

Exodus 16:1-21 (KJV)

¹ And they took their journey from Elim, and all the congregation of the children of Israel came unto the wilderness of Sin, which *is* between Elim and Sinai, on the **fifteenth day of the second month** after their departing out of the land of Egypt. ² And the whole congregation of the children of Israel **murmured** against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness: ³ And the children of Israel said unto them, Would to God we had died by the hand of the LORD in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the flesh pots, *and* when we did eat bread to the full; for ye have brought us forth into this wilderness, to kill this whole assembly with hunger. ⁴ Then said the LORD unto Moses, **Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you;** and the people shall go out and gather a certain rate every day, that I may prove them, whether they will walk in my law, or no. ⁵ And it shall come to pass, that on the sixth day they shall prepare *that* which they bring in; and it shall be twice as much as they gather daily. ⁶ And Moses and Aaron said unto all the children of Israel, At even, then ye shall know that the LORD hath brought you out from the land of Egypt: ⁷ And in the morning, then ye shall see the glory of the LORD; for that he heareth your **murmurings** against the LORD: and what *are* we, that ye **murmur** against us? ⁸ And Moses said, *This shall be*, when the LORD shall give you in the evening flesh to eat, and in the morning bread to the full; for that the LORD heareth your **murmurings** which ye **murmur** against him: and what *are* we? **your murmurings are not against us, but against the LORD.** ⁹ And Moses spake unto Aaron, Say unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, Come near before the LORD: for he hath heard your **murmurings**. ¹⁰ And it came to pass, as Aaron spake unto the whole congregation of the children of Israel, that they looked toward the wilderness, and, behold, the glory of the LORD appeared in the cloud. ¹¹ And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, ¹² I have heard the **murmurings** of the children of Israel: speak unto them, saying, At even ye shall eat flesh, and in the morning ye shall be filled with bread; and ye shall know that I *am* the LORD your God. ¹³ And it came to pass, that at even the quails came up, and covered the camp: and in the morning the dew lay round about the host. ¹⁴ And when the dew that lay was gone up, behold, upon the face of the wilderness *there lay* a small round thing, *as* small as the hoar frost on the ground. ¹⁵ And when the children of Israel saw *it*, they said one to another, *It is* manna: for they wist not what it *was*. And Moses said unto them, *This is* the bread which the LORD hath given you to eat. ¹⁶ *This is* the thing which the LORD hath commanded, Gather of it every man according to his eating, an omer for every man, *according to* the number of your persons; take ye every man for *them* which *are* in his tents. ¹⁷ And the children of Israel did so, and gathered, some more, some less. ¹⁸ And when they did mete *it* with an omer, he that gathered much had nothing over, and he that gathered little had no lack; they gathered every man according to his eating. ¹⁹ And Moses said, Let no man leave of it till the morning. ²⁰ Notwithstanding they hearkened not unto Moses; but some of them left of it until the morning, and it bred worms, and stank: and Moses was wroth with them. ²¹ And they gathered it every morning, every man according to his eating: and when the sun waxed hot, it melted.

Bread from Heaven (2)

OUTLINE

- (1) Threatened with Hunger
- (2) Treated with Heavenly Food

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⁶ And Moses and Aaron said unto all the children of Israel, At even, then ye shall know that the LORD hath brought you out from the land of Egypt: ⁷ And in the morning, then ye shall see the glory of the LORD; for that he heareth your **murmurings** against the LORD: and what

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are we, that ye **murmur** against us? ⁸ And Moses said, This shall be, when the LORD shall give you in the evening flesh to eat, and in the morning bread to the full; for that the LORD heareth your **murmurings** which ye **murmur** against him: and what are we? **your murmurings are not against us, but against the LORD.**

Jesus says in **Matthew 6:25-34 (KJV)** ²⁵ Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? ²⁶ Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? ²⁷ Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature? ²⁸ And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: ²⁹ And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. ³⁰ Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? ³¹ Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? ³² (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. ³³ **But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.** ³⁴ Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.

Jesus exhorts His disciples not to fret when challenged with meeting the daily necessities of life. But look to God for their sustenance. He will certainly add to them all these things that they may have no lack.

He is exhorting them to a higher purpose for life that He has purposed for them. This was Jesus' words to ask that they mind the spiritual or overarching purpose for their existence.

For the Israelites, God is going to make them a national witness for Him. They need to be mindful of the awesome spiritual mandate and privilege.

³² (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.

For the world at large, living a godless life, you will find that is all they could see to life. But you have been rescued from eternal judgment to a higher calling in life that promises eternal rewards. You ought to trust God for our daily supplies. You are to exercise faith in God.

Their murmuring and complaining bring dishonour to their God and is poor testimony to the power and care of their God for their well-being.

Jesus cited the example of the flowers in the field and the birds in His created world that He so lovingly clothed and fed. Surely, you are more valuable than these. You are gloriously made in my image.

Jesus challenged His disciples to live above the base and seek the noble purpose for life and the base things will surely be taken care of.

A believer shared about the daily struggle of life when he said, "What comes from humans but it is impossible for the Lord to experience? The answer is, 'Worry.'" And by faith, he said,

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“What comes from God but it is impossible for humans to manufacture? Wisdom!” Finally, he said “And what is it that brings wisdom and dispels worry? Worship!” Then he concluded his assessment of the blessed Christian life when he said, “Let nothing frighten you...nothing from yesterday’s past, today’s present, or tomorrow’s future.” Our heavenly Father will take care of us. Are we looking to Him?

These words echo the teaching of our Lord which teaches listeners to cease from anxiety and worry over their physical and material well-being. Anxious care will continue to pervade the heart but the believer must continually realize that as a child of God, he is under the care of his Almighty Creator God. Jesus uses the observations of daily life and makes simple logic most powerful! God will take care of us like He cares for the birds He has created. There is more to life than subsistence.

The key here is “trust.” Trust God to take care of us! When anxiety overtakes us, we often speak faithless words and become fretful as the Israelites in the wilderness. Often times, they are at the expense of those closest to us. It can devastate the peace in the home. We look at the bleak outlook and we despair. Perhaps it is a loss of job, or even a sickness. Our Lord does not want us to live in such self-inflicted misery. He wants us to continue to trust in Him for He cares and He will provide for us.

Truly, as the old saying goes “A day of worrying is more exhausting than a day of work.” May the Lord help us to realize that worry doesn’t do any good.

Consider this: “It is easy for those who have everything they need to advise those who have not everything they need not to worry and make the best of their lot. Nothing is cheaper than advice and nothing is more common than to gravely tell other people what they should do when we really know nothing of their circumstances and trials. Why should not rich people and all those whose wants are gratified be contented? ‘Don’t worry,’ they say, ‘don’t fret, don’t get into a passion, be content with your lot.’ One might well say, ‘You exchange places with me, and I will be as contented as you are.’”

It is true that there are those whom God has endowed with material blessings who has lost sight of God’s purpose for blessing them and pay lip service to His kingdom needs.

Haggai the elderly prophet says, these shall not prosper. Somehow, they would rich a pocket filled with holes.

Philippians 4:15-19 *Now ye Philippians know also, that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only. For even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my necessity. Not because I desire a gift: but I desire fruit that may abound to your account. But I have all, and abound: I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you, an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, wellpleasing to God. But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.*

Certainly, a contented mind is a continual feast, but how am I to have a continual feast when plans fail, health is broken, the wardrobe is shabby...and all things are against me?”

Yet, our Lord wants His children to realize that there is such a thing as faith in our heavenly Father and it is an indispensable thing for His children to have. We do not need to make the worst of our lot; we should make the best of it. Do we pull our hats down over our eyes and

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then complain that we cannot see God's care in our lives? Our Lord says, "Look at the birds and see your blessedness." Have an eye to see that life is beautiful with God!

A Christian said well, "No outward lot can give content to a grumbling soul. And a contented spirit may be found in the humblest home. It is a great blessing to possess what one wishes, but it is greater still not to desire what one does not possess."

Our Lord Jesus uses a scene of everyday life of the enviable birds that fly so carefree to bid His people to cease from worry that often eats up the peace and joy of Christian living.

Our Lord continues to teach the pointlessness and uselessness of anxious care. The phrase "by taking thought" means "caring or being anxious." The verb "can" means "is able or has the power to." The word "stature" means "age or time of life." Man has no power to extend or prolong his life one bit when it is time for him to leave this world. The advancing of our aging is an irreversible process. Our Lord uses the word "cubit," a measuring term for the length from the tip of our finger to the forearm to tell us that even our very height is determined by God. Can we add any height to our physique? The answer is an emphatic "no." Yet, realize that there is a higher purpose to our existence than a mere physical existence! We are made a spiritual being and we have the ability to worship and praise God, and to call our Creator God by such an endearing term as "Heavenly Father"! This is not so for the birds, and yet our Father in heaven who created the birds does feed them all the same.

Therefore, there is a sense of realizing our limitation and yet realizing our privilege. In times of lack, can we not realize that God cares and will take care of us? Can we not call in faith to our heavenly Father and be patient to behold how He will gloriously supply our every need, as the Apostle Paul testified to the Christians in Philippi: "Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God" (Phil 4:6).

God raised George Muller to testify of His glory and faithfulness. Muller established of orphanages for destitute children. He testified that God alone is our helper!

It is well observed, "The glory of God is a living man; and the life of man consists in beholding God."

Israel needed to learn the lesson of trusting God as they fulfil His purpose for their lives.

*⁹ And Moses spake unto Aaron, Say unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, Come near before the LORD: for he hath heard your **murmurings**. ¹⁰ And it came to pass, as Aaron spake unto the whole congregation of the children of Israel, that they looked toward the wilderness, and, behold, the glory of the LORD appeared in the cloud. ¹¹ And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, ¹² I have heard the **murmurings** of the children of Israel: speak unto them, saying, At even ye shall eat flesh, and in the morning ye shall be filled with bread; and ye shall know that I am the LORD your God.*

We observed God's care for His people. Was there a need to murmur? Would their murmur cause God to withhold His care for them? It will not! But it brings dishonour to His Name and is not befitting His children to murmur against Him.

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Instead of murmuring, we are to ask God to give us this day our daily bread. A most legitimate prayer because we have surrendered our lives to His care.

FB Meyer observed well, “The race of murmurers is, alas, not extinct. Lips have joined in singing consecration hymns sometimes give passage to complaints. And we are none of us so careful as we ought to be to restrain the expression of discontent. How often are murmurings mingled with the food we eat, because we are not exactly pleased with its quality or preparation; with the weather, because it does not fit in with our plans; with our daily calling, because it is irksome and distasteful; and with the presence or absence of certain persons in our lives.”¹

God promised them the daily supply of bread from heaven in the morning and in the evening, quails. What a sumptuous feast for a wilderness crowd. God wanted them to develop their utter dependence because this is what it truly is. It is Him who is our Creator, Sustainer and Saviour.

Hebrews 1:1-3 *God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;*

Let us not be ignorant of God’s eternal purpose and let us be willing to align our lives to His will for our lives that it may bring honour and glory to Him that the estangled world may come to know and receive Him.

¹³ *And it came to pass, that at even the quails came up, and covered the camp: and in the morning the dew lay round about the host. ¹⁴ And when the dew that lay was gone up, behold, upon the face of the wilderness there lay a small round thing, as small as the hoar frost on the ground. ¹⁵ And when the children of Israel saw it, they said one to another, It is manna: for they wist not what it was. And Moses said unto them, This is the bread which the LORD hath given you to eat.*

God was true to His promise. He supplied them with quails in the evening and they had bread from heaven in the morning.

It was a small round thing, as small as the hoar frost on the ground. The word “Manna” means “What is it?” They did not know what it is but this was the heavenly bread that will nourish them for 40 years while they wander in the wilderness due to their lack of faith to possess the Promised Land.

May we learn to pray daily – *Lord, help me to behold Thy glory daily in tokens of Thy care.*

On 16 October 2008, the Singapore government announced a government guarantee on deposits of individuals and non-bank customers in banks, finance companies and merchant banks in Singapore until year-end 2010. The announcement stated that the guarantee is backed by S\$150 billion (US\$100 billion) of Singapore government reserves. It was commented that “the move was to avoid an erosion of bank deposit bases...” We

¹ F.B. Meyer, Moses, CLC Publications, 2002, 117.

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remembered insurance policy holders also showed signs of panic of what will become of their policies. We saw the value of Singapore's reserves reduced by one third as a result of panic sell-off in the stock markets around the world following the collapse of Lehman Brothers. We saw the increasing vulnerability of this world's monetary system where governments of the world tried to solve their debt problems by printing more money. Many signs of weakness are looming on the horizon! What should Christians do if there is indeed a run on the banks and we lose our hard-earned savings accumulated over the decades? Our Lord Jesus says, "Have faith, our heavenly Father will take care of us!"

Our Lord speaks of cultivating confidence or trust in the heavenly Father's providential care and protection. You recall Jesus' illustration of the grass to teach them of the frailty and transience of life and the changes that can happen from one day to another. Even the lush green grass seen in the field today can be cut the next day for use as natural fuel. Is there any security in life? The picture looks bleak! However, He wanted them to realize the privilege they have as children of God. This is the same message for us today! Where is our security? If it is in our bank accounts or our properties and investments, let us take stock and realize how insecure these are! There is security only in Jesus! When we have Jesus as our Saviour, we have everything! When we do not have Jesus, we have nothing! It is a fearful awaiting for the day of judgment when the Father will cast the unbelieving into the lake of fire that will burn eternally!

John Calvin, the theologian of the Reformation movement, made a most succinct definition of faith when he said, "Faith is far superior to human intelligence. It comes from the illumination of the Holy Spirit. Faith, thus given by God, has a twofold aspect. It enlightens the mind to understand the truth of God, and establishes the heart in it. And the Holy Spirit not only originates faith, but increases it by degrees, till He conducts us by it all the way to heaven" (2 Tim 1:14). Jesus is the object of our trust. He represents fully the Godhead and fully represents all men. He understands our anxieties and He assures us by His Word of His providential care. He can never fail us for He is God Almighty!

"Little faith will bring your soul to heaven, great faith will bring heaven to your soul." (C.H. Spurgeon 1834-1892)

Do not be anxious about our supply of food, drink and clothing even though the supply runs low for we live by faith and not by sight. The promise of God's care for us is very sure! We have to take God at His Word and experience the fulfillment of His word in our lives as He has promised. Whenever we are in need, we can call out to Him, the Owner of all things, to nourish us. He is faithful to His promise. He will take care of us. This is a truth that every child of God has to personally experience to behold His faithfulness!

Our heavenly Father has perfect knowledge of what we need and He will surely supply us with all that we need. The Father sent the Son Jesus to assure us in Person! The disciples of Jesus learnt well when He broke the five loaves and two fishes to feed the five thousand, and there were twelve baskets left over after supplying to all. Jesus is the Bread of Life! He is not only the Creator by His spoken word, He is also the regulator of it. All things are in His hands. Jesus is repeatedly emphasizing this truth. If you have God with you, fear not! He will take care of you!

¹⁶*This is the thing which the LORD hath commanded, Gather of it every man according to his eating, an omer for every man, according to the number of your persons; take ye every man for them which are in his tents.*

Notice here that the work of the Israelites are to diligently gather and they will verily be fed.

Proverbs 20:4 The sluggard will not plow by reason of the cold; *therefore* shall he beg in harvest, and *have* nothing.

Proverbs 13:4 *The soul of the sluggard desireth, and hath nothing: but the soul of the diligent shall be made fat.*

We labour with the work that God provides for us to do, and verily we shall be fed.

God Ordained Work for Wages

The first principle that we learned is God ordained work. This is a consequence of the fall of man recorded in Genesis 3:19. Man is to work in order to sustain his physical life. So human labour is that which is ordained of God to feed or sustain physically man till the day he dies. From his labours, man shall receive the fruit of his labour to feed and sustain his physical life. This is grace to man as it keeps him away from indulging in further sin as a consequence of idleness.

Human labour is that which is ordained of God whereby man feeds or sustains himself physically till the day he dies. Money has been used to quantify this labour. It is a unit measure of a man's labour whereby he could use to feed himself till the day he dies. Savings is the accumulated or stored value of human labour whereas debt is the obligation to serve human labour. This is the biblical concept of honest money.

The Bible's teaching is that man can enjoy the fruit of his labour. It is given to him by God who has enabled him to work (Deut. 8:18). And there is nothing better for a man, than that he should eat and drink, and that he should make his soul enjoy good in his labour. This is from the hand of God. (Eccl. 2:24) And also that every man should eat and drink, and enjoy the good of all his labour, it is the gift of God. (Eccl. 3:13; 5:19).

In order to facilitate a store for man's labour, money is introduced. We received wages or remuneration for labour rendered in the form of wages.

¹⁷ *And the children of Israel did so, and gathered, some more, some less. ¹⁸ And when they did mete it with an omer, he that gathered much had nothing over, and he that gathered little had no lack; they gathered every man according to his eating. ¹⁹ And Moses said, Let no man leave of it till the morning. ²⁰ Notwithstanding they hearkened not unto Moses; but some of them left of it until the morning, and it bred worms, and stank: and Moses was wroth with them. ²¹ And they gathered it every morning, every man according to his eating: and when the sun waxed hot, it melted.*

Notice that God instructed them to a daily dependence, we are prone to forget the mercies of God. In the wilderness, we learn that it is God who provides for us our daily bread. We need to learn to give thanks daily to Him.

Matthew 6:33: *"But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."*

This is a command to persevering faith. Let us continuously put God first in our lives. There is that innate tendency to despair and lose heart which our Lord, the Great Physician of the soul, is seeking to treat. The world and its attractions and allurements have often caused

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many a Christian to stumble and fall. The promise of our Lord is that He will take care of all our needs when we put Him first in our lives.

We have the tendency to live our lives our own way, thinking that it is the best for us. The Lord Jesus promises to reward us for our faithfulness. He is teaching us that He knows what is best for us and that we can trust Him to take care of us. We will receive the best care.

The key word here is *“righteousness.”* It is the conformity of heart and life to God’s will, the divine law of God (summarized in His commandments and broadly in Holy Scriptures). We must do what is right in God’s sight. This is what it means to seek Him first.

A writer said well, “Every generation has to bear its own burden, to weather its peculiar perils, to pass through its manifold trials. We are daily exposed to temptations, whether it be of idleness, self-indulgence, or vice. The feeling of duty and the power of courage must resist these things at whatever sacrifice of worldly interest. When virtue has thus become a daily habit, we become possessed of an individual character, prepared for fulfilling, in a great measure, the ends for which we were created.” Is seeking God and His righteousness a habit in your life?

CONCLUSION

May we be strengthened to seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness for our eternal blessings. Amen.