

Exodus 16:17-17

The children of Israel if you remember have at this point been delivered from the hands of the Egyptians. They had been in slavery for some 400 years and now they are out travelling in the wilderness and the Lord is the One that is leading them as He has taken them through the Red Sea and then He had healed the bitter waters that the people had encountered as Moses had thrown a tree in the waters and they had been made sweet.

Last week in our study we saw the Israelites complain on multiple occasions and as they did so their complaints came to Moses. They even went so far as to begin to say they wished that they had stayed in the land of Egypt. How sad that they actually thought to return to slavery and how sad when believers today are set free by the Lord and then choose to go back to the old ways that used to dominate them.

Now the Lord really had every right at this point to come against His people for their complaints but instead we saw the Lord graciously provide both quail and manna to eat. When the evening came the quail came upon the land and then the next morning they woke up and found a thin substance on the ground that they were to then collect and eat on a regular basis. This substance was called Manna or literally “What is it”

As God provided this manna it was not just for one or two days, but the manna came faithfully for a full 40 years as God provided for His people and we talked about how much food this would have been that God is now providing out of nothing. Over in the book of Psalms in chapter 78 verses 24-25 we have the following which says of God that **He Had rained down manna on them to eat, And given them of**

the bread of heaven. ²⁵ **Men ate angels' food; He sent them food to the full.** This manna was a unique provision of God for sure.

Now one other thing that we talked about a little bit last week is found in chapter 16 verse 4 which says the following ⁴**Then the Lord said to Moses, "Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you. And the people shall go out and gather a certain quota every day, that I may test them, whether they will walk in My law or not.** So the Lord had made it clear that through this provision of manna that God was going to test the people to see if they would walk in His commands or not.

We have talked about this but there are times that God will test us...and I don't think it's so He can figure out what is really in our heart for He knows all things, but instead tests and trials often reveal to ourselves things that need to be worked on in our lives and we know that trials are often purifying as the dross or impurities rise to the surface that the Lord might make us more like Him.

So let's pick up our study here today in verses 17-18 which say the following ¹⁷**Then the children of Israel did so and gathered, some more, some less.** ¹⁸**So when they measured it by omers, he who gathered much had nothing left over, and he who gathered little had no lack. Every man had gathered according to each one's need.** So the manna has appeared and the command of God was that in the morning they were to go out and gather what each person needed.

I do want you to take note that the people had a choice to make. They could go out and gather what God provided or they could choose not to. I think today we have the same choice to make in our lives...I

believe that God has given us His Word as part of our daily manna...of course this is spiritual manna and not physical manna but we have a choice every day whether we will partake of the daily spiritual food that God provides for us.

Furthermore, the world has a choice to make and that choice is will they accept the provision of God for the forgiveness of sins as given through Jesus Christ. God has given His glorious righteousness, but we must accept it and partake of it.

What I like here is that each person was able to go out and gather whatever their household was in need of. Both those that gathered little and those that gathered much had no lack and the idea here is that God provided more than enough for the people's hunger to be satisfied.

This reminds me of the feeding of the 5,000 when the Lord had been teaching for a few days and the journey was long for many people and they would become faint on the way home...And the disciples said "Lord send them away for we have nothing to give them"...and in response the Lord said "you give them something to eat." And then the Lord proceeded to take the little the disciples had and gave it to all who were there and the people were so stuffed that they had multiple baskets of food left over.

There is a saying that many of you are probably familiar with and the saying goes "Where God guides He provides" and I have found this to be true in life as have many others. If God is leading you in life and you are in the middle of His will He is going to take care of the needs that we have.

Philippians 4:19 says the following **9 And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus. And then over in Psalm 84:11 the Word says For the Lord God is a sun and shield; The Lord will give grace and glory; No good thing will He withhold From those who walk uprightly.**

I think as we walk with Jesus we learn that He can and does provide for every need that we might have.

Look at verses 19-20 which say the following **19 And Moses said, "Let no one leave any of it till morning." 20 Notwithstanding they did not heed Moses. But some of them left part of it until morning, and it bred worms and stank. And Moses was angry with them.**

So the children of Israel so far had been obedient to the Lord and they had chosen to go out and gather the manna that was needed in the morning and then Moses told them after this that they were to leave none of it until morning.

Now here's the part of the test that some of the Israelites failed as we are told here that they did not listen to Moses as some of them left the manna until morning and it bred worms and stank and we are told Moses was angry with them.

I suppose we should take note that disobeying the Lord stinks and it won't produce anything good. Worms in food have only one goal and that's to destroy what was meant to be good. So it is if you and I choose to disobey the Lord.

There is a blessing that will come over our lives as we live in obedience and on the other side of the coin there is discipline that comes when we choose not to listen.

I can imagine the embarrassment of those that chose not to obey as they came outside of their tents and had to clean up the mess that they had caused. I can imagine their neighbors watching them and knowing what had happened as multiple people in the camp were experiencing the same repercussions.

When the Lord says something you and I need to know that it isn't something that is optional to obey or not obey. If you are going to serve Jesus, the moment He speaks we need to follow. And we need to let go of things that aren't good for us as they can and will produce destruction. Jesus said the following in Luke 11:28 which simply says **28 But He said, "More than that, blessed are those who hear the word of God and keep it!"**

How are you doing on keeping the commands of God in your own life? Are you doing what the Lord says through His Word or are you deliberately choosing to go your own way?

Then look at verse 21 which says the following **21 So they gathered it every morning, every man according to his need. And when the sun became hot, it melted.** It's interesting that the people were to gather the manna of God every morning...I do believe you and I need to be gathering the daily manna of God's Word every day of our lives and I believe but I'm not being legalistic about this but I believe the best time to gather from the Lord is in the morning. And I think that it's true that often times when the sun comes out and the day gets busy that the opportunity to gather from the Lord can be lost.

I would just ask you today are you gathering from the Lord each day His daily manna in your life? Are you coming out and looking to Him

for your provision in life or are you looking to the world to provide for your needs?

I wanted to share with you just quickly here the faithfulness of God to His people in His daily provision if you listen to what Deuteronomy 8:2-5 says which gives a little more insight to how the Lord equated manna with His Word it says the following ²**And you shall remember that the Lord your God led you all the way these forty years in the wilderness, to humble you and test you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not. ³ So He humbled you, allowed you to hunger, and fed you with manna which you did not know nor did your fathers know, that He might make you know that man shall not live by bread alone; but man lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the Lord. ⁴ Your garments did not wear out on you, nor did your foot swell these forty years. ⁵ You should know in your heart that as a man chastens his son, so the Lord your God chastens you.**

So the Lord in providing the manna daily for His people was teaching them that they could rely on His daily provision to faithfully come and in that they would learn that they were to live and build their lives on His Word. We should be the same way as we go through life.

Verses 22-26 say the following ²²**And so it was, on the sixth day, that they gathered twice as much bread, two omers for each one. And all the rulers of the congregation came and told Moses. ²³ Then he said to them, “This is what the Lord has said: ‘Tomorrow is a Sabbath rest, a holy Sabbath to the Lord. Bake what you will bake today, and boil what you will boil; and lay up for yourselves all that remains, to be kept until morning.’ ” ²⁴ So they**

laid it up till morning, as Moses commanded; and it did not stink, nor were there any worms in it. ²⁵ Then Moses said, “Eat that today, for today is a Sabbath to the Lord; today you will not find it in the field. ²⁶ Six days you shall gather it, but on the seventh day, the Sabbath, there will be none.”

Now if you remember the Lord had already told them that when the 6th day came they were to gather enough for two days and here we see the people being obedient to what the Lord said...We can also see that as they were obedient God watched over the manna and caused it not to breed worms or stink.

We also for the first time here in these verses see the Lord begin to institute the Sabbath for His people. This was to be a time of rest and it was to be done unto the Lord. It was probably a great blessing for the people that as they were obedient the Lord led them to times of rest in their lives. Over in Ezekiel 20:12 we have the following which says ¹² **Moreover I also gave them My Sabbaths, to be a sign between them and Me, that they might know that I am the Lord who sanctifies them.** The Sabbath was to be a constant reminder of how the Lord had worked in them and set them apart for Himself.

Today as New Testament believers we don't have any kind of requirement to keep the Sabbath...instead we have freedom to worship the Lord as we please, but I will say that taking time to rest is a good thing to practice in life. Just stopping in life to give thanks to the Lord for His provision is a blessing and is good for the soul.

I want to point out also that the Sabbath rest that we can enter into today is not just for one day, but it is for every day as we can rest in

Jesus who has set us free. We no longer have to work for our salvation, we no longer have to keep the law, instead we have abundantly received from the Lord.

We might also take note here that manna was an unusual food indeed. It could be prepared in all kinds of ways and so you can imagine there were manna cakes and manna burgers and there was mannacotti and manna bread and so on...I'm sure the people got quite creative with it.

Look at verses 27-30 which say ²⁷ **Now it happened that some of the people went out on the seventh day to gather, but they found none.** ²⁸ **And the Lord said to Moses, "How long do you refuse to keep My commandments and My laws?"** ²⁹ **See! For the Lord has given you the Sabbath; therefore He gives you on the sixth day bread for two days. Let every man remain in his place; let no man go out of his place on the seventh day."** ³⁰ **So the people rested on the seventh day.**

Well, well, well are we surprised at all that some of the people chose to be disobedient. Here the Lord is giving them a whole day to rest and to trust that He will provide for their needs and instead they go out and blow it by looking for something that was not going to be found.

How often do we do that in life? The Lord gives us clear instructions and we think we know a little better than the Lord and we can take matters into our own hands and then we find that we are outside of the Lord's Word for our lives .

We do see the Lord is upset with the people as He simply says "how long will you refuse to keep my commandments." But I'm thankful

here that the Lord didn't punish them, instead, He just lets them know again that they won't find it on the seventh day and they are to rest.

You know I am sure thankful that the Lord is gracious to us as we go through life. The Lord does not always punish the way that we might deserve...Often times He gives me far less than what perhaps I have earned in life. The Word says this in Psalm 145:8-9 which says

The Lord is gracious and full of compassion, Slow to anger and great in mercy. ⁹The Lord is good to all, And His tender mercies are over all His works.

Look at verses 31-36 which says ³¹**And the house of Israel called its name Manna. And it was like white coriander seed, and the taste of it was like wafers made with honey.**

³²**Then Moses said, "This is the thing which the Lord has commanded: 'Fill an omer with it, to be kept for your generations, that they may see the bread with which I fed you in the wilderness, when I brought you out of the land of Egypt.' "** ³³**And Moses said to Aaron, "Take a pot and put an omer of manna in it, and lay it up before the Lord, to be kept for your generations."** ³⁴**As the Lord commanded Moses, so Aaron laid it up before the Testimony, to be kept. ³⁵And the children of Israel ate manna forty years, until they came to an inhabited land; they ate manna until they came to the border of the land of Canaan. ³⁶Now an omer is one-tenth of an ephah.**

Here we learn that manna tasted like white coriander seed with honey...that's a nice blessing. I bet the people of Israel were glad it didn't taste like a gross food like olives or something like that. The

Lord could have made it bland and unappetizing but instead it was sweet.

And then the Lord told them to take a jar of the manna and to keep it for future generations that they might see the bread that the Lord had fed them...This was a supernatural provision from the Lord as they were to lay it up before the testimony and we learn later on that they actually put the manna along with the two stone tablets which are the 10 commandments and the rod of Aaron that will bud in the future in the ark of the covenant as a testimony to them.

So not only could the Lord allow the manna to breed worms and stink overnight, but He could also preserve the manna for two days on the Sabbath and then for many generations as a testimony.

Now to close out this chapter I have one more thing to just bring to you and it's actually in reference to Jesus and how He is the bread that came from heaven and I wanted to share with you from the Gospel of John 6:30-35 which says the following ³⁰**Therefore they said to Him, "What sign will You perform then, that we may see it and believe You? What work will You do?"** ³¹**Our fathers ate the manna in the desert; as it is written, 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.'** ”

³²**Then Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, Moses did not give you the bread from heaven, but My Father gives you the true bread from heaven. ³³ For the bread of God is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world."**

³⁴**Then they said to Him, "Lord, give us this bread always."**

³⁵ And Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst. The manna that God provided for His people was a picture of the true bread that would come from heaven...**That true bread is the Lord Jesus Christ who was sent from heaven and those that partake of the true bread of life shall never hunger again. The Israelites found hunger every day while in the wilderness and yet Jesus satisfies the deep need within our soul to be filled by God.**

I'm so thankful the Lord came from heaven on our behalf. I'm so thankful that as we choose to come to Him receiving Him in our hearts that He truly does satisfy us. Have you received the Lord in your heart today for the forgiveness of sins? If not I can tell you that I know there is a spiritual hunger deep within your heart that only He can fill.

Well let's move on here into chapter 17 if you look with me at verses 1-3 which say Then all the congregation of the children of Israel set out on their journey from the Wilderness of Sin, according to the commandment of the Lord, and camped in Rephidim; but there was no water for the people to drink. ²Therefore the people contended with Moses, and said, “Give us water, that we may drink.”

So Moses said to them, “Why do you contend with me? Why do you tempt the Lord?”

³And the people thirsted there for water, and the people complained against Moses, and said, “Why is it you have brought us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our livestock with thirst?”

So the people are again travelling and they came to a place called Rephidim and that name means “Resting place” and I have a question and my question is what kind of a resting place is this that there is no water? Perhaps they assumed there would be water there but when they came the water source was all dried up.

And then notice the people once again contend with Moses. Really at the end of the day Moses can only do what he can do...I mean he isn't the one that has provided at all for God's people and yet they are expecting him to do something about where God has led them as a people.

I kind of wonder at this point why the people of Israel did not have a greater faith that God would provide and work in the situation. It's almost to me like they automatically think the worst in every situation they come into. It's like they are a bunch of Negative Nellie's.

To me the people of Israel should have said “the Lord delivered us from Egypt, the Lord allowed us to cross the Red Sea, the Lord provided water once before, the Lord provided manna and quail...of course He is fully capable of providing for us in this time of need as well.

I am reminded that often times in life we don't get the lesson the first time around and I think God was allowing these difficulties repeatedly so they would thoroughly learn that He is their provider...It has been said you don't actually learn something until you have done it at least 7 times.

Look at verses 4-7 which say ⁴So Moses cried out to the Lord, saying, “What shall I do with this people? They are almost ready to stone me!”

⁵And the Lord said to Moses, “Go on before the people, and take with you some of the elders of Israel. Also take in your hand your rod with which you struck the river, and go. ⁶ Behold, I will stand before you there on the rock in Horeb; and you shall strike the rock, and water will come out of it, that the people may drink.”

And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel. ⁷ So he called the name of the place Massah and Meribah, because of the contention of the children of Israel, and because they tempted the Lord, saying, “Is the Lord among us or not?”

Notice that as the people complained against Moses **that they became the motivation for him to be in prayer.** Trials will do that, they will cause you to pray with an intensity that perhaps you have never had before...and Moses just asks the Lord “what am I going to do with these people?”

And perhaps Moses was kind of at his wit's end and he is thinking it's time the Lord came against these complainers as they never seem to understand that the Lord will work for them...Perhaps Moses thought it was time for the Lord to blast these people with some fire and brimstone.

And yet once again the Lord is merciful to His people as he tells Moses to take the elders with him and we see Moses do just that. Do you ever wonder if some of the people got jealous that the elders got to do some things that the rest of the people did not? It reminds me of

how Jesus took Peter, James and John with him on multiple occasions and the other disciples had to simply wait. I think sometimes you and I have to be content in the Lord trusting that He allows us to participate in precisely what we need to.

So Moses goes with his rod and the elders and he strikes a rock that was found and as he does so there is a stream of water that comes from it providing for what the people needed.

The place was then called Massah which can mean tempted and Meribah which can mean contention. And really the people in this had tempted the Lord by challenging whether He was actually with them or not. We ought to always remember that God is present in our lives. Even in the most difficult of situations He is right there with us.

Now I have to say just briefly that this striking of the rock is a picture of Jesus and how He was struck for us...The Israelites had been complaining and failing and coming against what God had provided for them in leadership and the Lord tells Moses that he was to go and strike the rock...Jesus is the rock that was struck for us that we might be saved, even though we don't deserve it, even though we were far from the Lord He allowed Himself to be spat upon and struck. Jesus said the following in John 7:37 which says **³⁷ On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink.**

That same invitation is open to all who would come to Him placing their trust in Him. Jesus was struck that we might be blessed.

One more section here as we close out this evening if you look at verse 8 which says **⁸ Now Amalek came and fought with Israel in**

Rephidim. Now the people of God have a problem that is different in that they are under threat of an enemy that has come along...The Amalekites are seen here for the first time in a while in the scriptures and if you do some research you find that Amalek was actually a grandson of Esau and if you remember Esau had despised his birthright and traded it for a bowl of stew.

Now the Amalekites in the scriptures are often seen as a picture of the flesh and how the flesh will try and pursue a person and drag them down and beat them up...so it is with this people group...I think you and I have a battle with our flesh that rages pretty constantly as well don't we?

We do learn over in Deuteronomy 25:17-18 the following details which gives us some insight into how the Amalekites attacked. They say ¹⁷ **“Remember what Amalek did to you on the way as you were coming out of Egypt, ¹⁸ how he met you on the way and attacked your rear ranks, all the stragglers at your rear, when you were tired and weary; and he did not fear God.** Notice they came after the rear ranks or the stragglers at the rear who were tired and weary.

That's always a tactic of the enemy I believe. He looks for those that are separated from the rest of the believers, he looks for those that are tired and weary, he looks for those that aren't paying attention.

I have to just caution us tonight that we look to help those in our fellowship that are hurting and struggling, they need us to come along side them and help them along in the faith. The enemy will gladly pick them off if we aren't careful and watchful.

Look at verse 9 which says ⁹ And Moses said to Joshua, “Choose us some men and go out, fight with Amalek. Tomorrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the rod of God in my hand.” Here we have Joshua mentioned for the first time and this is the one that will one day lead the people of Israel into the promised land...and Moses tells him grab some men, go out and fight with Amalek and I am going to the top of the hill with the rod of God in my hand...Perhaps Moses was trusting in the rod to be the instrument God would use to help the people of Israel...that makes sense for God had used it before.

Look at verses 10-13 which say ¹⁰ So Joshua did as Moses said to him, and fought with Amalek. And Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of the hill. ¹¹ And so it was, when Moses held up his hand, that Israel prevailed; and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed. ¹² But Moses’ hands became heavy; so they took a stone and put it under him, and he sat on it. And Aaron and Hur supported his hands, one on one side, and the other on the other side; and his hands were steady until the going down of the sun. ¹³ So Joshua defeated Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword.

Notice that the rod isn’t mentioned...but the raising of hands was...The raising of hands is a posture of prayer and I believe as Moses was submitting to the Lord, lifting His arms unto the Lord looking for help and strength for the people of God that the Lord acted on their behalf.

And of course Moses would get tired as he did this...I think every man or woman of God is going to get tired in life and when we get tired we need others to help us hold up our hands...we need others to stand

beside us helping us...I know I need people to intercede on my behalf and come alongside and help me in life and I know that you have that same need.

God designed us to go through life together, He designed us to minister to each other and encourage each other and Moses as used of God as he was, was just like you and I. We need to know that we can't go it alone and that's why we are told in Hebrews that we are not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together.

Verses 14-16 to close us out say ¹⁴Then the Lord said to Moses, “Write this for a memorial in the book and recount it in the hearing of Joshua, that I will utterly blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven.” ¹⁵And Moses built an altar and called its name, The-Lord-Is-My-Banner; ¹⁶for he said, “Because the Lord has sworn: the Lord will have war with Amalek from generation to generation.”

After the victory Moses was to write down in a book what had happened and there was a promise given that one day the remembrance of Amalek would be wiped out from under heaven...and notice at the end the Lord said there would be war with Amalek from one generation to the next.

Even today you and I as we go through life looking to serve Jesus have a constant battle with the flesh don't we? One day that battle will be over, one day we'll shake off the ways of our flesh forever and we'll enter into glory with our Lord.

Until that day we must live under the banner of the Lord resting in Him, calling out to Him, asking Him for His great work in our lives and

rallying around Him...that's what a banner was used for in biblical times...It gathered the people together and Jesus is certainly the One we run to in battle.

Well let's pray as we close today.

Exodus 16:17-17 “The Lord Is Always At Work”

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