

## Exodus 16 – God’s Provision: Manna and Quail

Last week Jeff took us through Exodus 13 and 14 and we walked with the Israelites in their first steps of freedom after they crossed the Red Sea. From the encouragements and challenges Jeff shared through that passage, one question and one statement stand out that are still echoing in chapter 16

- “What setback has tempted you to turn back?”
- “Fight to be a people of faith instead of a people of feelings.” (Discipleship) – not just descriptive of their situation, but beauty of what God was willing to do to teach them here

I think it was when I was in college that I had a group of friends that would “Put up the lightning rod” – saying something edgy or risqué, verge of heretical, flippant (I don’t advise this mindset – even the rod)

Our expectation and our faulty interpretation is that God, especially in the Old Testament, stands ready to zap anyone who reaches a certain “high level of sin”, or crossing a line that is not to be crossed

Instead of a zapping God, we see a God who longs to teach his people to walk in faith, who wants to moment by moment, experience by experience, develop them as disciples just as Jesus did with his 12

*16:1-3 - The whole Israelite community set out from Elim and came to the Desert of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month after they had come out of Egypt. <sup>2</sup>In the desert the whole community grumbled against Moses and Aaron. <sup>3</sup>The Israelites said to them, “If only we had died by the LORD’s hand in Egypt! There we sat around pots of meat and ate all the food we wanted, but you have brought us out into this desert to starve this entire assembly to death.”*

The Israelites are one month removed from leaving Egypt and they are unified – they are responding as one community. Unfortunately, that oneness and unity comes out in a grumble. (read underlined)

Then in verse 3, they get painfully whiny – they basically say, “Egypt is such a better place to die!”

(“I do understand that when my time comes, when your time comes, there are more comfortable, more desirable places than others to die and enter into eternity. But when you are not really on the verge of dying, and you are stomping your feet in a tantrum and saying, I want to die over here, not over there – that is a bit of a problem, and a heart adjustment may be needed.

Not only whiny, it’s blasphemy – “we would be better off if the Lord hadn’t saved us, if the exodus event (the greatest salvific act God had done for the Israelites) had never happened”

If ever there was a “zap first, ask questions later” God, you would expect him to step up now

It is so sad to see anyone call bondage freedom and freedom bondage, but that is what they were doing

Their memory was a bit faulty – “We sat around pots of meat & ate all the food we wanted.” And again, their unity, the fact they grumbled as a whole community was impressive (for lack of a better word)

The fact that there was no account of anyone doing a fact check here and giving a dissenting opinion – wow...

Wait a minute – we were slaves

We had awful working conditions that were only getting worse (bricks w/o straw)  
Our foremen were being beaten for our inability to meet impossible quotas

But before we are too hard on them – When our now gets really tough, how accurate are our assessments of the past?

Now, a spirit of grumbling is not directly tied to whether you think the past is great

- “Those were the days” can be a way to whine about the present
- Only talking about how bad the past was can deny what God was, is doing

Our grumble switch is connected to heart attitudes (gratitude is a big part of this)

*16:4-5 - <sup>4</sup> Then the LORD said to Moses, “I will rain down bread from heaven for you. The people are to go out each day and gather enough for that day. In this way I will test them and see whether they will follow my instructions. <sup>5</sup> On the sixth day they are to prepare what they bring in, and that is to be twice as much as they gather on the other days.”*

Amazing phrases “rain down” (God’s generosity) and “bread from heaven” (this theme just might come up later)

But my favorite is “enough for that day.” How much does God provide? Enough for that day. Of his bounty, how much does he want them to take? Enough for that day.

I have been alive 19,879 days, Lord willing my odometer will roll over to 20,000 on January 4 – please don’t feel like you have to get me a card

Along the way I have had some incredibly amazing days and some deeply painful days. But I tell you this - God has always, always, always given me enough for that day.

There are days that as I went through them I might have argued that truth with you and said, “I don’t have enough. I can’t do this.” But looking back, God has always given me enough for that day, even when I did not like what I was getting.

And again we see the Father’s heart to disciple his children. He taught them to not just turn to him for only a random celebration or festival, but they needed to rely on him and see him provide every day for them – he would provide bread for them and it would be “enough for that day”, and the next day, and the next day, on and on for 40 years

Jesus reflected that heart to disciple and teach trusting the Father for daily provision – the Lord’s prayer!! (give us this day our daily bread) How incredible this phrase is in the context of what the Father had daily demonstrated and taught the Israelites

Also the words “test them” & “whether they will follow my instructions” in verse 5 need to be understood as coming from the heart of a teacher, not the heart of a zapper

I believe the test is for them and their learning, not for God – what is the purpose of a test when education is going well and done well?

Verse 5 – Sabbath prep! (Sabbath mode)

I have a niece – and a great niece, about to turn 3 – who is adorable, inquisitive, and fast

During the Sabbath, or Shabbat, and religious holidays in Judaism, there may be restrictions on certain activities that can extend to the use of appliances. Restrictions may include turning appliances on or off, using control panels or activating lights and sounds. Sabbath Mode allows people to use their household appliances without violating their religious laws. When appliances are put into Sabbath Mode, certain features may be modified or disabled to accommodate these needs.

So what was, what is the big deal about Sabbath?

Exodus 16:23 - He said to them, "This is what the LORD commanded: 'Tomorrow is to be a day of sabbath rest, a holy sabbath to the LORD. So bake what you want to bake and boil what you want to boil. Save whatever is left and keep it until morning.'"

Why does a heart attitude of sabbath matter?

1. Invitational – to be with him and focus on Him, to do something the way he did it (made in his image)
2. Rest – We need it, not just when we are "busy." We need it, he knows we need it. One of his most beautiful invitations in Mt 11 - "Come to me all you are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest."
3. Holy – set apart – slow down and realize our dependence (hagios – holy ones)

<sup>6</sup> So Moses and Aaron said to all the Israelites, "In the evening you will know that it was the LORD who brought you out of Egypt, <sup>7</sup> and in the morning you will see the glory of the LORD, because he has heard your grumbling against him. Who are we, that you should grumble against us?" <sup>8</sup> Moses also said, "You will know that it was the LORD when he gives you meat to eat in the evening and all the bread you want in the morning, because he has heard your grumbling against him. Who are we? You are not grumbling against us, but against the LORD."

Verse 6 - "you will know" and in verse 8 as well (phrase used in exodus event as well)

Verse 7 and 8 – twice "You ain't grumbling against us!" As if Moses also expected the lightning bolt

There is no mystery here about the Israelites state of mind and attitude – grumble/grumbled/grumbling – 2,7,7,8,8,9,11 (Why did God not zap the complainers?)

The Hebrew word for grumble here is not just a mumbled complaint, it is closer to open rebellion – a sense of angry "we are done here"

There is no mystery here about God's heart and His intention

I Hear You

<sup>13</sup> But the angel said to him: "Do not be afraid, Zechariah; your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you are to call him John." Luke 1:13

Suddenly a man in shining clothes stood before me <sup>31</sup> and said, 'Cornelius, God has heard your prayer and remembered your gifts to the poor.' Acts 10:30b-31

<sup>7</sup> The LORD said, "I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard them crying out because of their slave drivers, and I am concerned about their suffering." Exodus 3:7

His response is the same, even to their grumbling (v.8 – he has heard your grumbling against him)  
He is so beautifully merciful – despite their grumbling, he would patiently teach, disciple, lead

These were days of complaint while looking back at the glory days  
But years later a new day of complaint would look at these days of complaint as the glory days

God was, would be, and is very busy revealing Himself:

- Miraculous feeding – bread and meat – Feeding of the 5000
- Lord's prayer – "Give us this day our daily bread"
- He called himself the bread of life
- Broken bread would represent his broken body

John 6:25- (after feeding of 5000)

<sup>25</sup> When they found him on the other side of the lake, they asked him, "Rabbi, when did you get here?"

<sup>26</sup> Jesus answered, "Very truly I tell you, you are looking for me, not because you saw the signs I performed but because you ate the loaves and had your fill. <sup>27</sup> Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. For on him God the Father has placed his seal of approval." (Pause)

<sup>28</sup> Then they asked him, "What must we do to do the works God requires?"

<sup>29</sup> Jesus answered, "The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent." (the lesson of the desert)

<sup>30</sup> So they asked him, "What sign then will you give that we may see it and believe you? What will you do? <sup>31</sup> Our ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written: 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.'<sup>[c]</sup>"

<sup>32</sup> Jesus said to them, "Very truly I tell you, it is not Moses who has given you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. <sup>33</sup> For the bread of God is the bread that comes down from heaven and gives life to the world."

<sup>34</sup> "Sir," they said, "always give us this bread."

<sup>35</sup> Then Jesus declared, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty. <sup>36</sup> But as I told you, you have seen me and still you do not believe. <sup>37</sup> All those the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never drive away. <sup>38</sup> For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me. <sup>39</sup> And this is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all those he has given me, but raise them up at the last day. <sup>40</sup> For my Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise them up at the last day." (should end hthis is so beautiful I should end here, but you can't make this up...)

<sup>41</sup> At this the Jews there began to grumble about him because he said, "I am the bread that came down from heaven."

We are grumblers, we are sinners. (Prone to wander, Lord I feel it.) But He is a gracious and merciful God who provides our daily basic needs as well as our deepest needs

### Pausing for Directed Prayers

Father, thank you for your provision...

Father, I don't want a grumbling spirit to cause me to miss the joy of walking with you. Forgive me for these recent grumbings...

Father, I praise you that you welcome my prayers and my crying out to you. I cry out to you about...

Father, thank you for the gift of Sabbath. Teach me to rest in you.

Father, thank you for your patient teaching. Teach me to sit at your feet

Father, thank you for daily bread – both physical and spiritual. Teach me to take and eat with joy and gratitude.