

Exodus Part 16: A Diet for Eternity

1. Prayer
2. Joke?
3. Review/Intro:
 - a. We are on our journey through the wilderness along with 1.5 million or more Jews fleeing Egypt. They are entering the land of Midian, a vast desert where water and food are in short supply.
 - i. It was a major challenge to feed 125 of you last Sunday, right Twila and Dorothy?
 - ii. Imagine doing that for 1.5 million folks every day in the middle of the desert without running water or a refrigerator or a crock pot!
 - iii. The reason the Exodus is so amazing is that it is exactly that. Amazing! It is a shining example of God's provision and care for a nation.
 - b. Now some of you are involved in the "First Place" diet.
 - i. You are trying to lose weight.
 - ii. I have a new diet to tell you about too.
 - iii. It's called the "Bread of Life" diet?
 1. I hope that by the end of the day, you will try it!
4. Thirst
 - a. Exodus 15:22-25 *Then Moses led Israel from the Red Sea, and they went out into the wilderness of Shur; and they went three days in the wilderness and found no water. When they came to Marah, they could not drink the waters of Marah, for they were bitter; therefore it was named Marah. So the people grumbled at Moses, saying, "What shall we drink?" Then he cried out to the LORD, and the LORD showed him a tree; and he threw it into the waters, and the waters became sweet.*
 - i. Water is the universal need of life. None survives without it.
 1. Three days without water must have been excruciating.
 2. And then to find water but not be able to drink it (bitter – poisonous?) would have been even worse.
 - a. I imagine some tried. Some probably got sick.
 - ii. We try to drink the water of the world but it is bitter.
 1. It does not satisfy.
 2. The water of the world is what the world offers.
 3. It offers us many things to satisfy our thirst. (woman at the well).
 4. But what we need is water that is purified by the tree.
 - a. The tree is symbolic of the cross.
 - b. Only the cross, death to ourselves, can bring us life.
5. Hunger
 - a. Exodus 16:1-3 *Then they set out from Elim, and all the congregation of the sons of Israel came to the wilderness of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month after their departure from the land of Egypt. The whole congregation of the sons of Israel grumbled against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness. The sons of Israel said to them, "Would that we had died by the LORD'S hand in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the pots of meat, when we ate bread to the full; for you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger."*
 - b. V4-7 *Then the LORD said to Moses, "Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a day's portion every day, that I may test them (it seems more like training than testing), whether or not they will walk in My instruction. 5 "On the sixth day, when they prepare what they bring in, it will be twice as much as they gather daily."*

- c. *6 So Moses and Aaron said to all the sons of Israel, "At evening you will know that the LORD has brought you out of the land of Egypt; 7 and in the morning you will see the glory of the LORD, for He hears your grumblings against the LORD; and what are we, that you grumble against us?"*
- d. *v8-12 Moses said, "This will happen when the LORD gives you meat to eat in the evening, and bread to the full in the morning; for the LORD hears your grumblings which you grumble against Him. And what are we? Your grumblings are not against us but against the LORD." 9 Then Moses said to Aaron, "Say to all the congregation of the sons of Israel, 'Come near before the LORD, for He has heard your grumblings.' " 10 It came about as Aaron spoke to the whole congregation of the sons of Israel, that they looked toward the wilderness, and behold, **the glory of the LORD appeared in the cloud.** WOW! 11 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 12 "I have heard the grumblings of the sons of Israel; speak to them, saying, 'At twilight you shall eat meat, and in the morning you shall be filled with bread; and you shall know that I am the LORD your God.' "*
- e. *v12-15 So it came about at evening that the quails came up and covered the camp, and in the morning there was a layer of dew around the camp. 14 When the layer of dew evaporated, behold, on the surface of the wilderness there was a fine flake-like thing, fine as the frost on the ground. 15 When the sons of Israel saw it, they said to one another, "What is it?" (the meaning of the word manna). For they did not know what it was. And Moses said to them, "It is the bread which the LORD has given you to eat.*
- f. *16 "This is what the LORD has commanded, 'Gather of it every man as much as he should eat; you shall take an omer apiece according to the number of persons each of you has in his tent.' " 17 The sons of Israel did so, and some gathered much and some little. 18 When they measured it with an omer, he who had gathered much had no excess, and he who had gathered little had no lack; every man gathered as much as he should eat. 19 Moses said to them, "Let no man leave any of it until morning." 20 But they did not listen to Moses, and some left part of it until morning, and it bred worms and became foul; and Moses was angry with them. 21 They gathered it morning by morning, every man as much as he should eat; but when the sun grew hot, it would melt.*
 - i. Manna was the miraculous MRE's.
 - ii. It wasn't dropped by airlift like in New Orleans. It wasn't delivered by soldiers.
 - iii. It was given by God to feed His people every single day (except on Saturdays) for 40 year!
- g. *v22-26 Now on the sixth day they gathered twice as much bread, two omers for each one. When all the leaders of the congregation came and told Moses, 23 then he said to them, "This is what the LORD meant: Tomorrow is a sabbath observance, a holy sabbath to the LORD. Bake what you will bake and boil what you will boil, and all that is left over put aside to be kept until morning." 24 So they put it aside until morning, as Moses had ordered, and it did not become foul nor was there any worm in it. 25 Moses said, "Eat it today, for today is a sabbath to the LORD; today you will not find it in the field. 26 "Six days you shall gather it, but on the seventh day, the sabbath, there will be none."*
 - i. Because it would not keep two days except on the Sabbath (which is something brand new for them), this demonstrates that **we were created for a DAILY dependence upon God** { }
- h. *v27-30 It came about on the seventh day that some of the people went out to gather, but they found none. 28 Then the LORD said to Moses, "How long do you refuse to keep My commandments and My instructions? 29 "See, the LORD has given you the sabbath; therefore He gives you bread for two days on the sixth day. Remain every man in his place; let no man go out of his place on the seventh day." 30 So the people rested on the seventh day.*
 - i. Up to this point there is no law of the Sabbath.
 1. It is being revealed to them in practice.

- a. Not a rule but a way of life.
 - b. God shows us His ways because He knows what is good for us.
 - 2. The Israelites are being trained by God. He is showing them how to depend upon Him, and how to find rest in Him.
- ii. Early civilizations worked 7 days a week.
 - 1. No such thing as a 6 day or 5 day work week.
 - 2. Being survival based, nomadic living, it seemed “impossible” to work just 6 days and make a living.
 - 3. Yet Israel would become one of the most prosperous nations in the world based upon their willingness to let God provide on the 7th day and to rest on it.
- i. v35 *The sons of Israel ate the manna forty years, until they came to an inhabited land; they ate the manna until they came to the border of the land of Canaan. 36 (Now an omer is a tenth of an ephah.)*
 - i. God provided during their ENTIRE journey. He will provide for you during your entire journey on this earth if you will follow Him.

6. New Testament Parallel

- a. John 6:24 *So when the crowd saw that Jesus was not there, nor His disciples, they themselves got into the small boats, and came to Capernaum seeking Jesus. 25 When they found Him on the other side of the sea, they said to Him, "Rabbi, when did You get here?"*
- b. v26 *Jesus answered them and said, "Truly, truly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled. 27 "Do not work for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you, for on Him the Father, God, has set His seal."*
 - i. What are you working for?
 - ii. For things that last or things that will rust, perish, die, and someday be destroyed?
 - iii. Or are you working for things that last?
 - iv. **Only two things last forever.**
 - 1. **The word of God and the souls of men.**
 - 2. Where do you spend your time and money on?
- c. 28 *Therefore they said to Him, "What shall we do, so that we may work the works of God?" 29 Jesus answered and said to them, "This is the "work" of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent."*
 - i. Many people think that there are some DEEDS that they have to do to earn God’s favor.
 - 1. Some people think that if they only do this or that, or don’t do this or that, then God will like them and let them in heaven.
 - 2. Our world and religions tell us that we have to DO certain things or not DO certain things to get God to let us in heaven.
 - ii. But Jesus tells us very plainly. The work (deed) of God is simple. Believe in Him. Trust Him. Give yourself to Him.
 - 1. Being a Christian is not about what you have done. It is about what God has done for you. He has done the work. He asks us only to place our faith in Him and rest in what He has completed. (a seventh day rest of sorts).
- d. 30 *So they said to Him, "What then do You do for a sign, so that we may see, and believe You? What work do You perform? 31 "Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, 'HE GAVE THEM BREAD OUT OF HEAVEN TO EAT.' "*
 - i. The Jews recall the desert experience. They want a sign.
 - ii. They wonder if this guy is as good as Moses.
 - 1. Give us something like the loaves and fishes again. That was cool.

2. Do that every day like Moses did with the Manna.
 3. But manna rotted at the end of the day. Jesus is forever good bread!
- e. 32 *Jesus then said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, it is not Moses who has given you the bread out of heaven, but it is My Father who gives you the true bread out of heaven. 33 "For the bread of God is that which comes down out of heaven, and gives life to the world." 34 Then they said to Him, "Lord, always give us this bread."*
 - i. And they want a free ride. Give us this bread. We would like to live like our ancestors did. That was cool.
 - f. 35 *Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me will not hunger, and he who believes in Me will never thirst. 41 Therefore the Jews were grumbling about Him, because He said, "I am the bread that came down out of heaven."* (personified bread – very confusing to people who aren't spiritualizing the conversation).
 - g. 47 *"Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes has eternal life. 48 "I am the bread of life.*
 - h. 49 *"Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. 50 "This is the bread which comes down out of heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die. 51 "I am the living bread that came down out of heaven; if anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread also which I will give for the life of the world is My flesh."*

7. What satisfies your appetite?

- a. As long as we consume, eat, fill our diet and take our fill with the what the world offers...(ie., Television, sports, magazines, books, entertainment, leisure activities, even our work), we will look and act like spiritually malnourished children.
 - i. KJH saw them in Panama, big distended bellies, looking like they are fat but in fact they are starving to death.
 - ii. Starving people in the concentration camps ate sawdust.
 1. It had absolutely no nutritional value.
 2. But it filled up their stomachs so they wouldn't feel the hunger pains.
 3. Feeding on what the world has to offer will leave us starving spiritually.
 4. We will numb our spiritual hunger but we will starve to death spiritually.
 - iii. This world is sawdust.
 1. Filling our lives with what it has to offer will leave us dull to spiritual things.
 2. **I want you to pay special attention to this next point:**
 3. **We will not pursue the things that truly satisfy when we take our fill of the things that do not.**
 - iv. We will also discover that we have no strength to resist temptation as our "resistance" is so worn down by spiritual malnutrition.
 - v. Neither will we walk by the Spirit and be used by God.
- b. In the world, and even in the church, there are people wandering around the desert like the children of Israel.
 - i. They are searching for the "manna" – looking for tangible bread to meet their needs.
 - ii. Remember what manna means? "What is it?"
 1. What is it that will meet your needs?
 2. That is the question of the ages.
 - iii. Many cry out to the Lord, "give me this or that and I will be satisfied"
 1. Yet after getting what they want, their satisfaction is just temporary.
 2. Just like a child with a toy they have grown accustomed to, they discard it and look for something else to fill the void.
 - iv. What do we do? How do we fill this void?

8. Action Steps:

a. **Choose to come to Jesus.**

- i. Many of us believe in Him but we don't come to Him.
- ii. "I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me will not hunger, and he who believes in Me will never thirst."
- iii. The passage from John speaks of believing in Him and coming to Him.
 1. The act of belief is drinking from Him.
 2. But the act of coming to Him is how we **feed** spiritually.
- iv. We drink from the rock but we don't feed daily on what He has to offer, the bread of life, which is Himself.
 1. How do we come to Him?
 - a. Coming to Him in prayer, sitting before His feet, listening to Him through His word and through what I call contemplative prayer (sitting quietly and listening to praise songs and letting your heart rise to adore Him).
 - b. Journaling and listening.
 - c. Worshipping Him.
 - d. Obeying His still small voice.
 2. How much time do you spend "coming to Jesus?"

b. **Come daily to Jesus.**

- i. Just as the manna had to be gathered daily, Jesus told his disciples to pray, "give us this day our DAILY bread."
- ii. We must come to Him daily for our spiritual needs and sustenance.
- iii. I saw a sign that said, **"7 days without Jesus makes one weak"**.

c. **Choose to be deliberate in what you consume.**

- i. Not just in physical consummation but those things that have spiritual effects as well.
- ii. I want to challenge you to do something that may be difficult for most of us here.
 1. We all consume (fill our lives) with stuff that has absolutely no spiritually nutritional value.
 - a. Its only purpose is to quiet the spiritual hunger in us.
 - b. For some of us it may be those 2 or three beers you "gotta" have when you come home from work.
 - c. For others, it may be that high you feel you gotta have to numb the pain and boredom you feel.
 - d. You are only numbing the spiritual hunger pains with the spiritual equivalent of sawdust.
 - e. You are starving spiritually!
 2. Others of us consume (fill our lives) with stuff that has no spiritual value either.
 - a. It has the EFFECT of junk food, it cancels the hunger, it shouts down the cry of our hearts, and it makes us feel a bit better for just a little while.
 - i. For many of us here that is the television, video games, maybe romance novels, busyness, or even extra long hours at work.
 - ii. The average American spends 20 or more hours a week in front of the television.
 - iii. And then they stumble into bed to get up and go through the same mind-numbing routine of a day as the day before.
 - b. I want to challenge everyone here to awaken your spiritual hunger pains this week by turning off the television for the entire week. Turning off the computer for the entire week. Come home on time from work for an entire week.

- c. Put down the gooey books, the video games, the instant messenger, the cell phone, the palm pilot, and let God awaken in you hunger pains for Jesus.
 - d. **Put the sawdust down!**
 - e. Come to Jesus instead!
3. Let's pray.
- a. Lord Jesus, true Bread of Life, the Only One who can satisfy, the Only One who can meet our thirst and our hunger, thank you for your presence here today.
 - b. I pray that your Spirit will show us of our hunger and distended bellies that only make us look like we are full when we in fact are dying of hunger.
 - c. I pray that your Spirit will show us how self-involved, how self-fulfilling, how self-pursuing we are and that we will wither without YOU!
 - d. Your word says, "Apart from Me you can do Nothing."
 - e. Oh God, consecrate our hearts to You. Lead us to shut off, turn off, put down, and kneel down this week.
 - f. Lead us to immerse ourselves in your word, in your presence and in your love. We come to you today, hungry.
 - g. In Jesus Name, Amen.
- iii. Are you broken? Has God awakened your hunger for Him today? Spend some time with Him, Come to Him at the altar for awhile, if there is no room, use the floor, or go to your knees in your pew. Take a few moments to "come" to Him before we meet with Him at the Lord's table. Prepare yourself.