

# Soul food

## Part 1, Exodus 16:1-33

<sup>1</sup>The whole Israelite community set out from Elim and came to the Desert of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month after they had come out of Egypt. <sup>2</sup>In the desert the whole community grumbled against Moses and Aaron. <sup>3</sup>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."

<sup>4</sup>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. <sup>5</sup>On the sixth day they are to prepare what they bring in, and that is to be twice as much as they gather on the other days."

<sup>6</sup>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, <sup>7</sup>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?" <sup>8</sup>Moses also said, "You will know that it was the LORD when he gives you meat to eat in the evening and all the bread you want in the morning, because he has heard your grumbling against him. Who are we? You are not grumbling against us, but against the LORD."

<sup>9</sup>Then Moses told Aaron, "Say to the entire Israelite community, 'Come before the LORD, for he has heard your grumbling.'"

<sup>10</sup>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.

<sup>11</sup>The LORD said to Moses, <sup>12</sup>"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.'"

<sup>13</sup>That evening quail came and covered the camp, and in the morning there was a layer of dew around the camp. <sup>14</sup>When the dew was gone, thin flakes like frost on the ground appeared on the desert floor. <sup>15</sup>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. <sup>16</sup>This is what the LORD has commanded: 'Everyone is to gather as much as they need. Take an omer for each person you have in your tent.'"

<sup>17</sup>The Israelites did as they were told; some gathered much, some little. <sup>18</sup>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.

<sup>19</sup>Then Moses said to them, "No one is to keep any of it until morning."

<sup>20</sup> However, some of them paid no attention to Moses; they kept part of it until morning, but it was full of maggots and began to smell. So Moses was angry with them.

<sup>21</sup> Each morning everyone gathered as much as they needed, and when the sun grew hot, it melted away. <sup>22</sup> 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.

<sup>23</sup> 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.’”

<sup>24</sup> So they saved it until morning, as Moses commanded, and it did not stink or get maggots in it. <sup>25</sup> “Eat it today,” Moses said, “because today is a sabbath to the LORD. You will not find any of it on the ground today. <sup>26</sup> Six days you are to gather it, but on the seventh day, the Sabbath, there will not be any.”

<sup>27</sup> Nevertheless, some of the people went out on the seventh day to gather it, but they found none. <sup>28</sup> Then the LORD said to Moses, “How long will you refuse to keep my commands and my instructions? <sup>29</sup> 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.” <sup>30</sup> So the people rested on the seventh day.

<sup>31</sup> The people of Israel called the bread manna. It was white like coriander seed and tasted like wafers made with honey. <sup>32</sup> 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.’”

<sup>33</sup> So Moses said to Aaron, “Take a jar and put an omer of manna in it. Then place it before the LORD to be kept for the generations to come.”

In the modern era we and turn food into semi religion

- SBS has a whole channel for cooking these days
- Where it's just show after show of people cooking
- That's all they do cook food
- Until recently I did the majority of the cooking in our house
- And it was no passion for me, there was no ingredient of love in my meals
- For me it was a chore
- Watching a show of people cooking is like watching a show about vacuuming

I think my point is summed up when I saw my parents watching Masterchef, first season

- And it was a challenge where Po was watching the meet cook through the oven door
- Just sat there... watching meat cook.....
- while were sitting there watching her watching meat cooking

- this is my kind of cooking show.....
- this is the way food was meant to be filmed,
- at 1000 frames per second and exploding

But I have a feeling if Jesus were around today he would partaketh of the food channel

- because in the history of God's people time and time again food, particularly bread
- comes up in the bible, in parables, in the different stories, in rituals and sacraments

But it's never just food for the eating, that God is talking about... but food for the soul

- and here in Ex chapter 16 we see probably the 1<sup>st</sup> example of soul food
- with the manna from heaven

Israel has been rescued from the Egyptians in spectacular style

- 10 plagues, parting the red sea the whole kit and caboodle
- But as they enter the desert, they start to grumble
- V3

The Israelite remember the past with rose coloured glasses

- Remember that time we here in slavery... ahhh those were the days
- Sure occasionally the pharaoh would take and kill all your babies
- You were occasionally beaten to death for not working hard enough, had no freedom
- But still all the meat you could eat....
- Even just weeks after the miracles of the exodus they seem to forget what God has done
- As Aaron explains this to them, they see yet another miracle

The Glory of the Lord appearing in the cloud V10

- As Aaron talks to them about their grumbling they look out to the desert and see a cloud
- In the cloud is the Glory of the Lord...
- Does this mean its glowing, or they all just recognise God's presence in it.. don't know
- we spoke about this at Gen Now this week, God uses clouds to represent his presence
- God regularly shows Israel visibly, tangible he is there with them
- They are truly blessed, nowhere other than JC does God make himself known so clearly
- BUT they still grumble.....

- Yet God gives them what they need, manna every morning and Quail for meat

The name Manna, comes from the first words the Jews mutter when they see it

- Man hu, means “what is it” so that’s what they called it.
- Keep it for a day only, gather only that they needed for one day, one Omer per person
- Wondering what that is v36 clears it up
- <sup>36</sup> (An omer is one-tenth of an ephah.)... right.. an ancient measurement of some kind

But this is not a story about God producing another miracle

- This isn’t just God materialising manna and quail to feed a few million people
- But in the experience God is forming the Jews in a very tangible way

We can see this in verse 32-33

- Why do they save some manna in a jar?
- Because these events are not just about food in the belly, not just answering the grumbles
- But this experience is about teaching Israel about what it means to be God's people
- Not just this generation but all generations to come, even to God's people today.
- Like our series over the last few weeks, God is refining his people
- And the desert is his anvil.... The desert time is not just a punishment
- Because of the whole golden calf thing... but it’s a time of shaping and forming for Israel
- But what is he teaching them?

He gives them bread, bread to eat. Also quail but they focus on the bread

- This was the very start of one of God's initiatives for his people to recognise his presence
- In the desert God gives bread, in Christ he gives us the bread of life
- We share the bread in communion to partake in his body.

When they collect too much God spoils what they kept

- V20... why do that? Why make it go off?
- I can understand wanting to collect it all, I hate to see waste,
- I recon I would be compelled to collect up all the spare manna
- Put in in a Tupperware, then in the fridge, just in case... that seems wise
- But God says no..... you can’t collect extra, can’t keep any for a rainy day,

- I will give you a Sabbath rest, so on the 6<sup>th</sup> day collect enough for 2 days

But here God teaches us a lesson

- To be my people is to fully rely on me.... Rely so strongly that every day I will feed you
- This lesson in one sense seems so petty... like training your dog
- When he goes to snatch the treat from your hand... no....nicely
- No... I will feed you... you will be my people and you will rely on me.

Then on the Sabbath there's no manna, he told everyone to collect double the day before

- Some people went out to collect anyway
- Yet there was nothing there... no manna on the Sabbath
- Like Pavlov's Dog God is conditioning them to keep the Sabbath
- In fact in the desert he gives them no choice... there is nothing to do, no food to collect
- Side note here is the first recorded observance of a 7 day week
- God sets up this cycle of rest and work over a 7 day period

This Manna is not just food for the belly but also food for the soul

- It's not just strengthening their bodies but their faith, their spiritual awareness
- Its honing and shaping them to be God's people and live life
- Like their creator and Lord is present watching and active in this world

The question for us as we read this story almost 4000 years later, have we learnt this lesson

- Do we live lives like the creator and Lord is present watching and active in this world
- To truly trust that God will provide.... God will be there when we need him most

A Dad was in the park with his family

- When he hears his 6 year old shout dad catch
- He turns to see his son half way up a tree.. launch himself out
- Having no time to think he caught his son, hit the ground and rolled in a heap
- The father turned to him and said why did you do that!
- Boy said, because I knew you would catch me...

When we fall do we believe God will catch us? Do we have the faith to jump from time to time.

In our church we have a number of people that have relied on God, jumped from that tree

- Mary in Zimbabwe, there's not much health care, no social security
- There is no superannuation, every month they wonder if they can pay their bills
- That's taking a jump... that's living like the promise of God are real

We have families that leave work and careers to work at cross roads, mercy ships

Clive's work in china, and continues work for God over seas

- This is just one example, but this is how live our lives like God will provide
- Have you ever seen the blind skiers in the winter para Olympics
- They just listen for the instructions... left right straight
- Completely blind they barrel down the slope

Sometime trusting in God feels a bit more like that

- You can't see where you're going or how you're going to get there, you just have to trust
- I was once running an alpha for a church, but I only had 2 weeks to promote it
- I was thinking, this is going to flop, it's not going to work , no one will come
- So I did a letter box drop, said my prayers and crossed my fingers
- That first night, there was 3 new people from the community
- I didn't know what would happen or how it would happen,
- I just had to believe that it would