

TEXARKANA REFORMED BAPTIST CHURCH**SERIES TITLE: EXODUS 16:4 | SERMON TITLE: MANNA & DAILY FAITH****DAVE WAGNER**

Exodus 16:4-5 ⁴ Then the LORD said to Moses, "Behold, I am about to rain bread from heaven for you, and the people shall go out and gather a day's portion every day, that I may test them, whether they will walk in my law or not. ⁵ On the sixth day, when they prepare what they bring in, it will be twice as much as they gather daily."

Exodus 16:19-20 ¹⁹ And Moses said to them, "Let no one leave any of it over till the morning." ²⁰ But they did not listen to Moses. Some left part of it till the morning, and it bred worms and stank. And Moses was angry with them.

Deuteronomy 8:2-3 ² And you shall remember the whole way that the LORD your God has led you these forty years in the wilderness, that he might humble you, testing you to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep his commandments or not. ³ And he humbled you and let you hunger and fed you with manna, which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that he might make you know that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by every word¹ that comes from the mouth of the LORD.

God fed Israel in the desert for 40 years with Manna. Manna was a substance that would be on the ground anew every morning, miraculously, and which could be made into a sort of bread.

Six days a week God would put the manna on the ground and Israel was commanded to only gather as much as they needed for the rest of the day. They had to trust that God would provide for them again the next day; they were not permitted to gather more than they needed for one day.

If they did, the hoarded manna would breed worms the next morning; they couldn't eat it. They had no choice but to trust God.

The exception was on the 6th day of the week, our Friday. On that day they could gather enough for two days since God would not give manna on the seventh day, Sabbath, our Saturday. This was because Saturday was a holy day on which God commanded rest from work, and gathering the manna would be work.

Now the basic reason God did this was to teach Israel to trust him with a daily trust. By "daily trust" I mean a trust which did not look out further than the present day, but patiently, humbly and obediently looked to God to provide just for today; the next morning they were called to wake up and, once again, trust God to provide just enough for the present day. And they were called to do this day by day. Manna was a great way to teach them this lesson since it's hard to get more basic than man's need for food.

Now God doesn't feed us with manna, but he does direct us to the same kind of daily faith. And that's my point today: God's will for us is that we exercise a daily faith in humility, patience and obedience.

Let's begin by exploring the passages for more details about this daily faith.

Filling Out The Daily Faith

First, in Exodus 16.4, we see that God gave the manna in order to test Israel, whether they would obey his law or not.

Specifically, this concerned whether Israel would refrain from keeping manna overnight, and whether they would refrain from gathering manna on Sabbath.

Now in order for God to test us he usually, or always, has to create a situation of difficulty. There must be some evil thing which we are tempted to do. In Israel's case they were tempted to distrust God's provision by hoarding manna and going out to gather it on Sabbath. Their difficulty was forsaking their own wisdom and thoughts, forsaking their urge to protect themselves, and simply relying on God like humble children.

God is doing the same in our lives. He is creating difficult situations to see whether you will trust him by obeying his simple command, despite your temptation to do what seems better or easier to you.

This is especially so in the area of faith. God has set up the world so that we can lose it all in a moment, and nothing is certain. We are tempted to obsess about the future and to hoard up money and provision so as to defend ourselves from eventualities. But this is against God's will. God would have us trust him with a daily faith, a faith which only asks for provision today, and does not demand of God assurance of a security which God never offers.

Second, from Exodus 16.20, the command for daily faith aims to avoid the rotteness which occurs when we hoard for the sake of maximum security.

When Israel kept the manna overnight it spoiled and bred worms. Take this as a picture of what happens to everything that we seek to use as security against the future. The man who hoards money is hurt by the money when it turns foul in his mind and heart; like the manna his money changes from being a good and helpful provision to stinking poison.

And this will happen in any area where we don't exercise daily faith. Everything you seek to hold onto will become rotten; if you use a relationship to give you the security which you should only seek from God, you will ruin the relationship; it will breed worms. If you look to a career to protect you and give you identity, as only God is meant to do, your career will breed worms and begin to stink.

What we're really doing in these cases is just idolatry. Men should only look to God to deliver them, but like the heathen of old most men bow down to statues of wood and stone and look to them for deliverance.

Brothers, we can keep nothing, for nothing is ours. Everything we have we have only on loan; soon you will die and God will require it back. There's only one exception. You are permitted to keep One thing now and into eternity without ever giving it back. That thing is the Father, the Son and the Spirit.

So daily faith is calculated to prevent the breeding of worms in your life.

Third, from Deuteronomy 8.2, daily faith is designed to humble you. It was much easier to be humble when we were children, for then we literally depended on someone else for everything. Someone else changed our diaper, prepared all our meals, gave us all our clothing and shelter, took us everywhere we needed to go, and taught us everything we needed to know.

When we grow up we gain autonomy; then we begin to feel that we are the master of our fate, and captain of our soul. But it's all nonsense. No matter how adult, how wise, how rich, how competent, how anything we become, we are always and only relying on God for every single scrap of everything we have.

Well, God wills daily faith for us. And daily faith aims to humble us. This is because, the more dependent we are the more lowly we must know ourselves to be. How proud can the quadriplegic be? How proud the child with down's syndrome? How proud the blind man who must be led everywhere by the hand? No, the more dependent we are, the more humble we must be.

So God would have us know for certain that nothing is certain. Tomorrow is not guaranteed you. Trust God today and be content for what he gives you today. Do not proudly demand your allowance for tomorrow; if you do, it is only your devilish desire to be master of your fate and captain of your soul.

Fourth, from Deuteronomy 8.3, daily faith requires that we learn to live more on God's word than we do even on bread.

That's what God wanted to teach Israel; that it was more important for them to hear God's word, learn God's word, meditate God's word, trust God's word, hope in God's word, and obey God's word, more important even than eating.

Now what's more important to people than eating? If you said drinking and breathing I would agree with you. But that's about it. There's almost nothing more essential to man than nourishment.

For most people, take away their breakfast and lunch and see how they feel by dinner. Observe their mood. Maybe test them a bit; argue with them some and give them a hard time; see how well they take it 😊

Bread is basic. Most people can barely miss a meal without serious frustration.

And in daily faith, we learn to live more on God's word than food. Jesus quoted this verse to the devil when he was fasting. Jesus was determined to hold God's word as more precious even than eating.

Now here's how this fits together: Faith is like chewing, but you can't chew without something in your mouth. If faith is chewing, God's word is what faith chews. If faith is a burning fire, God's word is the fuel upon which faith burns. If faith is the engine of a truck, God's word is the gasoline burned by the engine.

Without an ongoing encounter with God's word, your faith will have no fuel; there will be nothing to burn. Your faith will be a fire which has gone out. All that remains is a cold, quiet, pile of ashes.

What, after all, are you believing in, if you don't know the Word? When the devil tells you that you're far too sinful for God to love you, to what can your faith turn in defense?

Romans 4:5 ⁵ And to the one who does not work but trusts him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted as righteousness

When the devil tells you to go on and enjoy a little sin, after all, God will put up with it, since you're a Christian and God favors you, what will your faith feed on?

Ezekiel 18:4 ⁴ Behold, all souls are mine; the soul of the father as well as the soul of the son is mine: the soul who sins shall die.

So live on God's word that you may live by daily faith. Your faith is the fire; God's word is the fuel.

Why should we believe in the first place?

Someone might justly ask why we should trust God in the first place? This is a fine world he's made, after all, with all its sorrow and misery. How can we have a daily faith, or any faith, when God made such a bad world? Surely this casts doubt on God's character?

There are two parts to the answer. The first is this: God didn't make a bad world; he made a good one. Our world is now bad as a result of the joint effort of men and devils. Sorrow and misery flow from the sinful actions of creatures, not from the creative actions of God. So be careful to keep that straight. Genesis 3 is in your Bible for a reason.

But the second part of the answer is this: It is true that God permitted such evil to enter the world. Shall he be thought a villain for his permission of evil? Let's admit it is sometimes easy to believe the devil's lie that God is, after all, the bad guy. To what then shall we turn that we may defend our daily faith in God?

Many things could be offered, but one thing towers above them all. If you want a guarantee about the character of God, if you want certainty about whether God is the good guy or the bad guy in the story which is history, you need look no further than the cross of Christ.

When Jesus died on the cross he demonstrated the character of God, perhaps as nothing else could either before or after for all time. Jesus' death showed that God is righteous, since in his death God was punishing the sin of believers, all the believers who have lived since the beginning of the world. God proved he is a righteous God who will not turn a blind eye to sin. No sins are swept under the rug. The soul that sins shall die. Every sin and evil deed will be punished, no ifs, ands or buts.

At the same time, God demonstrated the greatness and the depth, the intensity and immensity of his love for sinners, when Jesus died. What kind of love must God have for sinners if he is willing to put his own Son to death for them? You know very well there's not a father in this room who would kill his son to save his sworn enemy. Not you, not me.

And God displayed his wisdom. The predicament of the universe is not how we can make all men equal, but how in the world a righteous God can love and forgive sinners. If God is just, he must punish sins; if he desires to rescue sinners and does so, then he isn't just. How is this predicament solved?

By the death of Christ. In the death of Christ God shows himself to be both just, and the justifier of those who believe in Jesus. That is, God shows that he is a righteous judge; he doesn't ignore sin and crime; he punishes the guilty as a good judge must.

And God shows himself to be the one who makes bad men right with himself. God takes guilty people, horribly guilty people, people who should burn in the fire, and in the death of his Son, God removes every ounce of their guilt. He erases their debt. He cleanses their filthiness. He expunges their criminal record. He slams his gavel and declares, "Not Guilty. Righteous. Innocent."

The most glorious ArchAngels and Seraphim and Cherubim could never have dreamed of such a solution to the universe's biggest problem. But God devises and executes his glorious Gospel with pleasure and ease, so great is his wisdom.

I asked a moment ago where we can turn when we begin to doubt God, when it gets hard to have daily faith given the evil and sorrow and horrors of the world. Sinner, you can turn to the Cross of Jesus. There the righteousness, the Wisdom, and the love of God for sinners were displayed as never before and never since. Look at Jesus' death and have joy. Your sins, which are many, are forgiven you.