church event, upset that no dessert was left. I explained he had missed his chance, and that we couldn't be expected to have an infinite supply. When I offered him apples and his eyes lit up, I asked if he was hungry. He said he was, that he and his family were living out of their vehicle and were taking turns being hungry. I gave him apples, peanut butter, and the dessert I'd set aside for myself.

This fall, the [price of groceries has skyrocketed](#), increasing 7.7 percent from October 2021 to October 2022. The cost of lettuce is of particular concern, with the price tripling in recent months. Some of this is due to a [virus that has hit California's Salinas Valley](#), a major lettuce-growing region.

As we prepare for Christmas feasts, we may complain about the increase in food costs, but for increasing numbers of people, this presents a frightening dilemma. Many must make difficult decisions, like paying rent or feeding their children. The recently released annual report from [Food Banks Canada](#) notes a 35 percent increase in visits to food banks between March 2019 and March 2022. According to the same report, about a third of those depending on food banks are children.

In her *More-with-Less Cookbook*, Doris Janzen Longacre wrote, “As North Americans, most of us grew up believing we were born into an era of abundance. . . . Christian discipleship now calls us to turn around.”<sup>1</sup>

- What is God's dream of abundance for all?
- How might God be calling you (like Joseph) to help someone in despair reach their potential?

—Susan Fish,  
[susan@storywell.ca](mailto:susan@storywell.ca)

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<sup>1</sup>. Doris Janzen Longacre, *More-with-Less Cookbook* (Herald Press, 2000), 13.



**Susan Fish** is a writer, editor, and theologian living in Waterloo, Ontario. She has an MTS from Conrad Grebel University College and is a novelist with two published books and another novel forthcoming in 2023.

## Resources for this session

**Salt & Light Videos** are great for leader preparation or introducing each weekly session. **James Mast**, a teacher at Methacton Mennonite Church, is the presenter for unit 1. The videos are closed-captioned, free, and available on [MennoMedia's YouTube channel](#).