

Mission: Possible
Living on Manna – God’s Provision
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Turn with me if you would to Exodus Chapter 16. Today we continue in our series, “Mission: Possible” and we’ll be looking at how God provided for The Israelites throughout their 40 year journey from captivity to the Promisedland!

If there would only be one thing that I want us to leave here with today, it would be this.....Even when it seems impossible that God will provide for our every need, we can be assured through scripture, time and time, and time again, that He will take care of us!! God will meet every need we have, and we will not lack anything in our lives. Will we have to do without some things that we really want? Perhaps. Will we struggle at times to see how far our finances and resources have to be stretched? Yes. Will it seem at times that God isn’t providing for our needs? Yes. But beyond these questions, and beyond our feelings, we must know the reality that God, Jehovah-Jireh – the Great provider, does provide for His people!

Read Exodus 16 – it’s the entire chapter but it gives us the story and full context of what’s happening.

The whole Israelite community (2+ million people) 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. ² In the desert the whole community grumbled against Moses and Aaron (the leadership honeymoon was over after just a month and a half!). ³ The 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.”

⁴ Then 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. ⁵ On the sixth day they are to prepare what they bring in, and that is to be twice as much as they gather on the other days.”

⁶ So Moses and Aaron said to all the Israelites, “In the evening you will know that it was the LORD who brought you out of Egypt, ⁷ and in the morning you will see the glory of the LORD, because he has heard your grumbling against him. Who are we, that you should grumble against us?” ⁸ Moses also said, “You will know that it was the LORD when he gives you meat to eat in the evening and all the bread you want in the morning, because he has heard your grumbling against him. Who are we? You are not grumbling against us, but against the LORD.”

⁹ Then Moses told Aaron, “Say to the entire Israelite community, ‘Come before the LORD, for he has heard your grumbling.’”

¹⁰ While Aaron was speaking to the whole Israelite community, they looked toward the desert, and there was the glory of the LORD appearing in the cloud.

¹¹ The LORD said to Moses, ¹² “I have heard the grumbling of the Israelites. Tell them, ‘At twilight you will eat meat, and in the morning you will be filled with bread. Then you will know that I am the LORD your God.’”

¹³ That evening quail came and covered the camp, and in the morning there was a layer of dew around the camp. ¹⁴ When the dew was gone, thin flakes like frost on the ground appeared on the desert floor. ¹⁵ When 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. ¹⁶ This is what the LORD has commanded: ‘Everyone is to gather as much as they need. Take an omer^[a] (about 3.6 liters) for each person you have in your tent.’”

¹⁷ The Israelites did as they were told; some gathered much, some little. ¹⁸ And when they measured it by the omer, the one who gathered much did not have too much, and the one who gathered little did not have too little. Everyone had gathered just as much as they needed.

¹⁹ Then Moses said to them, “No one is to keep any of it until morning.”

²⁰ However, 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.

²¹ Each morning everyone gathered as much as they needed, and when the sun grew hot, it melted away. ²² On the sixth day, they gathered twice as much—two omers^[b] for each person—and the leaders of the community came and reported this to Moses. ²³ He said to them, “This is what the LORD commanded: ‘Tomorrow is to be a day of sabbath rest, a holy sabbath to the LORD. So bake what you want to bake and boil what you want to boil. Save whatever is left and keep it until morning.’”

²⁴ So they saved it until morning, as Moses commanded, and it did not stink or get maggots in it.

²⁵ “Eat it today,” Moses said, “because today is a sabbath to the LORD. You will not find any of it on the ground today. ²⁶ Six days you are to gather it, but on the seventh day, the Sabbath, there will not be any.”

²⁷ Nevertheless, some of the people went out on the seventh day to gather it, but they found none. ²⁸ Then the LORD said to Moses, “How long will you^[c] refuse to keep my commands and my instructions? ²⁹ Bear in mind that the LORD has given you the Sabbath; that is why on the

sixth day he gives you bread for two days. Everyone is to stay where they are on the seventh day; no one is to go out.”³⁰ So the people rested on the seventh day.

³¹ The people of Israel called the bread manna.^[d] It was white like coriander seed and tasted like wafers made with honey. ³² Moses 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 wilderness when I brought you out of Egypt.’”

³³ So 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.”

³⁴ As the LORD commanded Moses, Aaron put the manna with the tablets of the covenant law, so that it might be preserved. ³⁵ The Israelites ate manna forty years, until they came to a land that was settled; they ate manna until they reached the border of Canaan.”

Pray

So as we look at this passage of scripture today, I want to ask and then answer **4 Questions about God’s provision....**

So if you’re taking notes, lets jump in to today’s message and here’s question #1

1. **Is God really there?** - (Exodus 16:2-3) Do we really believe God is here and do we really believe that God cares about our needs? **And this is the question that the Israelites were struggling with!!! Even though they had just been delivered out of 400 years of captivity & slavery in Egypt, even though they saw God’s hand at work to guide them out, and even though God has taken care of ALL their needs up to this point, they began grumble and the question they were most challenged with was the question of whether or not God really cared about their needs? There have been times in my life and I’m sure there have been times in your life when we’ve wondered if God really cared about us. And I think we’ll be able to settle this question when we do 2 things.**
 - a. And the first thing that we must do is to understand that Peace comes when we trust in the **Blessing Giver**, not in the **Blessing**. When we run after the blessings, instead of the Blessing giver, we will never find peace.....why? Because the blessings are never enough and we will continually be filled with worry, anxiety, and fear that God doesn’t care for us! And this is exactly what the Israelites were dealing with in this moment!! They were so concerned about receiving the BLESSINGS of God, that they failed to focus on God himself who had already done incredible, miraculous things in their lives!! If we want peace in our lives, then know that His peace will come when we trust in Him, not what He does or does not give to us.
 - b. Here’s the 2nd thing that we need to do in order to settle the question of whether or not God really cares for us. We have to move away from the **fairytale belief** in God (I want to say the Lottery –ticket belief in God) to a **gut-level belief**.

- i. Having a gut-level belief in God means that we are choosing to believe in a God with unlimited resources and an unlimited ability to focus on each and every person all at the same time! Our text tells us that God supplied manna for everyone in every household!
- ii. Having a gut-level belief in God means that we are learning to trust God's ability to see us through regardless of what our current circumstances might be! The Israelites were struggling with Trusting God because they found themselves a month and a half into their journey, in a situation where they had to live on less food than what they had when they were held captive! They no longer liked their circumstance of scarcity and it was having an impact on their level of trust in God. But they would learn throughout their journey that God would see them through.....not just in the short-term but in the long term as well.
- iii. Having a gut-level belief means that when trials come, rather than running away from God, we run to God! Some of the Israelites were so doubtful about God's provision for them that they were willing to run back to slavery! When trials come in our lives, do we run away from God, or do we run to God?

If you've ever doubted that God cares for you, know this. God loves and cares for us more than we could ever realize. If he was willing to give up his son for us to provide a way for us to spend eternity in heaven, don't you think that he is able to provide for us and to take care of all the little things that we tend to stress about here on earth? Yes!!

The second question we need to ask and answer this morning is this....

2. **What keeps me safe?** - What sources of safety will we turn to when our spiritual journey gets tough? Here in our passage and also in (Numbers 11:4-6), **the Israelites were concerned about their well-being and about what they "needed" in order to feel safe and secure! So let's pause here for a minute to think about this in our own lives....what makes us feel safe and secure? Good health? Good friends? Good family? Good job with benefits? Good home? Good car? Money in the bank account? Money in our retirement accounts? It's going to vary from person to person but we have to consider this in our lives about what makes us feel safe!! And the reason we have to do that is because often times....**
 - a. Our greatest **temptation** is when we take the blessings of God (Good health. Good friends. Good family. Good job. Good benefits. Good home. Good car. Money in the bank account. Money in our retirement accounts.) and worship them as **gods** – our sources of safety. And there's nothing wrong with having any of these things but when we get to a place where we worship them, we're in spiritual trouble and this is where the Israelites went wrong because they were more interested in their safety (in their stuff) than they were in God.
 - b. We must get to a place in our lives where we refuse to trust in these other **sources of safety**. God is our ONE source of safety!! When we accept God to be the one trusted source of safety in our lives, we can walk into tomorrow without needing to know what tomorrow holds! God told the Israelites the he will

provide for them on a day to day basis! They didn't need to be concerned with 2 days from now, or what would happen in a week's time, or a month's time, or even in a year's time. They just needed to trust in God for their safety, and nothing else! We know that the One who has asked us to take this step of faith is the One who keeps us safe so we don't need to know how He is going to handle every detail of our journey!! And the reason for this is because God simply calls each one of us to a life of obedience. He did it here in our passage with the Israelites and he does it with you and I as well.

- c. You see, Our survival is **dependent** on our **obedience**, not on our **abundance**. The Israelites were concerned with their abundance when they should have been concerned about their obedience! And the same is true for us!!!! If we spent more of our time living out obedient lives for God, the accumulation of "safety"....of "abundance" wouldn't really matter! God tells us that if we truly want to live, it will be dependant on our obedience to the one who gives us life!

I think it's interesting to note that throughout this series one of the common denominators in God turning the impossible into the possible, is that he always used someone who was fully obedient to him!! David was obedient, Daniel was obedient, Gideon was obedient, Elijah was obedient, Peter was obedient, and ultimately even though some didn't do as God had commanded and they struggled with trusting in God, the Israelites were obedient to what God was asking them to do. And I wonder today what would happen if every one of us made a decision to live our lives fully obedient to God? What impossible situation would God make possible because of our obedience? It's just something to think about for us today!

Alright, the 3rd question we need to ask and answer this morning is this.....

- 3. **Is enough for today, enough for me?** We can see in our passage that for many of the Israelites, their daily provision wasn't enough for them.....they gathered more than they needed, they hoarded some, and it led them down a bad spiritual path of disobedience and a lack of trust in God) Exodus 16:4-20
 - a. As believers, we are called to a completely **different value system than what the world offers to us! We live in a world that values the accumulation of stuff above everything else!**
 - b. But Jesus tells us that his True followers will value the relationship with the **Father** over the material blessings He provides.
 - c. And so what do we do with this, then? How do ensure that our values are based on our intimate relationship with God, rather than being based on "stuff"? How do we make sure that we are living our lives where what we have today is enough for us? Let me give you a few suggestions and I believe you'll have to write these down somewhere else on your notes as I didn't provide space for them.
 - i. The first thing I think we need to do is to be willing to walk away from accumulation. This is tough for us, isn't it? Because whether we like to think about this or not, we typically find ourselves in the shoes of the Rich Young Ruler who asked Jesus what he must do to inherit eternal life and

when Jesus told him to go and sell all of his possessions (his accumulation!) and then follow after him, the RYR couldn't do it! His accumulation, his possessions, his stuff, was more important to him than following after Jesus!

- ii. Here's the second thing I think we can do....we have to reject the deceitfulness of wealth. The story of the prodigal son is a perfect illustration for us here. He felt that his new inheritance, his wealth, would bring him all the satisfaction that he ever wanted and ultimately it left him empty and broke. Wealth in itself is not bad! But it's the lies that we believe about wealth that we must reject in order to live how God wants us to live.
- iii. And the third thing I think we can do in order to live our lives in this way is to redirect our thirst. Living on manna doesn't mean that we all have to live in poverty!! But it does mean that we have to replace our thirst for more and more stuff with a thirst for more and more of God!

And it's when we do these three things that we begin to see a shift in our lives to where we know that what we have, now, in the present, is enough for me!

Question #4 is this.....

- 4. Do I want entertainment or transformation?** Do we want to see miracles or do we want to experience miracles? This is really a heart question of desire! If we are going to live under God's provision, so that we both enjoy His blessings and worship him, we need to decide what we are really after!! Many people just really want to be entertained by the miracles of God....safely from a distance. But it's only when we are up close and a participant in those miracles that we can experience transformation! The Israelites in our passage here got to experience transformation in their lives because they were participants in a miracle!!!
 - a. And we need to understand that Transformation in our lives comes through **during times of hardships and challenges, and difficulties!! Our trials can be a gift to us that transforms us!**
 - b. God is calling us to transformation – to become absolutely dependant on Him to live trusting him for our every need!! When God's presence is enough for us to trust his provision, he is able to begin using us in ways he could never have done before and The more He **transforms** us, the more He can **use** us.

The end of our passage here today tells us that for 40 years the Israelites ate manna, and for 40 years God provided for their every need! And we find this thought again in **Deuteronomy 2:4, where It says, "For 40 years the Lord your God has been with you and you have not lacked anything."**

Does God provide for us? Yes! Do we need to trust him? Yes! Do we need to live obedient to his requests? Yes. And when we live like this we can say every day that God has been with us and we have not lacked anything!

Prayer

Song

Closing