

## 080424 English Sermon "Bread from Heaven" Exodus 16:2-4

Today, we look into an important moment in the journey of the Israelites through the wilderness. Exodus 16:2-4 reveals a lot about human nature and God's unwavering faithfulness. The Israelites, despite having witnessed God's miraculous deliverance from Egypt, found themselves grumbling and doubting God's provision in the desert.

The Israelites grumbled against Moses and Aaron, expressing a desire to return to the bondage of Egypt rather than face the uncertainties of the wilderness. This grumbling reflects a deeper issue: a lack of trust in God. They had witnessed the ten plagues in Egypt. They witnessed the parting of the Red Sea and crossed it themselves. They had experienced water gushing out of the rock. They had experienced God leading them with a pillar of cloud during the day and protecting them with a pillar of fire at night. Nevertheless, rather than being patient and thanking God for His guidance and provision, they complained about what was not right before their eyes.

How often do we find ourselves grumbling in our own lives when faced with difficulties? When we face trials, it's easy to forget God's past faithfulness. Our complaints often reveal our fears and insecurities, and show us how quickly we can forget God's previous acts of deliverance and provision.

Despite the Israelites' complaints, God responded with grace, not anger. God promised to rain down bread from heaven. This response demonstrates God's compassion and patience. It's a reminder that God understands our weaknesses and is always ready to provide for us, even when we falter in our faith. God's provision of manna was both a physical sustenance and a test of obedience. It was an opportunity for the Israelites to learn to trust God's daily provision and to rely on God rather than on their own understanding.

God instructed the Israelites to gather only enough manna for each day, except on the day before the Sabbath, teaching them to rely on Him daily. This was a test of obedience and trust. By gathering only what was needed for the day, the Israelites had to trust that God would provide again the next day. This teaches us about the importance of daily dependence on God. Each day brings new challenges and uncertainties, but also fresh opportunities to

rely on God's strength and provision. The practice of daily prayer, reading Scripture, and seeking God's presence becomes a source of comfort and stability.

This daily dependence on God is a vital lesson for us today. In our fast-paced, self-reliant world, we often want to secure everything in advance. Of course, we live a life of planning and preparing for the near future. However, since no one can be sure of tomorrow, it is important to live a life of believing in God's guidance every day. God calls us to trust Him daily, to seek His provision one day at a time, and to believe that He will meet our needs, both physical and spiritual.

The manna story did not end abruptly. It continued until the Israelites settled in the land of Canaan. Joshua 5:12 says, "The manna stopped the day after they ate this food from the land; there was no longer any manna for the Israelites, but that year they ate the produce of Canaan." This transition represents a critical moment in which God's provision was adapted to the new context of the life of the Israelites. The end of manna did not mean the end of God's care, but rather a new way of providing for his people.

Some say that manna is a miracle, but the fruits of the land, such as grapes, olives, and figs, are not miracles. The Israelites who settled in the land of Canaan worked hard to cultivate the land. They sweated. In the meantime, people began to think that this was something they had earned through their own labor. They thought that manna in the wilderness was given by God, but crops were something they had earned through their own labor. Is that really true? God sends rain at the right time and the sun shines at the right time, so crops grow and are harvested. The lesson of the story of manna tells us that the basis of human survival is God.

In Exodus 25, the Ark of the Covenant was meticulously crafted according to God's instructions and housed three significant items: the stone tablets of the Ten Commandments, Aaron's sprouted staff, and a pot containing manna. These items not only signify God's presence and miracles but also reflect human complaints and sin.

Once a year, on the Day of Atonement, the high priest would enter the Holy of Holies to sprinkle the blood of a sacrificial animal on the mercy seat of the Ark. This act of atonement was crucial for the forgiveness of the people's sins and the maintenance of God's presence among them. The Ark, with its contents, represents both the sinfulness of humanity and the grace of God. Through the blood of the sacrifice, God's presence was assured, symbolizing the atonement of sins and the restoration of the relationship between God and His people.

Fast forward to the New Testament, when Jesus taught his disciples to pray, there was this phrase: "Give us this day our daily bread." In John 6:35, Jesus declares Himself as the bread of life, offering eternal sustenance that goes beyond physical needs. For us, this promise is significant. As physical abilities decline, the assurance of spiritual nourishment and eternal life in Jesus provides hope and peace. Jesus offers a relationship that transcends the limitations of age, promising that whoever comes to Him will never go hungry or thirsty.

The manna was part of the old covenant, a sign of God's provision and faithfulness to Israel. Jesus, as the bread of life, ushers in the new covenant. His life, death, and resurrection establish a new relationship between God and humanity. Through Jesus, we receive the ultimate provision for our spiritual needs: forgiveness of sins, reconciliation with God, and the promise of eternal life. This new covenant features a deeper and more intimate relationship with God through Christ.

Dear beloved sisters and brothers in Christ, in Exodus 16:2-4, we see a powerful demonstration of God's patience, provision, and the call to trust and obedience. As we reflect on this passage, let us examine our own lives. Are we grumbling in the face of challenges, or are we trusting in God's provision? Are we seeking God daily? Let us pray for hearts that trust in God's unfailing provision and that walk in obedience and gratitude. May we remember that our God is a faithful provider, who loves us deeply and knows our every need. Fairfield Grace, may God's grace, peace, goodness, and mercy be with you, your family, your business, your studies, and with the lives of your children. To Christ be thanks and praise. Amen.