

## 092621 Numbers 11:4-6 "Where is God's Presence?"

A raccoon and a monkey were walking together on a forest trail and found a ripe wild berry tree. The raccoon said it was his because he found it first. The monkey did not step back, and he insisted that it was his. Then they agreed to share the tree fairly. A clever monkey cut off the waist of a wild berry tree and said that he would take the top of the berry tree. The raccoon took the lower part with only roots. The monkey enjoyed eating the ripe wild berries and the raccoon planted its roots in his backyard. The monkey only ate wild berries for one year, but the raccoon still eat berries every year.

There is a saying like this. "The urgent needs of the present will always overcome the more important values of the future." I don't know whether you agree with it or not, but there is an inevitable temptation of right now, because something is uncertain tomorrow. They easily compromise and fall easily. If you only stick to what's right in front of you, you'll soon lose something really important. The same is true of our life of faith. When our lives are tiring and difficult like today, we must ask ourselves whether we are living a life of vitality, I am missing something really important, and where God's presence is.

During the Exodus, the Israelites, who complained about the bitterness of water in the wilderness, resented Moses and Aaron. In verse 5, "We remember the fish we used to eat in Egypt for nothing, the cucumbers, the melons, the leeks, the onions, and the garlic;" "Ah, that was a good time~", longing for the past, listed 7 foods in detail. While they were slaves in Egypt, they were not paid a fair price for their labor. They were not workers in Egypt, they were slaves. From morning to evening, even though they worked really hard and were treated unfairly, they are now immersed in the

past, distorting the facts. Compared to that, what did they say right now in front of their eyes? Verse 6 says, "there is nothing at all but this manna to look at." It's 7 to 1! Compared to the 7 free foods they ate in Egypt, there is only one thing in front of them! Only manna! Besides, they kindly explain that they have run out of energy because they only ate manna every day.

The Bible says that the Israelites have tested God from time to time in the wilderness. In the midst of these difficulties, what is repeated in the Bible over and over again is that they doubted and distrusted if "God is among us or not." Even at the moment when they experienced countless miracles in the wilderness, they were resentful rather than thankful. Even when God saved the Israelites from being slaves of Egypt through ten plagues in Egypt! Even in the wilderness, he protected the people of Israel who might be cold with a pillar of fire at night, from the intense sunlight in the wilderness during the day with a pillar of cloud, and even water bursts from the rock and crossed the Red Sea.

Through today's Bible story, let's think about our reality. Everyone, we are experiencing the difficulty of COVID-19 still. Natural disasters are happening all over the planet. Business and economy have become difficult to some extent, and relationships are not easy. Of course, it's not just us, it's happening to everyone on the planet. We have various problems and shortcomings. By the way, like the Israelites in the story of Exodus today, are we not testing God by looking at the reality of today only?

But nevertheless, God said that through Moses that he would give them food. From the time of two and a half months after the Exodus, God gave manna for the first time in the Desert of Sin. In Exodus 16:4, "Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you." It is also written, 'The manna was like

coriander seed, and it was white and tasted like sweets mixed with honey.' What does the word "manna" mean? It means, "What is it?" (Express wonder/surprise) God gave the Israelites manna until they entered the Promised Land, and quail in the evening. When collecting manna, God did not allow them to accumulate one month or a week at a time, but allowed them to collect two days worth before the Sabbath, and made them go out to the field every day for the rest and trained to depend on God. \*If so, it is time for us to train ourselves to depend on God and live by holding on to God's Word every day during this difficult time! And live a life that gives thanks to God.

Many people in the Gospels came to Jesus. Among them, there are 10 leprosy patients. Ten people come to Jesus and want to be healed, and Jesus finally healed them. The other nine were scattered with joy, but only one came back to thank Jesus. The purpose of the remaining nine was "solving the problem" itself. The problem was for the illness to heal. However, we see that Jesus is not obsessed with 'events of miracles' or 'solving problems.' Rather, through such a problem, Jesus showed that God is God. Various problems test us in our lives too. Sometimes we get discouraged. However, before solving the problem itself, what we need to remember from the Bible today is that God is the source and provider of our life and be thankful to God in all circumstances!

In Exodus 25, God specifically taught Moses how to make the ark of the covenant. At that time, there was a tabernacle where God resided, and the interior was divided into the holy place and the most holy place. And, the Ark of the Covenant was placed in the center of the deepest of the Holy of Holies. Do you know what the three objects are inside the ark of the covenant? A stone tablet of the Ten Commandments, Aaron's sprouted staff,

and a pot containing manna. By the way, these three things have something in common! They were not only objects that spoke of God's presence and God's miracles, but also they were objects that contained the traces of human complaints and sins before God. All three.

So, the high priest enters the Holy of Holies once a year and sprinkles blood on the ark of the covenant with blood from the beast. As for what happened at that time, it was written that God's presence was with the Israelites. In other words, the presence of God is a phenomenon that occurs when God atones for our sins. Even today, God's presence is revealed when we sincerely confess our sins before God and repent.

A first grader wrote a note and left it on his mother's dresser.

It was like a bill actually.

"I took care of younger brother: \$2

My room cleaning: \$2

Shoe shinning for daddy: \$2

Errand charge for mommy: \$2

Got 100 percent on math test yesterday: \$5

All together: \$13." And he wrote at the end of the letter or bill, "Money due tomorrow! (Sorry, no grace period!)"

He came home after school with expectation.

And yes indeed, he found an envelop on his desk.

He opened it and found a letter instead of money.

It said, "Son, I kept you in my womb for nine months. I bear lots of pain.

But..... It is FREE.

For last six years I fed you and dressed you: FREE

In your sufferings I kept awake for night after night and once I held you in my arms and went to E.R. at dark night: FREE  
Last week you and your friends were playing baseball and our neighborhood had a totally shattered window to replace: FREE  
Future school expenses for you: FREE  
And she wrote at the end of the letter,  
"Son, I have nothing to charge you with. I do still love you!"  
After reading this letter, he went to his mommy and hugged her.  
He gave the letter to her and she found a note on it, "I love you, too. Paid in full. You are dismissed!"

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, how do you come before God today?  
Maybe like the first grader before his mother do you come to God?  
I came to church despite the pandemic. What can you give me?  
I do believe better than others so what is the deal?  
I do tithe sincerely even though others don't. What kind of blessing can you give? I've never missed a service or a meeting. What can I get?

They are great but what would God say when we come before God like this?  
Life and strength I give you. It's FREE.  
Air to breath and water to drink I provide. FREE.  
Forgiveness of your sin. FREE.  
I sent my beloved son Jesus Christ to redeem you from your infinite debt.  
It's FREE. I do still love you!

Dear brothers and sisters, when you feel that you have nothing, I pray that the Holy Spirit will remind you of today's scripture. You will surely find God's presence in the place where you thought there was nothing at all but this manna! Where there is our weakness and our sins, God has cleansed you

through the blood of Jesus Christ on the cross and made you God's children. Be sure to remember how great the grace and love God has given you and be thankful! Then, God's miracle will surely be there. Fairfield Grace, May God's grace and peace and blessing be with you and your family, and your business, and your studies, and with the lives of your children. Amen.