

May the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart, be acceptable to you O God, my strength and my joy... Amen.

The Israelites journey from Egypt has always fascinated me.

Can you imagine the awe and wonder of walking where the red sea flowed, with a wall of water towering on either side of you?

And on top of that, after safely passing through, to watch as the waters came crashing down on Pharaoh's army...

A moment that the Israelites witnessed, which was then followed by many moments of celebration...

When the prophet Miriam, took a tambourine in her hand, and all the women joined her with tambourines and dancing. As Miriam sang:

"Sing to the LORD, for he has triumphed gloriously; horse and rider he has thrown into the sea."

A time of freedom... A time of deliverance... A time of worshiping God...

And then, a mere chapter later in Exodus, we find our reading from today...

A not so joyous time in the wilderness, when we come across...

A bunch of hangry Israelites...

As we heard their words of anger... "If only we had died by the hand of God in the land of Egypt, when we sat by our pots of meat and ate our fill of bread.... For you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger."

Sounds like their hunger has brought forth some drama.

And yet, God was much more gracious in responding to them, than I am.

As God's response was one of love... But more specifically, it was a response of parental love.

Because God's response entailed specific instruction, testing the Israelites, to see if they would listen, when God provided them with food.

And sure, enough we discover that God was faithful to God's word. For "In the evening quails came up and covered the camp, and in the morning, there was a layer of dew. When the layer of dew lifted, there on the surface of the wilderness was a fine flaky substance, as fine as frost on the ground.

When the Israelites saw it, they said to one another, "What is it?" For they did not know what it was. Moses said to them, "It is the bread that God has given you to eat. This is what God has commanded: Gather as much as you need, but do not leave any of it over until morning." Of course, they did not listen; and all that was left until morning became wormy and rotten."

And for 40 years the Israelites gathered this substance left behind from the dew.

They called it manna. It was like white coriander seed, and tasted like wafers made with honey.

Now that sounds quite yummy, especially if all you have to do is gather it right outside your camp...

No grocery store lines, no supply chain shortages... Just God showing up every morning, leaving you with some manna, and enough manna for everyone.

Because manna is God's way of providing what you need.

It is God's way of saying take what you need for today. And don't hoard any extra, because if you do it will become rotten.

Manna is God's way of meeting you in the elements of life, of showing up where you are and meeting you, even in the dew.

And you know what, God is still providing manna each day...

Now it might not be white like coriander seed and it might not taste like wafers made with honey...

Instead, it might be a phone call from a loved one who brightens your day...

It might be hearing a song on the radio that transports you to a time of joy and a loving memory...

It might be a beautiful sunrise, the ride home on the school bus, the laughter of a child...

It might be in any given moment...

Because many moments make up your day...

Moments you do not prepare for, moments you do not plan... But moments that make all the difference in the world...

Because those are the moments manna is made...

And just like the Israelites manna didn't last, our manna is also fleeting...

Indeed, it will fill you for the time being, but, come the next day, those manna moments are often long forgotten...

Forgotten by the long to do list, the stress of life, or the fleetingness of time.

And yet, that day too, will be filled with manna...

Manna that has yet to be uncovered by the dew.

Because God is always there to meet you every day. To provide you with nourishment, love, and grace.

Now, it might not always be in the form you want, but God will make sure that it is enough...

So, as we continue on our Lenten Journey, I invite you to give thanks for those manna moments.

And as you give thanks, to notice where your heart is, and where you are placing your trust.

Because God will provide you with what you need. Again, it might not be what you want, but it will be enough...

So, place your trust in that... Knowing that day by day, God will meet you, providing you with strength, nourishment, and hope.

Because just as God provided manna to the Israelites and led them to the promise land...

God will journey with you, until you reach the promise land.

But until then let's cherish the manna we gather together... The manna moments provided by God each and every day... Amen.