

Pentecost 10, August 2, 2015

Our God Rains . . . for You!

Exodus 16:2–15



Dear friend in Christ. Grace and peace to you from our Lord Jesus Christ!

Our meditation this morning is based on the Old Testament reading of Exodus chapter 16, where the Lord promises to rain over us with food. The text says: “Then the Lord said to Moses, ‘Behold, I am about to rain bread from heaven for you’” (v 4).

Now, the announcement the Lord gave to Moses gives us today as well. The Lord is going to rain food. Now, what will you now do? As you see the Lord will bless us with all kinds of blessings including food. Will we go our own way preoccupied with the task of collecting food?

The same question we could ask the Israelites, after God said He will rain food over them.

We could ask them, what would you people of Israel, what are you going to do next? You’ve been enslaved in Egypt for 430 years to the day (Ex 12:41). You’ve been sent Moses to deal with Pharaoh over and over, so you could go free.

So, people of Israel, what are you going to do next? You’ve seen the plagues—the blood flowing, the flies bothering, the hail destroying, the frogs inhabiting, the animals dying, the locusts devouring, the gnats pestering, the boils hurting, the darkness blinding.

So, people of Israel, what are you going to do next? You’ve roasted your year-old, unblemished lamb. You’ve painted the doorframe with blood. You’ve heard the wailing throughout the night as the firstborn died.

So, people of Israel, what are you going to do next? You’ve left Egypt with the spoils, with their gold and silver and clothing (12:35). You, even with the Lord’s favor, have plundered the Egyptians (12:36). You’ve followed the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night.

So, people of Israel, what are you going to do next? You’ve walked on the dry ground with the wall of water to the right and to the left. You’ve seen the Egyptians who pursued swept into the sea.

So, people of Israel, what are you going to do next?

But, ask as much as you may, but we know the answer, for it is clear, they grumble!

They said: “Would that we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the meat pots and ate bread to the full, for you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger” (v 3).

What a people, all they do is grumble. And the Israelites said, “Is it because there are no graves in Egypt that you have taken us away to die in the wilderness? What have you done to us in bringing us out of Egypt? Is not this what we said to you in Egypt: ‘Leave us alone that we may serve the Egyptians’? For it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness” (14:11–12). Grumble!

And what does God do about this stiff-necked-grumbling people? The Lord is still good to them, He hears their grumbling and rains food over them!

What a people! Who like the Israelites of old! Now we, of course we, do not grumble, right? We grumble! You grumble . . . when loan interest rates are too high and when bank interest rates are too low. . . when the cost of milk is too high, but don't grumble when farmers' profits are too low.

We grumble, grumble, grumble . . . when the cost of parking is too high and when the number of parking spots is too low . . . we grumble when the internet signal is too poor and slow... when the calories in food are too high and the opportunities to exercise are too low. We even grumble when we're bored because we have too much time . . . when we're frantic because we have too little time.

We grumble, don't we, and we grumble worse than Goldilocks. Our porridge is too hot! It's too cold!

We are never happy, and when there is no happiness we are disappointed, and when we are disappointed we grumble

You grumble against or to God. You grumble to your spouse. You grumble in front of your children. And the outcome of our grumbling can potentially harm our relationships, certainly our relationship with God, our societies and even our church. We are never happy, not with God and not with His Church his bride.

Even so, the Lord says, "Behold, I am about to rain bread from heaven for you" (v 4). God causes it to rain and snow, the wind to blow and the stars to twinkle. Because, "He commanded the skies above" (Ps 78:23) the Psalmist says. God commands the skies above. God brought manna and quail to the people of Israel back then, and God still provides all his blessings to us today.

God commands the skies above. God brought angels who filled the skies, who sang praises and proclaimed, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger" (Lk 2:10–12).

God commands the skies above. And there on Calvary's hill, "It was now about the sixth hour, and there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour, while the sun's light failed. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two. Then Jesus, calling out with a loud voice, said, 'Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!' And having said this he breathed his last. Now when the centurion saw what had taken place, he praised God, saying, 'Certainly this man was innocent!'" (Lk 23:44–47).

And he was, except he took your sins and he took mine. "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" (Jn 1:29). "[God] made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God" (2 Cor 5:21). The Son of God breathed his last while the skies were dark.

All for us, even though we grumble!

God commands the skies above. "Then the Lord said to Moses, 'Behold, I am about to rain bread from heaven for you'" (v 4). He did; he does. Still today. He gives you your daily bread. "Daily bread includes everything that has to do with the support and needs of the body, such as food, drink, clothing, shoes, house, home, land, animals, money, goods, a devout husband or wife, devout children, devout workers, devout and faithful rulers, good government, good weather, peace, health, self-control,

good reputation, good friends, faithful neighbors, and the like” (Small Catechism, explanation of the Fourth Petition).

No wonder the Psalmist says: “The eyes of all look to you, and you give them their food in due season. You open your hand; you satisfy the desire of every living thing” (Psalm, Ps 145:15–16).

And more, Jesus says, “Am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst” (Jn 6:35).

He gives us the Bread, the Bread of Life, the Bread “who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world” (Jn 6:33). He gives us Jesus. So see, you have nothing to grumble about, for God Says, “Behold, I am about to rain bread from Heaven for you.”

What a blessed people we are, even when we grumble the Lord still provides beyond what we need so that we do not grumble, yet we do, maybe, instead of grumbling we should recount all the blessings we receive and share it with those who need. While we grumble because of dissatisfaction many are going hungry because of oppressive political powers all over, who still grumble because they don’t have enough so they have to starve other so they can fill their packets. There are many who are hungry because natural disasters and aid seems not to be getting to them. It seems that God is raining more food than others. Or maybe God wants us in true hope and in thanksgiving share and distribute all the wealth and blessings rained over us, with those in who don’t have. When we see those needs and in joy share with them, grumbling will diminish and joy will abound and hope will increase for those who share and those who will receive God’s rain through the giver.

Have we grumbled? Have we complained and been unhappy? Rejoice in the forgiveness of your sins, and behold all the blessings from God in you daily life, all the blessings he rains over each one us so abundantly that you can even share with others. May you continue being blessed!

Amen.