

God Wants To Provide

On Sunday, we talked about the concept of God as our provider.

1. Warm up question. Think of someone who depends on you – like a child, elderly parent, pet, etc. What’s something nice you like to do for them – and how does that make you feel?
2. Before we get to our Scripture passage, first a little background. For hundreds of years, the Israelites were slaves in Egypt. God used Moses to break their chains and lead his people out of Egypt into the wilderness. But once in the wilderness, after an initial rush of excitement about their newfound freedom, the Israelites began to face challenge of leaving behind old patterns and attitudes to build a new way of life under new circumstances. It would take them a long time – 40 years in the wilderness – to regain their footing and be ready to move into the land of promise.
 - a. In the Bible, Egypt represents a bad place – a place of oppression and struggle. We’ve all experienced personal “Egypt.” When in your life have you been delivered from an Egypt? What kind of adjustment period did you experience in the aftermath of your deliverance? During that adjustment period, did you ever find yourself wanting to go back?
 - b. Samantha said, “In Biblical study, the wilderness is a metaphor for that time in our lives where we struggle, fortify, dream, plan, make goals, and work to better ourselves and our relationships.” In other words, the wilderness is a transitional time. Where in your life right now do you feel like you’re in the wilderness?
 - c. When our life is discombobulated, it can be hard to trust. In Philippians 1:6, Paul says, “I am confident of this, that the One who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ.” How much confidence do you have that God is at work on a good big-picture plan for your life? Where would you put yourself on the following scale – and why?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/
Zero				Modest					Absolute
confidence				confidence					confidence

3. Read Exodus 16:1-21.
 - a. Look again at verse 3. How do you think God felt when God heard the Israelites complaining?
 - b. Look again at verse 4. Note that instead of smiting the Israelites for their faithless complaining, God simply provided for their needs. What does this teach us about God?

- c. Suppose you had been one of the Israelites who went out to gather up manna on the first day. How would you have felt? Do you think you would have been able to gather only as much as you needed for the day? What might have been going through your mind?
4. At a time in her life when Samantha felt like she was in a spiritual wilderness and wondered whether God was with her and willing to provide for her, she opened her Bible and read the first passage she saw. Let's read that passage, then share what words or thoughts from the passage most speak to each of us – Psalm 139:1-18 (read slowly and meditatively).
 - a. What words or thoughts from the passage most speak to you?
 - b. Verse 8 says, "If I ascend to heaven, you are there. If I make my bed in [hell], you are there. If I take the wings of the morning and settle in the farthest limits of the sea, even there your hand shall lead me and your right hand shall hold me fast." From this Samantha drew the thought that God is with us wherever we go in life, always seeking to make a way. Do you believe God is with you? Do you believe God is making a way for you? Why or why not?
 5. In our Exodus reading, some of the Israelites tried to save part of their daily allocation of manna and quail for the next day, but what they tried to save rotted.
 - a. Why do you think God only gave them enough for the day?
 - b. Those who tried to save some for the next day, what do you think they were thinking?
 - c. As already noted, what they tried to save rotted. What are we supposed to learn from that? Is it wrong to try to save up and be cautious? If not, then what's the point of our Exodus passage?
 - d. Samantha said, "How many of us are living a half-life today so we can have a half-life tomorrow?" What do you think she meant? How would you answer her question – on most days, do you feel you're living fully in the day? Why or why not?
 - e. In John 10:10, Jesus says, "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly." What's the meaning of the first half of this verse? What's the meaning of the second half?
 - f. As you absorb the message of Exodus 16, what (if anything) do you find yourself wanting to change or do better in your own life?

*Thank you for the gift of your presence in worship last Sunday.
By bringing your faith into the sanctuary, you made worship better for all of us!*