

Sunday, August 5, 2018 – Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost

“Daily Bread”

Exodus 16: 2-15

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Analogy

Adapted from CPR

Grace, mercy and peace to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, Amen.

“Then the LORD said to Moses, ‘Behold, I am about to rain bread from heaven for you’” (v 4).

Have you seen the commercial? The one where the reporter asks a guy who’s just won the World Series or the NBA finals or the Super Bowl, “What are you going to do next?” The answer: “I’m going to Disney World!” This television commercial first aired in 1987 following Super Bowl XXI: “Phil Simms of the New York Giants, you just won the Super Bowl. What are you going to do next?” “I’m going to Disney World,” he says. And they do! They really do go to Disney World.

So, people of Israel, what are you going to do next? You’ve been enslaved in Egypt for 430 years to the day (Ex 12:41). You’ve been sent Moses who cried to the Lord, “Let my people go!” You’ve been told no by Pharaoh over and over.

So, people of Israel, what are you going to do next? You’ve seen the plagues—the blood flowing, the flies bothering, the hail destroying, the frogs inhabiting, the animals dying, the locusts devouring, the gnats pestering, the boils hurting, the darkness blinding.

So, people of Israel, what are you going to do next? You’ve roasted your year-old, unblemished lamb. You’ve painted the doorframe with blood. You’ve heard the wailing throughout the night as the firstborn died.

So, people of Israel, what are you going to do next? You’ve left Egypt with the spoils, with their gold and silver and clothing (12:35). You, even with the Lord’s favor, have plundered the Egyptians (12:36). You’ve followed the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night.

So, people of Israel, what are you going to do next? You’ve walked on the dry ground with the wall of water to the right and to the left. You’ve seen the Egyptians who pursued swept into the sea.

You've cried out, "I will sing to the LORD, for he has triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider he has thrown into the sea. The LORD is my strength and my song, and he has become my salvation; this is my God, and I will praise him, my father's God, and I will exalt him" (15:1b-2).

So, people of Israel, what are you going to do next?

The answer is clear: grumble! "Would that we had died by the hand of the LORD in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the meat pots and ate bread to the full, for you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger" (v 3). Grumble, grumble, grumble. And the Israelites said, "Is it because there are no graves in Egypt that you have taken us away to die in the wilderness? What have you done to us in bringing us out of Egypt? Is not this what we said to you in Egypt: 'Leave us alone that we may serve the Egyptians'? For it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness" (14:11-12). Grumble, grumble, grumble. You stiff-necked people, the Lord has heard your grumbling!

Of course, you don't grumble. No, never you. But you do. You grumble! You grumble . . . when the price of gas is too high and when your miles per gallon are too low . . . when loan interest rates are too high and when bank interest rates are too low . . . when the cost of milk is too high and when the farmers' profits are too low.

We grumble, grumble, grumble . . . when the cost of parking is too high and when the number of parking spots is too low . . . when the cost of our cell plan is too high and when the data package is too low . . . when the calories in food are too high and the opportunities to exercise are too low.

We grumble, grumble, grumble . . . when we're bored because we have too much time . . . when we're frantic because we have too little time. We grumble, grumble, grumble! We grumble over things both big and small.

Even so, the Lord says, "Behold, I am about to rain bread from heaven for you" (v 4). "He commanded the skies above" (Ps 78:23). God causes it to rain and snow, the wind to blow and the stars

to twinkle. God commands the skies above. God brought manna. “And when the dew had gone up, there was on the face of the wilderness a fine, flake-like thing, fine as frost on the ground. When the people of Israel saw it, they said to one another, ‘What is it?’ For they did not know what it was. And Moses said to them, ‘It is the bread that the LORD has given you to eat’” (vv 14–15).

God commands the skies above. God brought quail. “At twilight you shall eat meat. . . . In the evening quail came up and covered the camp” (vv 12–13).

God commands the skies above. God brought angels who filled the skies, who sang praises and proclaimed, “Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger” (Lk 2:10–12).

God commands the skies above. And there on Calvary’s hill, “It was now about the sixth hour, and there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour, while the sun’s light failed. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two. Then Jesus, calling out with a loud voice, said, ‘Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!’ And having said this he breathed his last. Now when the centurion saw what had taken place, he praised God, saying, ‘Certainly this man was innocent!’” (Lk 23:44–47).

And he was, except he took your sins and he took mine. “Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!” (Jn 1:29). “[God] made him to be sin who knew so sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God” (2 Cor 5:21). The Son of God breathed his last while the skies were dark.

God commands the skies above. As the darkness lifted from the skies, the morning of the third day, the women went to the tomb and found it empty. “Why are you looking here? Jesus is among the living!” (cf. Lk 24:1, 5).

God commands the skies above. The skies were bright and filled with clouds. “ ‘You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all

Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.’ And when he had said these things, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight” (Acts 1:8–9).

God commands the skies above. “Then the LORD said to Moses, ‘Behold, I am about to rain bread from heaven for you’” (v 4). He did; he does. Still today. He gives you your daily bread. “Daily bread includes everything that has to do with the support and needs of the body, such as food, drink, clothing, shoes, house, home, land, animals, money, goods, a devout husband or wife, devout children, devout workers, devout and faithful rulers, good government, good weather, peace, health, self-control, good reputation, good friends, faithful neighbors, and the like.”

Even more than that, even as our grumbling grates His ears, He turns toward us in grace. He does not turn us away, instead he gives us the Bread, the Bread of Life, the Bread “who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world” (Jn 6:33). He gives us Jesus. So see, no matter what life brings, no matter the pain, the struggle, the disappointment, there is reason for hope and joy, “Behold, I am about to rain bread from heaven for you.” In Jesus’ name, Amen.