

EXODUS

God Our Provider
Speaker: Pastor Ashwin Ramani
sermon study summary
February 18 / 19, 2023

INTRODUCTION

Having been miraculously delivered from Egypt, God now leads the Israelites on a weaving path through the wilderness toward the promised land. But God's leadings are never pointless; they always teach us something. The wilderness teaches lessons that we will learn no other way. Previously Israel learned that God was their Healer. Next, they will learn that God is their Provider (Exodus 16:1-5). This is true for us today no less than it was for Israel in the wilderness.

Elim, where Israel had a respite, even though nice, was not the Promised Land. God led them from there into a barren wilderness where the people soon began to grumble against God. In their mind they compared where they were to what they had had in Egypt. It was enticing enough for them to consider returning (Exodus 16:2-3), having quickly forgotten the oppression in which they had lived and the deliverance they had received (Exodus 13:3, 15:6). The lure to return was a danger and a caution for Israel – and for the Christian today when living for Christ becomes difficult and we lose sight of God having delivered us to give us abundant life. The wilderness teaches us to trust God.

What was God's response? Judgment? Punishment? No! God, a gracious Father who delights in His children, extended grace and provided for their needs by feeding them and arresting the wear on their clothes for 40 years (Exodus 16:4, Deuteronomy 8:4). To put God's provision into perspective, He fed two million Israelites three million kilograms of manna daily for 40 years.

The same God who provided for the Israelites for four decades is well able to provide for you in your wilderness journeys. God wants to prove to you that He is trustworthy and able to take good care of you. But here is the catch: you will never know God as a provider unless you come into a position where you need His provision. There your faith will move from your head to your heart - to the place where you know you can depend on God.

God's gifts are not to be hoarded (Exodus 16:16-20). Israel needed to trust daily that God would meet their needs. Saving for the future was not the issue. The issue was that Israel tried to hedge their bets and keep some back in case God didn't come through in supplying manna. Remember, because God is the supplier of everything, we can be generous with the time, talents and resources that He has given us. His supply will not run out (2 Cor 8:15). Use all that He has given to us generously, deploying them in His Kingdom work, remembering those times when God generously granted you provision (Exodus 16:32-33).

Asking for our 'daily' bread – all those things that God knows we need - keeps our relationship with God in the present tense (Matthew 6:11). It keeps us in a posture of dependency – but not one of anxiety. As God took care of Israel in the wilderness we can be assured that God will take care of our needs according to His riches and glory.

God knows that satisfying our physical needs is not enough. Every person has a spiritual hunger, a deep longing of the heart, that only God can satisfy (John 6:30-35). Jesus fed 5,000 with a small sampling of loaves and fish, not unlike God's provision for Israel in the desert. Jesus says, "I am the bread of heaven." Jesus offers spiritual satisfaction that no material thing can provide when we live in perpetual dependence upon Him. Jesus, our Lord, is our provider.



EXODUS

sermon study guide

IN – PURSUE RELATIONSHIP

1. Have you ever been on a trip with interesting detours? Tell of one.
2. Have you ever experienced God's miraculous provision? Tell us your story.

UP – PURSUE GOD

3. Read Exodus 16:1-5. What are the Israelites complaining about? What did their reactions reveal about their knowledge of and trust in God? How did God respond? Why?
4. Skim John 6:1-15. Read John 6:25-35. How did Jesus use the people's preoccupation with food to illustrate what He wants them to understand? What are the differences and similarities between the manna of Exodus and the "bread of life"?

OUT – PURSUE MISSION

5. It is easy to forget God's goodness and provision and grumble in times of testing. What visible reminder do you have of God's provision like the "manna in a jar" (Exodus 16:33)? If you do not have one, think of something that could remind you of God's faithfulness.
6. Pastor Ashwin said, "A need is something that is essential for you to live a life of Kingdom influence." What do you personally need to live a life of Kingdom influence? Ask God to supply those needs and show you how to generously bless others.

For Personal Reflection / Prayer:

God came through every single day for His people as they wandered in the wilderness. Likewise, He will come through for you! Take some time to reflect on this truth and adopt a posture of dependency on the Lord. Pray, "Lord, I need you more than anything else in life. I trust that you will come through for me."

THE WORD (NIV)

Exodus 16:1-5 The whole Israelite community 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. 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."

John 6:25-35 ²⁵ When they found him on the other side of the lake, they asked him, "Rabbi, when did you get here?"

²⁶ Jesus answered, "Very truly I tell you, you are looking for me, not because you saw the signs I performed but because you ate the loaves and had your fill. ²⁷ Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. For on him God the Father has placed his seal of approval."

²⁸ Then they asked him, "What must we do to do the works God requires?"

²⁹ Jesus answered, "The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent."

³⁰ So they asked him, "What sign then will you give that we may see it and believe you? What will you do? ³¹ Our ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written: 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.'"

³² Jesus said to them, "Very truly I tell you, it is not Moses who has given you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. ³³ For the bread of God is the bread that comes down from heaven and gives life to the world."

³⁴ "Sir," they said, "always give us this bread."

³⁵ Then Jesus declared, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty."

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