

The Fourth Sunday in Lent – Pr. Faugstad sermon  
Exodus 16:1-3, 11-21: “God Gives Us the Bread We Need Most.”  
March 30, 2025 | Saude, Jerico, & Redeemer Lutheran Churches

**In Nomine Iesu**

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O Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, You are the bread of life, and have promised that whoever comes to You shall never hunger: Grant us faith truly to partake of You through Word and Sacrament, that we may find refreshment of spirit and be strengthened for Your service; who lives and reigns with the Father, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, ever one God, now and forever. Amen. (*Parish Prayers*, p. 60)

*Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen. (Rom. 1:7, etc.)*

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*The sermon text for today is taken from the sixteenth chapter of the Book of Exodus. We read selected verses in Jesus' name:*

They set out from Elim, and all the congregation of the people of Israel came to the wilderness of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month after they had departed from the land of Egypt. And the whole congregation of the people of Israel grumbled against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness, and the people of Israel said to them, “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.” ... / And the LORD said to Moses, “I have heard the grumbling of the people of Israel. Say to them, ‘At twilight you shall eat meat, and in the morning you shall be filled with bread. Then you shall know that I am the LORD your God.’” / In the evening quail came up and covered the camp, and in the morning dew lay around the camp. 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. This is what the LORD has commanded: ‘Gather of it, each one of you, as much as he can eat. You shall each take an omer, according to the number of the persons that each of you has in his tent.’” And the people of Israel did so. They gathered, some more, some less. But when they measured it with an omer, whoever gathered much had nothing left over, and whoever gathered little had no lack. Each of them gathered as much as he could eat. And Moses said to them, “Let no one leave any of it over till the morning.” But they did not listen to Moses. Some left part of it till the morning, and it bred worms and stank. And Moses was angry with them. Morning by morning they gathered it, each as much as he could eat; but when the sun grew hot, it melted. (ESV)

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*These are Your words, heavenly Father. Sanctify us by Your truth, Your Word is truth. Amen. (Joh. 17:17)*

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In Christ Jesus, the better Bread than manna or good health or great wealth, whom we feast on by faith for eternal salvation, dear fellow redeemed:

We have all had the experience of living day to day with regard to our health. We were dealing with an illness or a pain that forced us to take it one day at a time. Perhaps we have been day to

day with a job, not knowing if we would be coming back the next day. But I'm guessing that most of us here have never had to live day to day with regard to food. We either had food in the fridge or pantry, or we had the means to be able to get more. In this way, we possibly haven't felt the desperation that people throughout history have felt when they are hungry and have no ready source of food.

The Israelite people were hungry, and as far as they could see, there was no food available for the estimated hundreds of thousands in the assembly. Hunger makes it difficult to think clearly. This may be why the people sounded so positive about their time as slaves in Egypt, remembering when they *"sat by the meat pots and ate bread to the full."* Hunger also causes irritation. The hungrier the people got, the more they grumbled against Moses and Aaron.

But when we are experiencing some trial or test, it is a clear indication that God wants to teach us something. What He wanted to teach the Israelites in the wilderness is that even if they could not see a way out of the problem they faced, He would provide for them. That is exactly what He had promised to do. Hadn't He brought them safely out of Egypt? Hadn't He brought them through the Red Sea? Why would He forsake them now and leave them to die in the wilderness?

He told Moses to tell them, *"At twilight you shall eat meat, and in the morning you shall be filled with bread. Then you shall know that I am the LORD your God."* The meat came in the form of quail which essentially fell right into their hands that evening. The bread came with the morning dew. When the dew went away, *"a fine, flake-like thing"* was left. When the people saw it, they asked, *"What is it?"*—in Hebrew, *"Man hu?"* which became the name *manna*.

It was bread from the LORD, bread from heaven. And there was an abundance of it. The people were directed to gather an omer of it for each person, which was about two quarts in volume. Once the people had gotten what they needed, the manna still on the ground melted away with the sun. The people were to collect it every day—God sent it without fail. When they tried to save some from one day to the next, *"it bred worms and stank."*

The message was clear: the LORD would provide their daily bread. They literally lived day to day with regard to their food. They had no other source to draw from. They had to rely on the LORD if they wanted to live. This is a lesson that Jesus emphasized to His disciples when they asked Him how to pray. Out of the seven petitions He taught them, only one of them had to do with their earthly needs: *"Give us this day our daily bread"* (Mat. 6:11, Luk. 11:3).

Notice the *right-now* focus of the petition: *"Give us this day our daily bread."* Jesus does not teach us to wring our hands over how our bank accounts look or how our investments are doing, worrying about whether we will have enough for the future. He teaches us to pray for and to trust that our heavenly Father will provide each day what we need for our life.

I don't know about you, but I like to plan a little more than that. I'm already thinking about and saving for the future—a future, I might add, that I'm not even sure I will live to see. That's part of the reason God warns us about getting too caught up in our plans. We don't determine our future; He does. We don't get to choose the number of our days; He does.

That is not to say we should spend or give away everything we have today since God will take care of us tomorrow. We want to manage well what He gives us. We don't want to be reckless or wasteful. But the Lord's message is clear. We do not need to be anxious about what we will eat or drink or wear, because "[our] heavenly Father knows that [we] need them all," and "all these things will be added to [us]" (Mat. 6:32,33).

God will give us daily bread; He will give us everything we need for this life. That is His promise. But what we want and what we need are not the same. You might be convinced that you need a certain amount of money stashed away, or that you need a certain job promotion, or that you need a certain level of health to enjoy life. But those are actually wants. God knows what you need. That is why you pray, "if it is Your will," whenever you ask the Lord for something He has not specifically promised to give you. It is not that God is stingy; it's that He loves you too much to give you everything you want.

The reality is that we would never think we had enough. We would look at our Father in heaven as little more than a perpetual ATM, and we would act like spoiled children. That's what we see in the Holy Gospel for today from the five thousand men whom Jesus fed in a remote area (Joh. 6:1-15). They no doubt heard that Jesus started with five barley loaves and two fish. They saw how that small amount of food multiplied, and every man had as much as he wanted. They saw the fragments gathered up which filled twelve baskets.

"This is indeed the Prophet who is to come into the world!" they said (v. 14). They were thinking of the prophecy of Moses that a Prophet like him would come from among the Israelites (Deu. 18:15). They connected the manna that came when Moses was ruler to the bread Jesus now provided in a miraculous way. It all lined up. What better ruler could they hope for than Jesus? He could give them whatever and as much as they wanted!

But Jesus was not about to become their "bread king." When the people located Him the next day, they asked if He might do for them what Moses did for the Israelites in the wilderness. Jesus replied, "*my Father gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world*" (vv. 32-33). The people were still thinking about earthly bread, earthly riches, earthly glory.

"I am the bread of life," said Jesus. "*Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. This is the bread that comes down from heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die*" (vv. 48-50). Jesus was teaching the people about spiritual things, holy things, eternal things. He was teaching them about faith, salvation, and everlasting life. He said, "*I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. And the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh*" (v. 51).

The people wanted their physical needs met by Jesus. He had something better to give them — His own life. Jesus knew that we have a much more serious problem than where to get our next meal. We face a spiritual starvation that cannot be satisfied by any of our own efforts or works. On our own, we are doomed to death and eternal punishment. So God the Father sent His Son to save us.

His mission was much bigger than feeding the hungry. His mission was perfectly fulfilling the Law of God in our place, including the command to trust God for all our needs. Then He gave up His perfect life to atone for all our sins. Jesus died on the cross to pay for our grumbling, our greed, our self-gratification. All our sins—whatever they may be—are washed away by His holy blood.

After calling Himself *“the living bread,”* Jesus told the people they must feed on His flesh and drink His blood to have eternal life (v. 54). He was talking about faith, that they must put their trust for salvation only in Him. You feast on this *“bread from heaven,”* this *“bread of life,”* by hearing the holy and life-giving Word of Jesus, by returning to your Baptism through His Word of forgiveness, by eating and drinking His body and blood in the Holy Supper He instituted.

These are the ways that your spiritual hunger is addressed. These are the ways that the Holy Spirit increases your faith, so that you worry less about the unknown tomorrows and focus more on the blessed today. Not only will you continue to receive the daily bread that you need for this life, but you can be certain that the Bread of Heaven, our Lord Jesus Christ, will never leave you hungry, never leave you lacking in your spiritual needs.

In your deep hunger for love, your deep hunger for peace, your deep hunger for life, He comes to you still. He gives you His forgiveness, He covers you in His righteousness, and He fills you with His grace. He is the Bread you need most, the Bread you feed on for eternal life.

*Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost; as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, forevermore. Amen.*

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