

October 10, 2021

Exodus 16: 1-18

God provides Manna

Young people's message: Is it okay to complain? I would have to say YES it is. Only if you have tried everything in your power to fix the situation or problem. If you cannot fix it then it is okay to take the situation or problem to someone who has the power to fix it and make it right.

This morning we hear how the Jews complained to God. They ran out of food in the dessert. They only took food for thirty days. That would still be a lot of food to carry with them. When all the food ran out they complained to Moses. Who really could not make food out of nothing in the desert. So Moses had a talk with God. He listened and then made it rain bread from heaven. It was enough to feed two million people. God did this every six days for forty years. He gave them rules for collecting the bread. God would also provide water in the dessert for two million people, when Moses struck the rock with his staff. God told him what to do to make it happen.

Remember that God heard the Jews complain when they were slaves in Egypt. God hears our conversations with Him even when we think He is not listening. So God sent Moses to lead the Jews out of slavery in Egypt and on to freedom.

When talking with God it is always best to start off with thanksgiving. Tell God the things you are grateful for in your life. This could be the love of your family, the happiness of having good friends, or how good a cook your mom is, or how you like the clothes you wear. Then gently tell God your complaints. How it gets fixed may completely surprise you. The Jews asked for bread and got a lesson about being God's children for forty years.

Adult's message: This was many lectures I listened to this past week. I gained a great insight into how the Jews view the manna from heaven. They reflect back on it as a multi layered test and the beginning of how they learned to be Jews.

Like most things Yiddish this lecture starts with a question. Why did God give the Jews manna in the desert and what is its message? Moses is the one who tells us the answer and the message is this. God tells Moses that He will cause it to rain food from heaven. This event occurs thirty days after the Jews left Egypt and they have run out of food. All the food they carried with them for the journey is gone. God gives the Jews rules for collecting the food when it comes out of the

sky. They are to go out and pick enough food for each person in their household. This amount is one omer. Each day they were to go out and collect only one omer for each person in their house. No more and no less. If they picked too much it would rot or mold. God uses the manna as a test of the Jews faith. Not only was the manna for their food, but it was a challenge and a test.

The test was to see if they would listen to God's instruction. God was very specific about the manna collected. That it had to be done every day and on Friday you collected a double portion for each person in the house. The second portion was for the Sabbath. The only day in the week that it did not rain manna from heaven. The second portion for the Sabbath did not rot or go moldy. Unlike extra manna collected any other day. God is using the manna to teach the Jews the laws of the Sabbath. They are learning how to be proper Jews and to keep Kosher. So on the Sabbath you cannot work by collecting food that day. God is saying to Moses, lets see how these newly freed people follow the rules.

The other test was to see if the Jews would study Torah or God's word. God is actually looking after their human needs by supplying them with food daily. Will they study God's law? Other rabbis have said that this experience was a test of poverty. That at the end of the day your manna is all eaten and the pantry is empty. Now you have to rely on God to provide manna for tomorrow. The Jews needed faith that God will provide their manna for tomorrow. God is providing all they need

and will they study His laws and words? We do not live by bread alone, but by the words that come from the mouth of God. His word is providing all the Jews creature comforts in the dessert.

Moses tells the Jews that their existence is not the bread, but their connection with God. Bread gives us the energy to connect with God. Maimonedes said this miracle of the manna was the greatest one of all. It was not a one time event, but that it reoccurred every six days. This occurred for forty years for two million people. They were being fed directly by God every six days.

Moses tells the Jews that God sanctified the Sabbath when He created the world. God uses the manna to teach the Jews to keep the Sabbath. This is 2448 years after God created the world. They did not have to keep Sabbath for 2448 years and now they do. God introduces keeping Sabbath through the manna. Sabbath is not a day to shop for food or to cook food. It is the day to reap the benefits that have been acquired during the week. On the Sabbath you do nothing except enjoy the life that God has given us. Sabbath is a day of pleasure and a gift from God. This is the original understanding of Sabbath. It is the day that we focus on the things that connect us with God.

I never would have guessed that something so powerful and complex would come out of a cry for food. God even uses our complaints to teach us and to draw us closer to Him. This Thanksgiving reflect on the many blessing in our lives. Be grateful for where we live and the people

in our lives. Most importantly use the day as a reflection on our connection with God. The story of the manna reminds us of the importance of our food and where it comes from. That is why we say grace before and after a meal. May God continue to bless you in the years to come. Pastor D