



BOUNTIFUL TABLE

BY LAUREN WRIGHT PITTMAN

INSPIRED BY DEUTERONOMY 26:1-11

FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT

What a beautiful image. A full table, overflowing with the gifts of God re-given and re-distributed among the Levites and the aliens who reside among them. The native and the alien share a meal together in remembrance that their ancestors were once strangers in a land flowing with milk and honey. My ancestors, your ancestors, our ancestors, were once strangers. This text is clear; the alien resides among us and we are to celebrate all that God has given us by sharing in the bounty that God has given to our houses.

This passage reminds me of my own privilege as a white, middle-class, cisgender woman and challenges me to think of new ways I can share in my bounty. I often find myself living in a scarcity mindset, like I need to continue to Scrooge McDuck my way through this life clinging tightly to each penny that enters my bank account. I also grasp tightly to the ease with which I interact with the systems of this country; my privilege has become a comforting friend, a safety blanket. I need to live with open hands, emptying the first fruits of the ground, the fruits of my labor, the tainted fruits of my privilege and offer them back to God. In doing so, I honor my ancestors, and share in abundance with my community—the full extent of my community. We need to see, value, respect, listen to, and learn from the alien among us. We need to face their affliction, toil, and oppression, and let it break our hearts and do something about it. The aliens