

January 30, 2011
“Give Us This Day Our Daily Bread”
Exodus 16:11-21

11 Then the LORD said to Moses, **12** "I have heard the Israelites' complaints. Now tell them, 'In the evening you will have meat to eat, and in the morning you will have all the bread you want. Then you will know that I am the LORD your God.'"

13 That evening vast numbers of quail flew in and covered the camp. And the next morning the area around the camp was wet with dew. **14** When the dew evaporated, a flaky substance as fine as frost blanketed the ground. **15** The Israelites were puzzled when they saw it. "What is it?" they asked each other. They had no idea what it was.

And Moses told them, "It is the food the LORD has given you to eat. **16** These are the LORD's instructions: Each household should gather as much as it needs. Pick up two quarts for each person in your tent."

17 So the people of Israel did as they were told. Some gathered a lot, some only a little. **18** But when they measured it out, everyone had just enough. Those who gathered a lot had nothing left over, and those who gathered only a little had enough. Each family had just what it needed.

19 Then Moses told them, "Do not keep any of it until morning." **20** But some of them didn't listen and kept some of it until morning. But by then it was full of maggots and had a terrible smell. Moses was very angry with them.

21 After this the people gathered the food morning by morning, each family according to its need. And as the sun became hot, the flakes they had not picked up melted and disappeared.

Introduction

Jesus taught us to pray (Matt 6:11 NKJV) Give us this day our daily bread.

Bread here can refer to actual bread and food in general or to spiritual bread / food.

The prayer is a reminder that we must trust God daily to provide what He knows we need. And so this beautiful prayer is about undertaking the most terrifying spiritual journey of all, which is, living with absolute dependence on the miraculous hand of God. We all would love to experience a miracle, but are we prepared to live on manna. Are we really seeking to be as dependant on God as the children of Israel were in the wilderness?

Learning Daily Dependence

The word “manna” means “What is it?” Which is what the Israelites said when they saw it (v15). They were complaining about not having food, and manna was how God provided for them. Not exactly what they expected, they had no idea what it was. Ever pray for God’s help and He answered the prayer, only not in a way you expected, “what’s this, I didn’t know you were going to send help in this way, and cause me to

have to trust you each day!”

Each morning the area around the camp was wet with dew. (v14) When the dew evaporated, a flaky substance as fine as frost blanketed the ground. And every household was instructed to daily collect enough of the manna that they needed for the day and no more. And each day each family had just what they needed. If they tried to keep some for the following day it would be full of maggots and smell terrible. Thus they had to depend on God daily.

Now, you may say, “cool, they didn’t have to do anything and every day God provided for them; all they had to do is get up everyday and expect God to come through.” But think about it, this also meant that they went to bed each night wondering if God *would* come through the next day. They would have to ask themselves, Do I really trust God to come through. And if God didn’t come through, they were going to starve to death. They had to put their faith in God.

Peace is totally dependent on our faith. Is God really there? Do I really believe that? Does He really care about me? Can I trust Him? When I get up tomorrow morning will God provide for me again? Not an overabundance, but just enough to get me through the day.

It’s not easy to trust that God will provide, but will provide only what we need today. We demand He shows us what tomorrow holds. When others are confused, afraid, worried, depressed, and angry over their situation, we can remain calm, knowing that God will part the waters, He promises to meet our needs. No wonder Jesus says in Matt 6 after He tells us to pray, “Give us this day our daily bread” **Matt 6:26-27, 31-34**

Look at the birds. They don't plant or harvest or store food in barns, for your heavenly Father feeds them. And aren't you far more valuable to him than they are? Can all your worries add a single moment to your life? ... "So don't worry about these things, saying, 'What will we eat? What will we drink? What will we wear?' These things dominate the thoughts of unbelievers, but your heavenly Father already knows all your needs. Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need.

"So don't worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring its own worries. Today's trouble is enough for today.

He says, look at the birds. They obey what the life inside them tells them to do and God provides for them. It’s simple but not easy - trust and obey His Spirit in you and He will provide for you too, you’re much more valuable to Him than birds. Obey the life God has given you, and He will look after all the other things.

Living on manna is a wonderful, exciting, frightening adventure / journey of absolute dependence, where the miracles of God are a daily blessing. It is a life-long journey of praying each day, “Give us this day our daily bread.” You can’t control tomorrow, you don’t have the resources to count on, other than God. We have all prayed the Lord’s prayer and said, “Give us this day our daily bread.” We either didn’t think of what we were praying, or didn’t understand what the words meant; perhaps we thought only of it’s wonderful wording. But it is quite another thing when we have to face the terrible reality of *needing daily bread*. Yet, it is during those times that God will transform our hearts to free us to trust Him beyond our circumstances.

In His prayer Jesus is reminding us of the absolute dependence on God that the Israelites had to accept in order to survive their journey through the desert in route to the Promised Land. They had been in Egypt where the conditions were horrific, but at least they were provided for. Now, in the wilderness there was no one but God.

They had only left a few months before when they ran out of resources, began to panic, and wished they had never left their life of slavery in Egypt. They had witnessed the power of God through the miracle of Passover, and miracle of the parting of the Red Sea, when God delivered them from an enemy they could not defeat. Yet, here they are complaining that He was not able to care for them on their journey, a journey that God Himself put them on. Now, before we get down on these Israelites of little faith, let’s take an honest look at our own lives, because the truth is we have a lot in common with them.

We once lived a terrible life of being a slave to sin and the things of this world. We have experienced God at work in our lives. God has delivered us from an enemy we could not defeat on our own. He has put us on a journey through the wilderness in route to the Promised Land. Yet, the minute things don’t go our way we complain, our faith wavers, and we go back to old ways (or are tempted to).

We are very blessed that God is gracious and patient with us. He provided a solution for the Israelites, and that solution is an example for us to follow. ***God’s solution was this: Manna!*** He provided for them not out of a storehouse of abundant food, but through the daily provision of “just enough.” (v18) **Each family had just what it needed.** Daily the families were given just what was needed.

For 40 years, the Israelites would experience a daily miracle. Every morning God would provide manna – they didn’t know what it was but it was bread-like with a taste of honey, it was good and it sustained them. Each family was to gather enough food for the day. They were not permitted to gather more than a day’s supply except on the day before the Sabbath (on that day they could take twice the amount and on the Sabbath it would not rot. Some disobeyed and went looking for manna on the Sabbath...they didn’t find any. Which makes it clear that the manna was be provided supernaturally, not naturally). They would be required to trust God each and every day for His provision.

Here is where the most difficult emotional decision comes into play: ***Can you trust God with tomorrow?*** Can you really believe that even though He may have provided for today, He will do the same thing tomorrow morning? After all, our lives depend on it, if He doesn't come through we're going to starve. We love when God is pouring out so much blessing that we don't have room to take it in, we just don't like when He gives those blessing one day at a time.

Here is what is at the heart of Jesus' prayer: ***pray for the ability to trust God.*** Enjoy His blessings, praise and thank Him for His blessings, but never trust in the blessings more than you trust in the Giver of those blessings.

This whole spiritual journey is about learning that we are safe regardless of the circumstances. This journey is learning that the miracles of God come in daily portions, and learning the trust of daily provision. Just because we don't know what we will need tomorrow, doesn't mean He is not going to take care of us tomorrow.

No Plan- B

Now, did you notice what happened when some of the Israelites didn't trust God, because they were afraid He may not come through? They rejected God's plan, and trusted their own plan – they had a plan-B. Plan B was to not use all of the manner they gathered, but to keep some for the next day, just in case God didn't come through. Remember the result? (v19-20)

Then Moses told them, "Do not keep any of it until morning." But some of them didn't listen and kept some of it until morning. But by then it was full of maggots and had a terrible smell. Moses was very angry with them.

This is what happens to ***all plan-B's, they stink, they rot, they don't work, they get others angry.***

Think about this: They had gathered all they needed for the day, each had enough for the day. If they kept some for the next day, that means they didn't eat what was provided for them, they tried to save it instead of use it. God provided, but they wasted His provision. Some days we do not take advantage of all God's blessing, and we miss out on what He wants to provide for us, because we go to our plan-B instead.

Look, we don't like to admit it, but we are all tempted to think, "what if God fails me? What if He doesn't come through?" And we go back to rely on our own plan-B's. Here is the problem with trusting plan-B's. ***God cannot work for you or through you if you are not absolutely dependent upon Him.*** He needs you to let go of whatever else you tend to trust in, let go of your strategies to make life work, and shift that trust onto His faithfulness. If we want to see the miraculous hand of God at work in our lives each day, then like the Israelites we will need to go to bed each night trusting that in the morning *He* will put "food on the table." Because, our money, prestige, our energy, and abilities – all if it, can fail us, and in the end all of it will mean nothing. We too have to go to bed

each night with faith that God will come through in the morning. ***It's a decision of faith: do you trust God to come through tomorrow?*** When we can pray with faith, "Give us this day our daily bread" then we wouldn't face the day with dread, but expecting to see how God will meet our needs today. It will change how we deal with adversity. We may not know how God is going to provide, but we know He's going to do it.

Entertained or Transformed?

I know we want a life full of miracles, but we would rather be in the crowd observing the miracles, rather than be the one who can't walk, is blind, or has leprosy. We want to see a miracle; we just don't want to *need* a miracle. We would rather be entertained by a miracle than be the one that needs one. When we observe or hear of a miracle in someone else's life it causes us to think, but, when God does a miracle in our life it causes us to be transformed. The question is do you want to be entertained or transformed? ***When you become absolutely dependent on God and live trusting Him for all you need, you will experience transformation.***

One Provider

Hold on to God as your only provider. In the same way the children of Israel had no other resource to provide for them, we must place God in our hearts and minds as the one true provider / resource of our lives. When we turn to anything else when we are in trouble we are creating an idol. To live on manna means to refuse to believe that anything else other than God is my provider. When we choose to pray, "Give us this day our daily bread," we are choosing to believe God is going to come through. God is going to provide! I'm not going to panic. He is the only one I can trust to take care of this, and He *will* come through. That's when we are joining a prayer of faith with God's desire to be our Provider.