

Lesson 4. “What Is It?” – Praying for Daily Bread (16:1-36)

Opening Thoughts: A meal is a meeting with God. Sometimes children do not consider all the work and circumstances it takes to put a pleasant, healthy meal on the table. We have to learn by practice of prayer to be grateful and appreciate the work others do to make our lives sustainable. We have so much of our daily needs automatically provided for us that it becomes increasingly easy to complain. What are some daily events and circumstances that lead people to grumble? How is grumbling related to entitlement? When it comes to our relationship with God does God want us to learn dependence or independence? How does our “daily bread” experience mean to test us every day? Are we more grateful when we have more or less? How does this shape our prayers for daily bread?

Study: Exodus 16:1-36 – (Text Notes) During the wilderness journey toward the Mountain, the Israelites face a series of three testings. Each time they face adversity, they respond with grumbling. In the second event, they come to the Wilderness of Sin (pronounced ‘seen’, not related to “sin” as corruption; prob related to Sin-ai, the Mountain). The response to their grumbling is that the LORD directs Moses to test them to see if they will walk in his instructions or not.

1. The word “Providence” has been used by Christians to talk about God’s oversight as our Maker to provide good things and direct the course of life for His creation. What are your expectations for what God will provide in your daily life? What happens when one of those expectations isn’t met? Discuss some daily situations where people often grumble or complain. Why do people grumble?

2. In the first few verses, the Israelites grumble against Moses saying, “You are trying to starve us to death.” Why don’t they direct their grumbling to the LORD? Is there any difference between complaining to Moses and the LORD? What do you think this attitude will do to a person’s prayer life? How does God respond? (16:4-6)

3. In the Lutheran Catechism, Martin Luther describes the prayer for daily bread as a prayer for gratitude. He says, “God gives daily bread without our asking, even to unbelievers, but we pray in this petition that He would teach us to realize this and to receive our daily bread with thanksgiving.” In the story of the Manna, how did God teach Israel to be grateful? What are some ways God has taught you to be grateful? Does that gratitude come from situations where you have more or less?

4. 16:13-15 - The response of the Israelites was a question in Hebrew: “Manna?” (“What?”) They were unsure and even a bit skeptical about this gift because it was such a miracle. God tells them to save some manna as a memorial in the ark of the covenant to honor this story for coming generations. Do you think the “manna” should be remembered as a blessing or a judgment against their grumbling?

5. 16:17-18 - God provides the right amount for today. For some who lack, he provides more, for others who have more, he provides just enough. Look up 2 Corinthians 8:1-4, 12-15. What is this passage teaching us about the church and “left overs”? When we pray for daily bread, how can we make this awareness a part of our prayer life?

6. 16:22-26 - God commanded that they should gather twice the amount on day 6 and observe the holy Sabbath on day 7. What is this supposed to teach the people? How is the Sabbath practice a test for Israel? Which do you consider more important to learn, independence or dependence? Why?

7. Nowadays, people tend to have trouble resting. Sometimes this relates to sleep habits. It also is seen in choices to make time and space for rest. What’s going on here? What does technology have to do with it? What is a common “down time” for you? What do you do during your “down time”? Do you see a difference between a day off and sabbath?

8. In the trial in the wilderness, Jesus is tempted for forty days. According to Matthew, the first temptation is to prove that Jesus was God’s Son by making the stones to become bread. Jesus responds by quoting the Manna story, “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.” How does a time of fasting/restraint/loss teach us about prayer and our relationship with God?

Any Prayer Requests? Final Questions or Comments?

For Next Time, Read Ahead and Reflect on the Questions Below:

5. “Forgive Us” – Interceding in Prayer (32:1-33:6)

Text Notes: Israel has reached Mount Sinai at last. As Moses journeys up to the mountain to meet with God, the people grow restless. As he delays for 40 days, the people craft a god to worship and they hold their own feast. This begins a series of four intercessions by Moses.

Read and Reflect: Jesus teaches us to pray, forgive us our sins as we forgive those we sin against. Why do you think Jesus considers this prayer of forgiveness for others so necessary to include in our prayer life? In the story, the LORD’s wrath begins to kindle against Israel for their idolatry. Does our prayer of intercession change God’s mind? What about Jesus’ intercession?