

December 7, 2014

TIME OF REFLECTION

“Dump a year’s supply of manna into cold storage and, guaranteed, you will forget God until the supply disappears...Do you see how this is exactly what we need? Fears and worries live in the future, trying to assure a good outcome in a potentially hard situation. The last thing they want to do is trust anyone, God included. To thwart this tendency toward independence, God only gives us what we need when we need it. The emerging idea is that he wants us to trust *him* in the future rather than our self-protective plan.”

~Ed Welch, Professor of Practical Theology
and author of *Running Scared: Fear, Worry and the God of Rest*

“The most dark and terrible thing about human nature is our capacity to take the good gifts of God and make them into an instrument to cut ourselves off from God, to establish our independence from God. All the impulses toward good, all the experiences of God’s grace, and all the patterns of conduct and piety that grow from these can be and have constantly been made the basis for a claim on our own behalf, a claim that we have, so to speak, a standing in our own right. And so, in the name of all that is best in the moral and spiritual experience of the race, we cut ourselves off from the life that God intends for us - a life of pure and childlike confidence in the superabundant kindness of God.”

-Leslie Newbigin, 20th century Anglican missiologist and philosopher

“Grief has limits, whereas apprehension has none. For we grieve only for what we know has happened, but we fear all that possibly may happen.”

~Pliny the Elder (23-79 AD)

Worship through the Word

SERMON – “Fighting Fear with Faith” – *Alasdair Groves*

SERMON PASSAGES – *Exodus 15:27-16:4, 16:14-21, 31-34 (NIV)*

²⁷Then they came to Elim, where there were twelve springs and seventy palm trees, and they camped there near the water.

Exodus 16

¹The 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. ²In the desert the whole community grumbled against Moses and Aaron. ³The 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.” ⁴Then 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.”

¹⁴When the dew was gone, thin flakes like frost on the ground appeared on the desert floor. ¹⁵When the Israelites saw it, they said to each other, “What is it?” For they did not know what it was. Moses said to them, “It is the bread the LORD has given you to eat. ¹⁶This is what the LORD has commanded: ‘Each one is to gather as much

as he needs. Take an omer for each person you have in your tent.’” ¹⁷The Israelites did as they were told; some gathered much, some little. ¹⁸And when they measured it by the omer, he who gathered much did not have too much, and he who gathered little did not have too little. Each one gathered as much as he needed. ¹⁹Then Moses said to them, “No one is to keep any of it until morning.” ²⁰However, some of them paid no attention to Moses; they kept part of it until morning, but it was full of maggots and began to smell. So Moses was angry with them. ²¹Each morning everyone gathered as much as he needed, and when the sun grew hot, it melted away.

³¹The people of Israel called the bread manna. It was white like coriander seed and tasted like wafers made with honey. ³²Moses said, “This is what the LORD has commanded: ‘Take an omer of manna and keep it for the generations to come, so they can see the bread I gave you to eat in the desert when I brought you out of Egypt.’” ³³So Moses said to Aaron, “Take a jar and put an omer of manna in it. Then place it before the LORD to be kept for the generations to come.” ³⁴As the LORD commanded Moses, Aaron put the manna in front of the Testimony, that it might be kept.