

**“Our Daily Bread”**  
**Exodus 16: 4-12 and Matthew 6:7-15**

**March 6, 2022 Sermon by Rev. Alex Creager**

**Exodus 16:4-12**

<sup>4</sup>Then the Lord said to Moses, “I am going to rain bread from heaven for you, and each day the people shall go out and gather enough for that day. In that way I will test them, whether they will follow my instruction or not. <sup>5</sup>On the sixth day, when they prepare what they bring in, it will be twice as much as they gather on other days.” <sup>6</sup>So Moses and Aaron said to all the Israelites, “In the evening you shall know that it was the Lord who brought you out of the land of Egypt, <sup>7</sup>and in the morning you shall see the glory of the Lord, because he has heard your complaining against the Lord. For what are we, that you complain against us?” <sup>8</sup>And Moses said, “When the Lord gives you meat to eat in the evening and your fill of bread in the morning, because the Lord has heard the complaining that you utter against him—what are we? Your complaining is not against us but against the Lord.”

<sup>9</sup>Then Moses said to Aaron, “Say to the whole congregation of the Israelites, ‘Draw near to the Lord, for he has heard your complaining.’” <sup>10</sup>And as Aaron spoke to the whole congregation of the Israelites, they looked toward the wilderness, and the glory of the Lord appeared in the cloud. <sup>11</sup>The Lord spoke to Moses and said, <sup>12</sup>“I have heard the complaining of the Israelites; say to them, ‘At twilight you shall eat meat, and in the morning you shall have your fill of bread; then you shall know that I am the Lord your God.’”

**Matthew 6:7-15**

<sup>7</sup>“When you are praying, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do; for they think that they will be heard because of their many words. <sup>8</sup>Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

<sup>9</sup>“Pray then in this way:

Our Father in heaven,

hallowed be your name.

<sup>10</sup> Your kingdom come.

Your will be done,

on earth as it is in heaven.

<sup>11</sup> Give us this day our daily bread.

<sup>12</sup> And forgive us our debts,

as we also have forgiven our debtors.

<sup>13</sup> And do not bring us to the time of trial,

but rescue us from the evil one.

<sup>14</sup>For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you; <sup>15</sup>but if you do not forgive others, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

This is the Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

Rev. Jill Duffield shares a story about a friend of hers<sup>1</sup>. This friend had a habit of calling almost anything good in her life, “Bread from Heaven.”

School supplies donated to the local PTA? Bread from Heaven!

A Job Offer? Bread from Heaven!

A parking spot close to the building? Bread from Heaven!

A dress on sale her size? Bread from Heaven!

Jill shares that after a while hearing this from her friend, she’d simply role her eyes. She wanted to tell her friend that a lot it was just good luck, or surprise circumstances, or just a fairly normal part of the day. Why did her friend need to call everything Bread from Heaven?

And then Jill remembered our first reading from Exodus. The manna in the wilderness. She remembered how God provided food every single day for people who had just received freedom and new life. Every morning there was bread on the ground absolutely for free, for nothing. And yet the people of God continued to grumble and complain. Jill writes:

*“They took it for granted...they forgot to give thanks, they forgot to be surprised by grace, delighted by care, profuse in their gratitude. They got complacent and comfortable and forgot that everyday bread from heaven is worth rejoicing over every day.”*

As Jill reflected on that story, I think she saw a bit of herself in those wandering Israelites, those complaining people of God. Like them, Jill was also tempted to forget what a gift everything is, even the ordinary, even the everyday.

She goes on to say,

*Everything, absolutely everything, from dresses to job offers, from breath to a day at the beach, is in fact bread from heaven, a gift, a blessing, and something worth giving thanks for...I think I’ll call my friend and thank her for bearing witness to God’s grace and goodness, for being a role model of gratitude. She’ll probably tell me I called just at the right time. And she may even say, ‘Bread from Heaven’.*”

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<sup>1</sup> Duffield, Jill J., *Lent in Plain Sight: A Devotion Through Ten Objects*, p. 22.

Like Jill, we all forget the simple gifts of daily bread, of our breath and life, of the food we get to break and the people we get to share it with. Part of this is our culture which tells us we always need more and new. That we never have enough, and there's always something better out there, so never be content and gracious and thankful for what we already have.

Another part is that we are always thinking about what comes next – what's the next concern, the next project, the next action. And very rarely do we just take time to be in the moment. To pause for even five minutes in a day, and know and give thanks that this is the day that the Lord has made.

So I want to invite us to try two things this week. The first is in worship today. As we take communion, I want us not to rush through it, but savor it and be mindful of it. So as we take the communion bread and juice, I am going to invite us to take them slow, to savor, to notice, and to give thanks.

The second thing I want to invite you to try this week is to pause for five minutes each day. I recommend doing it in the morning if you can, near the start of your day. And in that time, you don't need to do anything at all, except sit and be silent. As you do, you can notice the environment around you. You can pay attention to your breath. You can listen to a song. But I want you not to think about anything else going on. Not your previous day. Not all the tasks ahead. But to simply sit and be still for five minutes.

And at the end of it, lift up to God one thing that you are grateful for that day. One thing that for you has been your Bread from Heaven.

Amen.