

This morning I have the privilege of beginning a series called the Bread of life discourse. It sounds fancy and is actually a long passage of scripture in John's Gospel. I am excited that I can start us off by concentrating on the Exodus reading. Throughout the discourse in the gospel of John, Jesus refers to this experience of the early nation of Israel. A foreshadowing of himself. The most important manna from heaven.

The Israelites had fled Egypt after over 400 years of slavery and during their 40yrs of wandering in the desert they were sustained by what God provided. They had just witnessed some amazing miracles. The parting of the Red Sea and the provision of drinkable water.

But they were grumbling, moaning and complaining, even though they were now free. They still were not satisfied.

(Sometimes we also fall into that trap of receiving what we asked for but it not being enough. )

God heard them and gave them food each day. Quail in the evening, and in the morning a strange flour-like substance, similar to coriander seeds that tasted like honey. The manna could be boiled and ground into flour. Made into bread or cakes. A versatile substance. That God provided. And they had to seek out.

But they didn't know what it was. Which is what the word manna means,..." what is it?" The last part of verse 4 is important, 'In this way I will test them and see if they will follow my instructions.'

The chunk of scripture we have missed out in Exodus 16 explains these detailed instructions. The manna would fall each morning and a limited amount was to be collected per person. None could be saved for another day. If it was, it became full of maggots and smelt. This only didn't happen on the 6th day, as on the 7th day, the Sabbath, there was no delivery! This was a test of faith and trust in The Divine. And of obedience.

Of course, we know from the gospel reading that this is a foundation for the people to understand who Jesus is and how very much we are reliant on Him. Not just for our physical needs, but more importantly our spiritual ones.

Each day the people had to gather their food, the manna, for their physical health, but it also represents our daily need to nurture our spiritual health.

Are we daily looking for our sustenance in God's word?

Are we drawing closer to our Saviour so we can get more glimpses of who he is?. Maybe searching for fragments of his glory? Direction for our lives?

I am so guilty of pre reading my daily readings if I am going away for a few days, so I do not need to take the books.

It doesn't work though. I don't remember it. It falls out of my head.

I need daily input from looking and praying over scripture.

I can't save it up, just like the Israelites couldn't with the manna.

This passage is such a wake up call to me.

On how much we need God. How much we need to trust Him to meet our needs. Daily.

And much He wants to give us.

It made me think of a verse that used to be at the beginning of each New Daylight (daily reading) booklet.

Psalm 119 v 105 In the NIV

'Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path'.

In the Passion translation

'Truth's shining light guides me in my choices and decisions; the revelation of your word makes my path clear.'

Two points

1. The light from a lamp does not shine very far into the distance. The light is for each step.
2. The word of God keeps us on the right path

Step by step, day by day reliance on God just like our daily need for Jesus, the bread of life.

God says in verse 12 of Exodus 16 'Then you will know I am The Lord your God'

He then, and now wants us to recognise His provision. He wants us to see some of His glory. How is that going to happen if we do not spend time with Him? In His word. Praying. Praising.

The reading from John's Gospel follows on from the feeding of the 5 thousand the previous day, which Jon talked about last week.

The people have been looking for Jesus. Possibly anxious for their next meal!

Maybe another miracle.

They are concerned about their bellies and Jesus is concerned for their lives.

He wants to feed them with God.

The food that endures, Jesus himself.

The second type of manna.

He is the bread that is broken and distributed for the life of the world. Broken but not divided. He is the bread that is eaten but never exhausted. He is the bread that consecrates those who believe in and eat him... That is, taking him into our lives. He is more complex than a human explanation.

Just like the manna in the wanderings of the Israelites, we come up short, and end up with, "what is it?"

In that last verse, v35 Jesus offers himself.

The imperishable bread that nourishes and sustains imperishable life.

Jesus makes us the same offer. He offers himself to everyone.

All who come to Him will never be hungry or thirst again.

He is inviting us to 'taste and see' for ourselves. And those who do, have no need to search anywhere else for satisfaction.

In every situation and each day we choose the bread we will eat; the kind that rots away or the one that lasts forever. The bread of life, Jesus.

Which will you choose each day?

Will you seek the peace and love of Christ or meet your material desires hoping that that will satisfy you. We all know how long that lasts!! No time at all.

I urge you to seek God daily.. He is our daily bread, from heaven.

Spend time with Him.

Get to know Him.

He wants to be our everything.

He wants to give us life.

And, if you feel as if you are in a wilderness situation at the moment, may you exercise trust and obedience. He always feeds those who come to him.

The reality is we are always in a wilderness, until we reach heaven. The promised land.