

The Sacred Journey: Becoming God's Holy People
Today's Message: Manna and Quail
Exodus 16:1-36

We as humans often think, "If only..." But into our "if only's" God says, "I will"

- Do you ever think, "If only..."
 - Illustr: Dr. Flick (kind, gentle) and the car accident, the death of his wife

"If only..." points to a world of regret

- If only... a failure to act
 - I had started saving for retirement sooner
- If only... poor decision
- If only... lack of effort
 - I had worked harder and finished high school
- If only... circumstances had been different
 - Story: Amy's parents - Mr. and Mrs. Primo, the drunk driver, the paralyzation
- If only... I had a different personality, more brains, greater confidence

- **Israel had an "if only"**
- Vs. 1 The whole Israelite community set out from Elim and came to the Desert of Sin...
 - Elim:
 - Maxie Dunnam: "It's interesting to note that the next stop in the wandering of the Israelites was at Elim. At Elim, there were twelve springs of water, and seventy palm trees. It was a welcome resting place after the difficult days in the wilderness."
 - Desert of Sin:
 - Note: the word "sin" does not refer to our modern word sin but Sinai
 - The Wilderness of Sin is a dry, sandy, wasteland in the southwestern part of the Sinai Peninsula
 - The "If only..."
 - Vs. 3 The Israelites said to them, "If only we had died by the Lord's hand in Egypt! There we sat around pots of meat and ate all the food we wanted, but you have brought us out into this desert to starve this entire assembly to death."

"I will..." is the promise of the Lord for ...

- Vs. 4 "The the Lord said to Moses, "I will rain down bread from heaven for you."

- **His Presence**
 - Vs. 6-7 So Moses and Aaron said to all the Israelites, "In the evening you will know that it was the Lord who brought you out of Egypt, and in the morning you will see the glory of the Lord, because he has heard your grumbling against him. Who are we, that you should grumble against us?"
 - Q: How will they see the glory of the Lord in the morning? A: in the manna

- Vs. 31-32 The people of Israel called the bread manna. It was white like coriander seed and tasted like wafers made with honey. Moses said, "This is what the Lord has commanded: 'Take an omer of manna and keep it for the generations to come, so they can see the bread I gave you to eat in the wilderness when I brought you out of Egypt.'"
 - Commentary James Bruckner, "The later command to place an omer of manna in the ark of the covenant corroborates the importance of the manna as a continual sign of God's presence and glory, even when the cloud was not visible."
- Vs. 10 While Aaron was speaking to the whole Israelite community, they looked toward the desert, and there was the glory of the Lord appearing in the cloud.
 - Note: God's presence often appears as a cloud.
 - The Cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night
 - Ex. 13:21 By day the Lord went ahead of them in a pillar of cloud to guide them on their way and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, so that they could travel by day or night.
 - Mt. Sanai
 - Ex. 24:15-16 When Moses went up on the mountain, the cloud covered it, and the glory of the Lord settled on Mount Sinai. For six days the cloud covered the mountain, and on the seventh day the Lord called to Moses from within the cloud.
 - The Tabernacle
 - Ex. 40:35 Moses could not enter the tent of meeting because the cloud had settled on it, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle.
 - The Temple
 - 1 Kings 8:10-11 When the priests withdrew from the Holy Place, the cloud filled the temple of the Lord. 11 And the priests could not perform their service because of the cloud, for the glory of the Lord filled his temple.
 - Jesus fulfillment: Mt. 28:20 And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."
- Illustr: Pastor James Moore of Houston, Texas, tells a story about a young man whose wife had died, leaving him with a small son. Back home from the cemetery, they went to bed early because there was nothing else he could bear to do. As he lay there in the darkness, grief-stricken and heartbroken, the little boy broke the stillness from his little bed with a disturbing question, "Daddy, where is mommy?"

The father got up and brought the little boy to bed with him, but the child was still disturbed and restless, occasionally asking questions such as, "Why isn't she here?" and, "When is she coming back?"

Finally the little boy said, "Daddy, if your face is toward me, I think I can go to sleep now." In a little while, he was quiet.

The father lay there in the darkness, and then in childlike faith, prayed this prayer: "O God, I don't see how I can survive this. The future looks so miserable, but if Your face is toward me, somehow I think I can make it." That's what the Messiah came to teach us: that God's face is always toward us. Nothing ever will be able to separate you from His love. Now, that's real security. ([Brett Blair and James W. Moore](#))

- **His Provision**

- Vs. 11-18 The Lord said to Moses, 12 “I have heard the grumbling of the Israelites. Tell them, ‘At twilight you will eat meat, and in the morning you will be filled with bread. Then you will know that I am the Lord your God.’”
- 13 That evening quail came and covered the camp, and in the morning there was a layer of dew around the camp. 14 When the dew was gone, thin flakes like frost on the ground appeared on the desert floor. 15 When the Israelites saw it, they said to each other, “What is it?” For they did not know what it was.
- Moses said to them, “It is the bread the Lord has given you to eat. 16 This is what the Lord has commanded: ‘Everyone is to gather as much as they need. Take an omer[a] for each person you have in your tent.’”
- 17 The Israelites did as they were told; some gathered much, some little. 18 And when they measured it by the omer, the one who gathered much did not have too much, and the one who gathered little did not have too little. Everyone had gathered just as much as they needed.
- Illustr: Ben Smith (Joe) he went on a short-term missions trip to Texas this summer. A few weeks after returning, he was asked if he would like to go to Honduras this November. They are going to build classrooms. He prayed, “Lord if you want me to go, then I need \$1,000 to cover the cost of the trip.” He didn’t tell anyone except my wife. On Tuesday, a person called and said, “I have some extra money, and the Lord wants me to give it to you.” He was so excited.
- Jesus Fulfillment: Jesus is the bread of life, the fulfillment of God’s greatest provision

- **His Patience**

- Vs. 2a In the desert the whole community grumbled against Moses and Aaron.
- Vs. 7 ...and in the morning you will see the glory of the Lord, because he has heard your grumbling against him. Who are we, that you should grumble against us?
- Vs. 8c You are not grumbling against us, but against the Lord.
- Vs. 9 Then Moses told Aaron, “Say to the entire Israelite community, ‘Come before the Lord, for he has heard your grumbling.’”
- Vs. 12 I have heard the grumbling of the Israelites.
- Observe: God doesn’t seem angry and does not punish them.
 - Compare: Numbers 16:41-44 The next day the whole Israelite community grumbled against Moses and Aaron. “You have killed the Lord’s people,” they said. 42 But when the assembly gathered in opposition to Moses and Aaron and turned toward the tent of meeting, suddenly the cloud covered it and the glory of the Lord appeared. 43 Then Moses and Aaron went to the front of the tent of meeting, 44 and the Lord said to Moses, 45 “Get away from this assembly so I can put an end to them at once.” And they fell facedown.
 - Note: The Lord is patient with the infant in faith, but he is stern with the stubborn and immature.
 - Commentary James Bruckner: The Lord used this grumbling as an opportunity to educate the people in walking in trust and following instructions. There is a

similar kind of grumbling in Numbers, but it occurs after they have been to Sinai and following the Lord for a year. There the grumbling brought judgment against the people, because they had had time to learn the ways of the Lord.

- **His Proving**

- Vs. 4 Then the Lord said to Moses, "I will rain down bread from heaven for you. The people are to go out each day and gather enough for that day. In this way I will test them and see whether they will follow my instructions."
 - Illustr: compost
 - What to put in a composter: To compost successfully, you need a balance of "green" (nitrogen-rich) materials and "brown" (carbon-rich) materials, along with air and moisture. Suitable greens include fruit and vegetable scraps, grass clippings, coffee grounds, and plant trimmings. Browns consist of fallen leaves, twigs, shredded paper and cardboard, straw, and sawdust.
 - Goal: a rich, fertile, soil-like material that can be used for home gardening and farming
 - Note: this is where we grow trust and obedience

- **His Pattern**

- Vs. 21-30 Each morning everyone gathered as much as they needed, and when the sun grew hot, it melted away. 22 On the sixth day, they gathered twice as much—two omers for each person—and the leaders of the community came and reported this to Moses. 23 He said to them, "This is what the Lord commanded: 'Tomorrow is to be a day of sabbath rest, a holy sabbath to the Lord. So bake what you want to bake and boil what you want to boil. Save whatever is left and keep it until morning.'"
- 24 So they saved it until morning, as Moses commanded, and it did not stink or get maggots in it. 25 "Eat it today," Moses said, "because today is a sabbath to the Lord. You will not find any of it on the ground today. 26 Six days you are to gather it, but on the seventh day, the Sabbath, there will not be any."
- 27 Nevertheless, some of the people went out on the seventh day to gather it, but they found none. 28 Then the Lord said to Moses, "How long will you refuse to keep my commands and my instructions? 29 Bear in mind that the Lord has given you the Sabbath; that is why on the sixth day he gives you bread for two days. Everyone is to stay where they are on the seventh day; no one is to go out." 30 So the people rested on the seventh day.
 - Note: The Sabbath Commandment has not yet been given, but it is already known.
 - Note: The Sabbath Pattern in creation is already present.
 - Q: Why does the Sabbath matter? A: God is creating a people who will be like him in righteousness and holiness. God rests. Therefore, to be like him, His people must rest.
 - Commentary Peter Enns, "Note also the nature of this Sabbath command. It is not simply that the Sabbath is 'observed' by the Israelites in that they refrain

from gathering food. Rather, it is God who refrains from supplying the food. It is he who ceases working, so that no manna or quail is to be found. ... Keeping the Sabbath is something God does and the Israelites are expected to follow suit. This pattern is rooted in creation itself: The Israelites rest because God did.”

Truth: Wherever you are, is where God wants to start.

Application: Change your focus from your “If only,” to God’s, “I will.”

Q: Do you find yourself in a place that you don’t want to be. You’re thinking, “If only...”

Application: Wherever you are, is where God wants to start. So, *trust and obey*.

God wants you and me to take the focus off of our, “if only” and to put it on His, “I will.” When we do that, the only thing left is to trust and obey.

- The Hymn: Trust and Obey
 - Background: “Mr. Moody was conducting a series of meetings in Brockton, Massachusetts, and I had the pleasure of singing for him there. One night a young man rose in a testimony meeting and said, ‘I am not quite sure—but I am going to trust, and I am going to obey.’ I just jotted that sentence down, and sent it with a little story to the Rev. J. H. Sammis, a Presbyterian minister. He wrote the hymn, and the tune was born.”
 - Verse 2
 - Not a burden we bear,
 - not a sorrow we share,
 - but our toil he doth richly repay;
 - not a grief or a loss,
 - not a frown or a cross,
 - but is blest if we trust and obey.