

DAY 1 (Week - Monday 13th August 2018)

Read: *Exodus 16:6-18*

There is always something to complain about, even when there isn't. We can find a grievance if we want to. No matter how unreasonable it is. We grumble when it's too hot, we grumble when it's too cold. We grumble when it rains. We grumble when it snows. We grumble when the weather has been too sunny for just a day longer than we would like it to be... and that is just with the weather.

We study Israel's experiences because they teach us timeless lessons. One would think that leaving the bitter camp of slavery would have meant joy for the people from Israel. Instead they complained about almost everything.

But just as the journey to the Promised Land was not always going to be pleasant, our journey through life isn't filled with constant ease, comfort, and pleasure. We go through trials and hardships because we live in a fallen world. But the good news is that God makes sure that, until we get to the Promise Land, we will be provided for.

Like the Israelites we often accuse God of having a hidden agenda. Nothing was enough to convince them to trust in God.

They were hungry and yes food is a need. We do need it to live, but instead of trusting God in the midst of their need. They blamed God for the lack of it. They desired food and got it, they desired meat and got it. They desired this and that and got it. And grumbled when they didn't get it.

And even though they were instructed on how much to take some took more than others, and others less than they were told. But everybody still had enough to fulfill their needs.

Meditation: *Is there still one more thing you have to have before you will be happy?*

DAY 2

Read: *1 Kings 17:1-6*

The scriptures continuously show us that we have a God who delights to provide for His children. However, that provision is dependent on us learning to give first place in our hearts to Him and His Kingdom [Mt. 6:33]

In our passage a severe drought was prophesied. Elijah, the man of God, was going to be affected too. Let us look at what and how that provision comes about.

First Elijah had to be obedient to what God told him. Elijah *“did what the Lord told him. He went to the Kerith Ravine.”* God always provides in accordance with the many promises and conditions of His Word. We too need to be obedient. This means a willingness to read and meditate on His Word. God may just be challenging you to implicitly obey Him.

Second God will always provide what we need. Elijah only needed food and water, nothing else. God knows our needs and is more than able to provide. Somebody once said, 'You may lack the fastest, the latest and the finest, but you won't lack what is needed'!

Third God provides at the right time. Never doubt God's timing! Someone said, 'God is never too early, He's never too late, He's always on time'. Elijah was fed in the morning and the evening. We should not get anxious but trust God implicitly.

Lastly God provides in unexpected ways. Ravens by nature are scavengers. They search, grab and hold on to food. They don't share. But, 'God works in unexpected ways His wonders to perform.' if God could use such birds to feed Elijah, He can surely provide for you.

Meditation: *Do you trust God enough to meet your need?*

DAY 3

Read: *Hebrews 5:11-14*

At some point in time each of us must make the decision to stop coming to church just to be fed and to instead come prepared to feed others. Coming to Church just to be fed means that one is not growing and this is what the writer is suggesting in this passage. We have to mature.

When one compares the stages of life we find that from an infant that is dependent on its parents for its basic necessities, still at risk if unwatched, we grow into the teenager who gradually takes some responsibility for themselves... gets a job, finds a purpose. Then we begin to earn authority like driving the car; then start to make small contributions to the family (maybe pay board). Then as an adult we have to take on responsibility for others, our children or even aged parents. In this stage you cannot expect to be treated like you were in the younger stages.

People fail to progress in their walks with God when they continue to depend on sources other than Him for their fulfillment in life.

We have to accept responsibility for our relationship. The only reason Christians stop growing, wanting to stay an infant, is because it seems easy. It is easy, there is no pressure, there are no expectations placed on you, everything is someone else's problem.

But is not really easier as we are dependent and not growing. We must accept that we are created for more. To remain in a state of infancy, is to fall short of one's destiny.

Jesus said you are the salt of the earth and a light in the darkness. [Mt. 5:13-16]

Meditation: *Are you still being fed or being fed to feed?*

DAY 4

Read: *John 6:1-15*

In this story we see Jesus caring for the spiritual as well as physical needs of the people.

He had been teaching them the whole day about the need for spiritual growth and how to grow spiritually. Then later that afternoon He became concerned about their physical needs. (John 6:5) they were hungry and Jesus knew it. He cares! He cared about them and He cares about us.

However they were out on a mountainside. There were neither shops nor enough money to quickly go and buy enough food to feed over 5000 people. But there was a boy who had five loaves and two fish which was supposed to be his lunch.

Jesus is given this lunch pack and He prays over it and the multitude is fed. A miracle! It doesn't end there because Jesus then tells the disciples not to let anything go to waste and twelve baskets are filled with what is left over.

That is what happened that day. However there are still many needing to be fed physically as well as spiritually. In the first part, it shows Jesus' compassion on the crowd, even though they drew the wrong conclusions about the mission of Jesus. This shows that we must be compassionate even towards those who oppose us.

This world is full of hungry people. All of them are hungry spiritually, and some may be hungry physically. Jesus is not here but we are.

Jesus stands on the edge of this hungry world. He's moved with compassion about their needs. He is looking for people just like you and me with five loaves and two fishes that he can take bless and break and use to feed the multitude. Will you give him yours?

Meditation: *Could you commit to serving?*

DAY 5

Read: *John 6:1-15*

An important part of the wilderness experience was God's provision of manna. The numbers of Israelites far exceeded what the land could bear. Only God could provide for them in such a place. And on particular this day, Jesus, by feeding the 5,000 men plus women and children, was pointing back to the Wilderness experience. What does this say about who Jesus is?

The task of feeding the people that day was clearly the work of God. Probably many of them weren't simply looking for another free feed but really wanted someone to tell them how they ought to be living their lives - what lifestyle they should be following in order to please God. Indeed I think it is a very natural human hunger to want to be told what to do.

After the feeding there was more left than what they started out with. There was one basket of fragments left for each of the twelve disciples to take with them. This should remind them that Jesus would abundantly take care of them. It should remind us who are hungry that Jesus will meet our needs as well.

Jesus, besides showing compassion for the hungry people, affirmed that He was the Messiah. By feeding the 5000 He demonstrated that He was sent by God.

He came to give us Himself! "I am the bread of life", says Jesus, "The one who comes to me will never become hungry, and the one who believes in me will never become thirsty.

Meditation: *is my following Christ because I'm really hungry?*

DAY 6

Read: *John 6:48-51*

Have you ever noticed that even when you eat your favourite food, you still get hungry again in a few hours? Some of us have been on a search for something that will satisfy and we've come up short. A few of us have tried partying, relationships, purchasing things, or rooting for a favourite sports team! In the long run, we're still starving as we search for satisfaction. Ravi Zacharias writes, *"With all our ingesting and consumption, our hungers are still many and our fulfillments are few."*

Like the people who followed Jesus we often miss the signs. They had completely missed the sign. All they were concerned about was getting their bellies filled. That bread could only satisfy one's hunger for a little while. What they really needed was the eternal bread from heaven.

If we settle for material things, we'll get hungry again. However when we partake of the *Bread of Life*, our hunger will be taken care of and all of our other needs will be met. In this story Jesus identifies Himself as *"I am the Bread of Life."*

Jews asked Jesus for a sign, before they would believe, even though he had just turned the five loaves into a meal for over 5 000 people. We have heard from Jesus Himself that the Father has drawn us to Him and given us to Him.

Earlier, you will recall, He had told them that He was the bread come down from heaven, and they then started challenging Him that He was not from heaven, He was from Nazareth. But He persists, 'I am the living bread that came down from heaven, and whoever eats this bread will live forever'. Now He adds, 'the bread that He will give is His flesh for the life of the world'.

Prayer: *Lord fill me so that I will never go hungry. AMEN*