

LENT 2024

# JOURNEY to FREEDOM

SATURDAY 16<sup>TH</sup> MARCH

**READ: Exodus 16:21-36**

***'For six days you shall gather it; but on the seventh day,  
which is a sabbath, there will be none.'***

Exodus 16:26

We have spent many years enjoying camping holidays and I have always loved the sense of living an uncomplicated life in our tent, of paring down our way of living. It focuses our minds on the necessities, instead of the non-essential. One necessity being food; in a tent with limited storage and refrigeration, meals are simpler, shopping only for that day's worth of food.

In the wilderness, the people of Israel, are doing the same, but without a visit to the supermarket! God has been providing them with water and food, the necessities for physical life. They are delivered their daily bread through the generous provision of manna from heaven – just enough for that day, no more no less. It is an exercise in daily trust in God.

But in today's scripture, there is a shift from water and food to rest. God has been providing food daily, but on the sixth day of the week, provides twice the amount, enough supply of manna that will stay fresh so that on the seventh day, they can rest. This echoes the creation story of God resting on the seventh day after creating the heavens and the earth. The people of Israel are to rest from work and toil and instead focus on God and learn to live and witness to others His holy rest. Their trust and faith are being tested; can they do this? Will they be tempted to focus on their own needs rather than focusing on God?

This is perhaps a lesson for us too, that by focusing on our needs for today, this present moment, rather than on our needs for tomorrow, next week, next year...we instead become more aware of God's provision, for all that He has given and continues to give us; His generosity to meet our physical and spiritual needs each day, through both our daily bread and rest.

How are you going to rest on your Sabbath? What needs to be gathered up or planned ahead to ensure that you can focus on today's needs only and set aside proper time for rest?

■ **Let us pray:** *Lord, help to prepare our hearts and lives to enable us to trust and rest in You. Amen.*

**The Revd Karen Herschell,**

**Vicar of the United Benefice of Balderstone, Mellor and Samlesbury**