

Lenten Devotional 2020

Saturday, March 14, 2020
Day 16, Exodus 16

Give Us This Day Our Daily Bread

Moses said to them, "It is the bread the Lord has given you to eat. (Exodus 16:15b)

It's easy for us to get frustrated with our spiritual fore-parents in these stories. After all, we think, if I had seen what God did at the Reed Sea, I would have no problem trusting him! Again, I invite you to think of all the times you have been fearfully desperate after God has already been active in your life. So, let's be as charitable with them as we would like our children and grandchildren to be with us. We might also ask why this is happening.

The first thing we should notice is that they are speaking against Moses and Aaron. This isn't just a fine distinction, it tells us something about the people. It is Moses and Aaron who have the actual relationship with the Lord. The people know the Lord from a distance. They know his might. But, they don't know him. So, they are superimposing their understanding about gods on God. The gods are capricious beings. You never knew if they were going to bless you or smite you. The priests (like Moses and Aaron) were meant to mediate between the people and the gods. So if blessing isn't coming, the problem is with the priests.

So, what the people are coming face to face with is the question if God is trustworthy and dependable. If you and I were honest, we would admit that there have been moments when we've had that very same question. Especially early on in the relationship.

Notice also that they have been wandering for a month. Perhaps the question was becoming whether or not to kill and eat their livestock which have been providing milk and cheese for them. If they start to do that, it won't be long until they are out of food. So, the idea may have been forming that God would not be providing food on the way. In either case, the character of the Lord is unknown to this people so it is no wonder they succumbed to fear.

Therefore, it seems likely that this scenario is somewhat orchestrated by God and, in fact, we are told that God is testing if they will obey his instructions. The result though is a new pattern being formed. God is showing them his character, just as he shows them his glory. Hence the connection between the cloud of presence and the message of food with instruction. Israel is being taught that they can ask God for their daily bread and they will receive it in abundance—not too much, not too little and enough that they can practice rest which is important for former slaves.

Jesus reveals the very same thing to his disciples about God, "Give us this day our daily bread." We do not need to question if God is good. Not only does he promise daily bread, he is reveal to us as our father. Our father will provide us all that we need for our daily provision. Of course no longer ask for this because we provide for ourselves. Perhaps that is why we struggle so much with trust in God. Perhaps we need to begin once more to earnestly ask God for our daily bread and thank God for his daily provision. Then, maybe, we will confidently come to him in times of trouble because we know who is our Father.

Prayer

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. Amen.