



Message Transcript

God's Gracious Provision

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Pastor Jeff:

Father in heaven, we give you praise, glory, and honor for who you are. And Lord, we believe that you have a word for us today because every time that your word is faithfully and accurately proclaimed that you speak. And so Lord, we're asking you today to speak directly to our hearts. Lord, we know that when you speak, you change us. You transform us. You turn us in a new direction. Give us clarity and exhortation. Sometimes you admonish us. And so Lord, our invitation is please do your work in and through us and among us this morning. And so, now, for all those who have gathered who desire to hear Jesus speak directly to you, who will believe what Hee says, and who will by faith put into practice what he shows you, will you agree with me very loudly this morning by saying the word amen? Amen.

As you know, for every spiritual and emotional high, there is an equal spiritual and emotional low. Sometimes we see this when we follow our sports teams and they win a great game they weren't expected to win and you think, "Well, from now on, they're just going to soar," and then they get beat by an opponent that they should never have even been beat by. Sometimes we experience it spiritually when we experience God work in marvelous, magnificent, miraculous ways. Only, a short time later, we can go through a sense of despair or discouragement, wondering, "Well, where's God right now?" When I was a youth pastor, I used to tell my kids... Every time we came home from a camp, like a weekend camp or a week-long camp, I would tell them, "Please be on guard for the next 24 hours." Because all of them come back and they're totally high and they're all in with Jesus and they're emotionally and spiritually pumped up. And I

would tell them, "You will be tempted like you've never been tempted before in the next 24 hours to throw you off kilter. Don't be surprised when that happens. Because for every spiritual and emotional high, there's an equal spiritual and emotional low."

As we've been studying the Book of Exodus, where we just came out of was one of the most miraculous stories of the entire Bible. God delivered the entire nation of Israel by parting the Red Sea and then bringing the waters over Pharaoh and his troops, killing them all. Not one was left and yet all of Israel survived. It was so good that they broke out into song. The men started leading worship with Moses and the sons of Israel. All the women then gathered. They had tambourines. It was a party. I mean, if there was any song that would've been sung that day, it would've been like, celebrate good times, come on. I mean, that was what was going on. That's the attitude of all Israel. And yet they didn't stay right there. Life continued to happen.

And while God is gracious in pouring out provision and God is so good that He will do good things even for those who don't follow him, oftentimes we want to know, okay, how can I continue to trust God to provide for me when I'm not feeling it? How can I continue to trust God to provide for me even in times of the mundane? Some Christians ask this question. How come it is I see in all these other people that God's doing great things for them and God's moving on their lives? How come he doesn't move in my life that way? If you've ever asked those questions, God has a word for you today. God wants you to know how you can experience His gracious provision daily and moving forward with him.

I'm going to invite you to open up your Bible to Exodus chapter 15. We're going to start in verse 22 today, finish that chapter, and work our way through chapter 15. Taking a look at God's gracious provision and how we can expect God's gracious provision in our lives. We're in Exodus 15, starting in verse 22. This is right after. Right after that they got out of the water and they sang songs to the Lord. Notice what it says. It says, "Then Moses led Israel from the Red Sea and they went out into the wilderness of Shur and they went three days in the wilderness and they found no water." How long has it been since their celebration? Three days. Is three days a long time or a short time? It really depends, right? I mean, it's a short time that when you've seen God move in such a miraculous way and it's only been three days, you would think that's a pretty short time to lose faith. And yet biologists tell us we can't go more than three days without water. How long have they been without water? For three days. You ever gone three days without water? That's a long time to go without water.

So, in some ways, it's a short time from seeing God's goodness, but it's a long time for their needs being provided for. Have you ever been a season like that? Where you know God's good and he is great and you've seen him work greatly, but in your own life personally, you've got a great need. That's what's going on right here. And it says in verse 23, "When they came to Marah, they could not drink the waters of Marah for they were bitter. Therefore it was named Marah." Marah in the Hebrew means bitter. If you studied the book of Ruth, you'll remember Naomi said, "Don't call me Naomi. Call me Marah." Because she had lost her husband. She was bitter on the inside.

And notice what happens. This is the first of about six times you're going to see this in the text today. Verse 24. "So the people grumbled at Moses saying, 'What shall we drink?'" What shall we drink? Now, what's grumbling? Grumbling is a sign of spiritual immaturity in the life of a believer. That's what grumbling is. Can Christians grumble? That's not rhetorical. Can Christians grumble? Yes, they can. We've found ourselves grumbling from time to time. Grumbling is a spiritual sign of immaturity. It's a lack of belief that the God of abundance can provide what you need when you need it. And so we grumble or we complain or we blame other people. That's just a sign of spiritual immaturity. Now, they've had this all along. Even though they've been delivered, even though they've experienced the salvation of the Lord, even though they've been singing praises, now it's been three days and what are they doing? They're grumbling! That's what they're doing.

And notice what happens. "Then he cried out to the Lord," Moses did, "and the Lord showed him a tree. And he threw it into the waters and the waters became sweet. There he made them a statute and regulation and there he tested them. And he said, 'If you will give earnest heed to the voice of the Lord your God and do what is right in his sight and give ear to his commandments and keep all his statutes, I will put none of the diseases on you which I put on the Egyptians for I the Lord am your healer.' And they came to Elim, where there were 12 springs of water and 70 date palms and they camped there beside the waters."

Now, here's the first point. If you want to experience God's gracious provision in your life, you must earnestly seek to obey God's voice. If you want to expect God's

gracious provision, then you must earnestly seek to obey God's voice. Earnestly seeking to obey his voice is not simply hearing His voice. It's not simply listening to His voice is not simply, I want to hear what God has to say. It's I'm earnestly seeking Him or diligently seeking Him in a way that I know what He wants so that I'll do what he's actually showing me. Some of you don't hear the Lord speak directly to you because you have no desire to do whatever God would show you to do. Some of us that would say, "I've heard God speaks today. I want to hear God speak to me," but you have no desire to do what the Lord shows you. It may be the reason why you don't hear the Lord speak.

How many of you know the Lord speaks today? He speaks through his living and active word every time that it's open. That is the Lord speaking. When the word of God is faithfully and accolade proclaimed, that's you hearing the Lord speaking. Sometimes when we have people visiting Brave who have been invited by friends, some people have been known to come up to me afterwards and say, "Did he tell you what I was going through? Because everything you said was speaking right to me." No, that's the word of the Lord. That's the way that He speaks through His word. And the more acquainted you are with His word and the more acquainted you are with His voice, the more than the Lord is able to speak subjectively about should I take this job or that job? Should I date this person or that person? Should I get married now or not? Those kind of subjective things. Because then it aligns with the word of God that you know. And so if you're going to see God's gracious provision in your life on an ongoing basis, you need to earnestly seek to obey his voice.

Now, here they had these bitter waters, right? And what does God tell them to do? God says, "Well, here's the deal. What you need to do." As they grumbled against Moses, Moses cried out to the Lord. The Lord showed him a tree and he threw it into the waters and the waters became sweet. Now, if you're like me and you read the scripture, you're like, okay, what kind of tree was that? Like, what kind of tree do you throw in bitter waters and make the water sweet? We could profit off that if we could figure out what tree it was. See, it's not about what the tree was, it's about that they were obedient to what God told him to do. Any old tree would've done. God said, "Throw that tree in the water." They threw that tree in the water and the bitter waters became sweet. See what I'm saying? They earnestly sought the voice of the Lord and they did what He said. Sometimes we earnestly seek the voice of the Lord, but we think, ah, that's not going to work. Throwing a tree in bitter water, what's that going to do? Earnestly seek his voice to do what He says. Hebrews 11 says that without faith it's impossible to please him because anyone who comes to him must believe that He is and that He rewards those who earnestly seek him.

See, when it comes to Bible study, I've been in enough small groups over the years that people will say things like this. "Hey, could you pray for me this week? I need to spend more time in the Word." "Can you pray for me this week? I need to pray a little more." And I understand that. But if the Bible is only a book to be read and studied, you're always going to feel that way. But you see, the Bible's not a book just to be read and studied. It's a book to be believed and obeyed. And if this is really your life, if Jesus is really your life, then you're not only reading the Bible just for knowledge.

You're reading the Bible because when you're reading it, you're saying, God, what are you speaking to me today? God, what are you showing me in your word? God, what do I need to apply?

And if you're young in the faith, here's what I would tell you. Anywhere that you open it up and you begin to ask that question of the Lord, this living and active document called the Word of God will speak to you about whatever God wants you to know regardless of where you are in the text. I've had seasons in my life, like I've told you, when the Lord is showing me something and I can't get away from it. Where, no matter where I open in the scriptures, I see God telling me the exact same thing. And it's frustrating, isn't it? Because sometimes we don't want to do that little thing that God wants us to do. We're waiting on a bigger thing that God has. But if you're earnestly seeking him for the purpose of obeying what he says, that's how you grow in your faith.

And let me tell you this. If you're younger in your faith or you're saying I'm a little more mature in my faith and now I'm really ready to grow, I really want to accelerate my growth with Christ, here's what I would say. One step of obedience is greater than five years of study. One step of obedience. You can be 10 years old, read the word of God, put it into practice, and you will grow more spiritually than people who study the Bible but don't do anything with it. Jesus said it this way in Luke 6. "Why do you call me Lord Lord and do not do what I say?"

I mean, one of the ways that I grow as a preacher is not just studying the word

but applying the word. Obeying the word. I found that the longer I walk with God, the more things he wants to show me about ways in which I can grow. Ways in which I can be transformed. All the ways in which I have not arrived yet. Things in me that still have sinful condition and depth of depravity that need to be changed. And if I'm seeking him earnestly saying, "God, I'm coming after you today because there's things in my life I know you want to speak to me about and I'm willing to do whatever you say," that's how you begin to grow. That's how you can experience God's gracious provision in your life.

Now, our God is so good that He even provides for you when you're not walking in relationship with him, doesn't he? I mean, the fact that you're here this morning breathing oxygen. Even if you haven't been obedient to the Lord, he still provides oxygen. The Bible says He causes rain to fall on the just and the unjust. God doesn't just send rain clouds over those who are Christians. Like your crops get nourished, but non-Christians, they don't. God's so gracious He gives grace and common grace to all people. If your heart is still beating, whether you're a Christian or not, that's God's common grace, God is good no matter what. But what we're talking about here today, as they begin their journey in the wilderness... Now, they've been delivered from their enemy. Now, they're ready to start walking with the Lord. What's the first thing He's telling them to do? Earnestly seek my face and do what I show you to do. That's why he gives them that statute. That's why he tells them in verse 26, "If you will give earnest heed to the voice of the Lord your God and do what is right in his sight and give ear to his commandments and keep all his statutes, I will put none of the diseases

on you which I put on the Egyptians for I the Lord am your healer."

Now, isn't that interesting? What are they praying for? What are they crying out about? What are they complaining about? They don't have what? Water. It's an important need. We don't last without water. It's something they can cry out for. It's okay to cry out for their needs. They're crying out for water. But what's God telling them? I'm willing to give you so much more than water. I won't put the diseases on you that I put on Egypt. I'm your healer. I want you to know I'm not just your provider. I'm not just your God that wants to give you stuff so you can keep living your life. I'm so much bigger than that. You're asking for water. I'll give you water, but I can do more than that. I can heal you and never put on you the diseases that Egypt had.

Whatever you're asking for is probably not big enough for what you're asking for. A quote I've been listening to from my friend all week that he got from somebody else that I'm sharing with you is how can we ask for such small things from a God who can do all things? Isn't that true? They're crying out for water and God's like, "Not only will I give you water, I'll heal you from all your diseases. Wouldn't that be good too?" And yet, when we only are focused on ourselves and our own little needs that need to get met, we miss out on the abundance of our God. Because notice verse 27. God brought them to a spring. After he had made the water sweet, then he is like, "That's not enough." They came to Elim where there were 12 springs of water and 70 date palms and they camped there beside the waters. Here, they're crying out to the Lord. Just give us water. The Lord's like, "I'll not only give you water. I'll give you healing. And oh, by the way, I'll give you enough to drink now, but where I'm taking you, there's 12

streams of water and there's 70 date palms and you can hang out."

Now, where are they? They're in the desert. They're in the wilderness. They're in a place where you're not going to see those things. What does it mean? When you go through a season in the wilderness where it doesn't seem like God can provide, our God can provide at all times in all ways. Because our God is the God that created the universe out of nothing. Amen? He's your provision and He's a God of abundance. The enemy will always lie to you when you're leaving your past life and you're beginning your new life with Christ and always tell you, "Now that you're here, you're on your own. God's not going to provide for you."

And here's what I would tell you. Oh, yes he will. Our God is a provider, our God is a healer, and our God is so much more. And this is the same thing that Jesus said in the Sermon on the Mount. Matthew chapter six in verse 33. What did He tell you? "Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things will be added unto you." All the daily needs that you have. All the things that you need to have to survive. I'll add all those, but seek me first. Seek my kingdom first. Seek the bigger things first and I'll add all these things. If you want to see God's gracious provision in your life, earnestly seek to obey his voice. Listen for his voice and obey his voice. Amen?

Secondly is this. If you want to expect God's gracious provision in your life, then you must daily continue to follow his instructions. Key word being daily. Daily continue to follow his instructions. Notice chapter 16, the first verse. "After they set out from Elim and all the congregation of the sons of Israel came to the wilderness of sin, which

is between Elim and the Sinai, on the 15th day of the second month after their departure from the land of Egypt." Before, it's been three days. Now, it's been a little over a month. So you think, man, now they got their act together. Now, they know because God's provided for them. Right? Look at verse two. The second time we see it. "The whole congregation of the sons of Israel grumbled against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness." Are they done grumbling? No. Sometimes Christians aren't done grumbling. I mean, we've seen God do miraculous things and then people tell us that God will still provide. And so we stop grumbling. We see He provides. And then a month later, what are we doing? We're grumbling again. Do you know why? Because we're dynamic and our needs continue to change. And now we wonder, okay God, you were good there, but where are you now? God, what have you done for me lately? That's exactly what Israel's saying.

Verse three. "The sons of Israel said to them, 'Would that we had died by the Lord's hand in the land of Egypt?'" Now, watch what they say. "'When we sat by the pots of meat, when we ate bread to the full, for you have brought us into the wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger.'" Now, before they were thirsty. What are they now? They're hungry. They're hangry. Have you heard of that word? I mean, that's what they are. They're hangry. They're they're angry in their hunger, right? And what are they saying? They're reflecting on their past. Now, what was their past? What had been going on in their lives for not only the past month, but the past 430 years? What were they? They were slaves. They were beaten. They were miserable. And how are they remembering that those days? Oh, the good old days! We sat by

pots of meat until we were full. We ate bread until we couldn't have it anymore. What do you remember that for?

Isn't it just like our enemy? That when he brings us into a relationship with Christ and our old lives are done and we begin to walk away from us, he tries to tug us back. Tries to show us how good those old days were when they were really no good at all. We start walking with the Lord and maybe we break up with the person that we were dating because they weren't walking with the Lord. And we get out to here and, all of a sudden, it's like, man, remember those good old days when you were dating them and how awesome it was? It wasn't awesome, but he tries to get you to go back. Or how about those of you that struggled with drugs and alcohol before you got saved and the Lord miraculously redeemed you. And you were so excited and so free and you take about three steps and you're like, yeah, but remember those good old days when you partied and you had all those friends? There's always a pullback from the enemy to take you back to, quote, the good old days, which were really not all that good at all.

Friends, as Christians, our best days are always ahead of us. They're always ahead of us because that's where Jesus goes. Jesus goes ahead of us. And one day when you meet Him face to face, that will be the greatest day of your life. The enemy is always trying to take you backward. God's always trying to take you forward in the kingdom of God. And if you're going to experience his ongoing gracious provision, then you must continue daily to follow his instructions. Now, notice what he says in the text. Notice this. Verse four. "Then the Lord said to Moses, 'Behold, I will reign bread from

heaven for you and the people shall go out and gather a..." notice this word, "...a day's portion every day that I may test them, whether or not they will walk in my instruction. On the sixth day, when they prepare what they bring in it, it will be twice as much as they gather daily.' So Moses and Aaron said to all the sons of Israel, 'At evening, you will know that the Lord has brought you into the land of Egypt. And in the morning, you will see the glory of the Lord for he hears your grumblings against the Lord and what are we that you grumble against us?"

Does God hear your grumblings? Yeah, because oftentimes you know what? We don't grumble towards God. We go to our friends and grumble about God. You say, "Well, I don't grumble. I'm just complaining about my situation." That's grumbling against God. That's saying that the God of the universe that's able to provide and the God of the universe that's sovereign in your situation isn't good enough for you right now. And so we grumble and we complain to other people. And we're all prone to that. And that's what's going on. So Moses said, "Here's how you're going to know that God is good. Here's how you're going to know he provides. Because every single morning, you will see a dew that comes on the earth and when you see it appear, it will be manna." And we're going to read about what's going on.

And every day, you're to take a day's worth of manna. It's going to be an omer. An omer is two ephs. And you're supposed to gather it how often? Daily. You're supposed to gather it every single day. What is that representative of? The Christian life is oh so daily, isn't it? This is the day the Lord has made. Let us rejoice and be glad in it. And yet, so often, we think we can just kind of spend time with God and then

maybe once a week we can give him a little more. Once a month, we can gather back together. Friends, the Christian life is lived daily. It means every day you need to take from the Lord what you need for that day. That's what he's saying.

And by the way, because I'm your pastor and I can say whatever I want from this pulpit as long as it honors the Lord, I'm going to do that right now. Do you know what a day means? It means a day. It's the same word used in Genesis one. When you wonder how many days did the Lord create the earth in, he created it in six days and he rested on the seventh day. It's a day. There was not one Israelite that would've heard this text and would say, "Oh my goodness. When God wants us to collect for a day, is that like a million years or is that like a day? I just don't know." Because God created the world in six literal days and rested on the seventh. Every Israelite knew it. I know it. God knows it because it's what the word teaches. That's free of charge. Amen.

But you think about it because notice what Moses says in verse eight. Moses said, "This will happen when the Lord gives you meat in the evening and bread to the full in the morning, for the Lord hears your grumblings which you grumble against him. And what are we? Your grumblings are not against us, but the Lord." He says this. Every time you grumble, you're not grumbling against God's servants. You're grumbling against God. Every time you complain about your pastor, you're not complaining about your pastor. You're grumbling before the Lord. Every time you complain about your church, you're not grumbling about your church. You're grumbling before the Lord. That's why, when Saul was saved, Jesus' first question to Saul was, "Saul, Saul, why

do you persecute me?" Because whatever you do to one of the least of these, whatever you do to one of the ones that belong to Jesus, you do unto the Lord. Grumbling is not a spiritual qualification for growth in the kingdom. Grumbling is a sign of spiritual immaturity.

He said, "Here's how you're going to know the Lord. You're going to get meat every single night and you're going to get bread every single morning. And here's how you're going to know it's the Lord. Because we're in the middle of nowhere and our God can provide." God can provide out of nothing. Whatever circumstance you're going through and you say, "I see no way out, I don't know how the Lord could," you don't see a way, but God does. You may not know the way, but God can make a way for you to get out of whatever you're in. Amen? And it's interesting because he tells them to collect it daily, but then on the sixth day they'll collect twice as much and we'll see why. Because the seventh day is going to be a holy day. A sabbath that is set aside for the Lord.

It's really interesting. In the word, this is the day the Lord is made. Even in the Lord's prayer. Our Father who art in heaven. Hollow would be thy name. Let your kingdom come. Let your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. And then Matthew chapter six, verse 11 says what? Give us this day our daily bread. Why not this week? Why not give us this month? Why not give us this year? Because if we prayed that way, we would have an earthly storehouse rather than a daily dependence. God has everything you need. He's given you everything you need for life in godliness. Ephesians 1 says, "You were blessed with every spiritual blessing." You have

everything you need to accomplish everything God wants with your life that he puts you on the earth to do. You have it all. But where is it? He keeps it in heaven because, if he put it in earthly storehouses, you wouldn't seek him. You would just complain that you didn't have the things in the storehouse you need. God wants us to daily depend upon him.

One of the ways that you experience more of God's provision is not only earnestly hearing his voice and being obedient to it, but daily depending on him and leaning into him and saying, "I need more of You to get through this. And Lord, I'm trusting You in this season." That's what it looks like. Growth in Christ is growth in dependence upon the Lord. Our prayer life demonstrates our dependence upon the Lord. Our hunger for the Word demonstrates our dependence upon the Lord. Our worship to Jesus shows our dependence upon the Lord. Our zeal for evangelism shows our dependence upon the Lord. And as we're growing in our daily dependence upon Him and following His instructions, we have this reliance. Because we live in a world... I mean, I love to talk about vision. I love to talk about what God's going to do. That's the way God created me. I get fired up about the future and what could be.

But the reality is we don't even know what a day is going to bring forth. The reality is we can't make tomorrow happen. Listen to what one of the half brothers of Jesus said. James in James chapter four in verse 13 and 14. "Come now, you who say, 'Today or tomorrow we'll go to such and such a city and spend a year there and engage in business and make a profit.' Yet you do not even know what your life will be

like tomorrow. You are just a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away." Most of you, if I were to ask you the question today, how many are you going to be here tomorrow? Most of us would say, "Well, of course. I don't have any other plans." But you get a one-day contract with life. There's going to come someday where you're not going to have tomorrow. And it could be tomorrow. We just don't know. And so what God tells us to do is, today, focus on me.

Now, here's the reality. All of us, because we're all marred with sin, because we have a deep depravity inside of us, there's a different proclivity for different kinds of sins for each one of us. Some of us tend to be more persuaded by drug use and some of us more by illicit relationships and some of us by greed and some of us by other things. Some of you have a tendency to live in fear and anxiety. That that's one of the ways that grips your heart more than the rest of us. All of us can give into that, but for some of you, you live with fear and anxiety. Do you know why? Because you don't live in today. You're always thinking about the past and how much better it is or that it can't be forgiven or you think about the future and what it's going to be like and you can't control it. But if all you had to worry about was today, if all you said is, "God, you got me today. What do you have for me today?" Most of us can make it through today. Most of us worry about tomorrow and yesterday. That's why God says daily. Get up daily. Get your meat daily. Get your bread daily. Seek me daily, daily, daily, daily.

Think about any skill that you have in your life. Chances are, even if you had a natural gifting for it, it didn't just come overnight. There was some daily practice in those things. Spiritually, that's exactly the way that it works. Day after day after day

after day, you could devote yourself to follow what God's instructions are. Now, I've read through this book for about 30 some years. More intensely now than I ever have before. I'm familiar with a lot of God's instructions. I could probably tell you I've read it. If you show me the Bible, I know I've read it because I've read it through the Bible many times. But it's so interesting to me that, when I'm seeking the Lord earnestly and saying, "Hey, show me something in your Word that you have for me today," that God can take a scripture I'm super familiar with and show me an application to that I've never even thought of. You can't grow out of discipleship. You can't grow out of I don't have a need for God anymore. And when you position yourself to earnestly seek and obey his voice and you position yourself to daily go after him and follow his instructions, that's when you open up the floodgates of heaven. That's when you open up God's opportunity to work in and through you. And this is exactly what we see in this text.

Now, let me give you the third. If you're earnestly seeking to obey his voice and you're daily following his directives, then let me give you a third. If you're going to see God's gracious provision in your life, you must freely receive from him with contentment. Freely receive from him with contentment. Notice verse nine of chapter 16. "Then Moses said to Aaron, 'Say to all the congregation of the sons of Israel, come here before the Lord for he has heard your grumblings.'" Fifth time we've heard that. God hears all your grumblings. And God's going to be gracious in the grumblings. Verse 10. "It came about as Aaron spoke to the whole congregation of the sons of Israel that they looked toward the wilderness. And behold, the glory of the Lord appeared in the cloud."

I've never seen the glory of the Lord appear in a cloud. We do live in Colorado and there are some times we overlook the front range and we're like, "Whoa, that's awesome." There's other times we see massive rainbows here and we think that's incredible. Sometimes you get to go to the coast and you see the ocean and see how vast it is and you're like, "Whoa." I've never seen a cloud with the glory of the Lord in it, but I can only imagine it must have been an awesome sight for all of Israel to look out on the landscape, in the wilderness, in the middle of nowhere, and to see God in all of his glory. And out of that cloud he speaks. And he speaks to Moses and he says this. Verse 12. "'I have heard the grumbings of the sons of Israel. Speak to them saying, 'At twilight you shall eat meat and in the morning you shall be filled with bread and you shall know that I am the Lord your God.'"

How are they going to know that he's God? Because I've heard all your grumbings. I've heard you say, "Hey, we're out of water." I've given you water. "Well, we want meat." I'm going to give you meat. "Well, we want some bread too because it was so much better back in the..." I'll give you bread and meat. And here's how you're going to know. Every night, you'll have meat and, every morning, you'll have bread. Verse 13. "So it came about at the evening that the quails came up and covered the camp. And in the morning, there was a layer of dew around the camp. And when the layer of dew evaporated, behold, on the surface of the wilderness in the desert, there was a fine flake-like thing fine as frost on the ground."

So what happens? At night, they've asked for meat. So now in the middle of nowhere, every single night, quail comes in. Well, where do they come from? You

know there's people that try to explain that away with quail migration patterns? Every single night at the same time in the desert? I don't think so. That's my God that's doing that. So he provides meat at night. And then, in the morning, there's a dew on the ground and, when the dew evaporates, there's this flake-like thing. They're going to call it manna. Manna means what is it? I think it was like the first Frosted Flake or something like that. It was some sort of bread-like substance they'd never seen before. And now they got meat at night and they got bread in the morning.

And verse 15 says, "When the sons of Israel saw it, they said to one another, 'What is it?' for they did not know what it was. And Moses said to them, 'It is the bread which the Lord has given you to eat.'" You asked for bread. This is what you're getting here in the wilderness. If you drop your eyes down to verse 31. Here's why they named it that. "The house of Israel named it manna and it was coriander seed white and its taste was like wafers with honey." So it had a kind of a honey wafery kind of flavor to this bread that they were eating. It gave them the sustenance they needed for bread and then they had meat at night. Where are they? They're in the middle of nowhere. And they have all their needs provided for them.

Notice verse 16. "This is what the Lord has commanded. Gather of it every man as much as he should eat. You should take an omer apiece according to the number of persons each of you has in his tent." An omer was two quarts. So for each person they were to gather enough. Two quarts for each person in the family. That's how much you needed. God gave them the exact amount. If you take two quarts per person, you're

going to have enough for your family. And verse 17 says, "The sons of Israel did so. Some gathered much and some gathered little." It means this. God's always willing to provide for all your needs. He's a God of abundance. Take what you need. That's what he was saying. Daily, take what you need. But don't take more than what you need. Just take what you need. You'll have everything you need. You'll have enough to live on. Just take what you need. I'm willing to give you everything that you need. Just take what you need, but don't take any more. So if you have a big family, gather more. If you have a small family, gather less. Everyone had enough whether they were a big family or a small family.

Notice verse 18. "When they measured it with an omer, he who had gathered much had no excess and he who gathered little had no lack. Every man gathered as much as he should eat. Moses said to them," now here's the command, "Let no man leave any of it until morning." In other words, whatever you're going to get from the Lord, eat it. Use whatever God gives you. Put into practice whatever God shows you. Don't store it. Don't leave it hanging around. Don't take extra. Take what you need and use what you get. That's the command. Now, what's going to happen? Verse 20. "But they did not listen to Moses." Do you know why? Because they're just like me and you. God says do it this way. We think we know better. "But they didn't listen to Moses and some left part of it until morning." And here was the result. "And it bred worms and became foul and Moses was angry with them."

What did Moses say? Don't keep extra. Take what you need and eat it. Don't leave it sitting around. Some were like, eh, I need to leave something sitting around.

And what happened? It had worms crawling through it, it smelled really bad, and Moses is now angry at them. Why? Because they didn't do what God said. You see, sometimes when God provides for us richly, God provides for us abundantly, He doesn't provide so that we store it up. He provides so that our needs are met and anything extra we have, we'd give away. It's called contentment. It means I can take more, but why do I need more? I'm only taking what I need so I can continue to focus on the things God wants me to focus on.

The problem I have with the prosperity gospel is not that our God is not prosperous because He is because you can't outgive God. And I'll teach you on that in the spring. The problem I have with the prosperity gospel is when it falsely teaches that God wants to prosper you so that you can have an abundance here. God doesn't want to anchor you down here. If God gives you an abundance, it's to use and be generous for others so you can still just take what you need. That's what it means. And so he's showing them. I've got all you need. You can gather all you need. I'm going to do it every single day. Just take what you need. And some of Israel is like we'll take even more. Because if we can store some extra up, if we can have a little lecture on the side, then my faith can be in my storage house rather than daily in the Lord. And Moses got angry about that.

Verse 21 says, "They gathered it morning by morning, evening by evening, as much as he should eat, but when the sun grew hot, it would melt." So you had a chance to get it in the morning. If you didn't get the bread in the morning, it was going to melt away and it wasn't going to be there. If you didn't collect the meat at night, it

wasn't going to be there. There's always going to be meat and there's always going to be bread because God's always going to provide, so take what you need, but do it daily. That was his command.

Now, here's the problem that we have. We sometimes want to take God's prosperity just for us and we want to store it. I mean, think about buffets. How many of you've ever been to a buffet? Some of you aren't being honest. I'm looking at you. I know you've been to a buffet. I've been to buffets. The challenge at the buffet is most people take more than what they'll ever need when they go to a buffet. Because even if you're not going to eat something that looks so good in the buffet line or it's so hot or it's so delicious, well, I got to have some of that. I got to have some of that. I got to... I'll eat a little bit and then I'll leave that and I'll go get some more. That's what buffets do. And then you wonder, why did I ever come to the buffet? I didn't need that much. I'm never coming back to a buffet again. I don't need to eat anymore.

God offers a buffet. He just says, "Take what you're going to eat. Take what you need. I've got this buffet for you." What we tend to do is we want to take it and then we have these things in our culture. You know what they're called? They're called doggy bags. Doggy bags aren't for your doggy. You know that? We ask for a doggy bag. And what do we do? We then take the extra and we take it home to put it in our refrigerator. And what happens when we put it in our refrigerator? It's good for a day or two, but if you forget that it's there, it's going to be like overused manna. It's going to turn bad and sour and there's going to be worms in it. And sometimes we do the same thing with God's provision in our life. He blesses us with things and then we

gather these things and it hinders us from staying focused on him because we got to take care of all of our things. What's contentment look like? Contentment means I got everything that I need. I don't need anything extra.

Now, how much is too much? I don't know. It probably depends upon who you're asking. You bring anybody in here from a Third World country and they'll say all of you have too much. But how much is too much? Too much is when our focus is now off God daily and we're thinking about other things. That's when it's too much. I don't know if you can relate to this. When Kim and I got married a couple decades ago, I remember we had nothing. Nothing. Her parents gave us a little bed set so we'd have a bed and we had a couch and then my parents gave us a card table so we'd have something to eat off of. That's all we had. I wonder now, when I look at my house, where do we gather all this stuff? How come we have all this? We need to give this stuff away. And here's where I was convicted on this week even as I'm preaching. I'm preaching to myself when I'm telling you this.

Sometimes we're praying to God for specific things that we want God to move in, but we got so much excess in our life that God's like, "No, get rid of the stuff that you don't need or that you're not going to use." I mean, all of you have things here you haven't seen in six months and you wouldn't know where to find them if you started looking for them. Some of you guys have stuff that are a year old or 30 years old and the only good they're going to serve is that, when you die, your kids are going to come into the house and say, "Why did mom and dad save this? I'm throwing that away."

Why do you still keep it. There's a few things that are valuable and good. It's okay to have some treasures. I'm not telling you go home and throw out all your stuff. I'm saying, if there's anything in your life that is a burden from you seeking the Lord daily, it's too much.

I'm not telling you, you should only have one car. I'm not telling you, you should only have one house. I'm not telling you how to live. I'm telling you, you before the Lord, ask the Lord, is there anything in my life that's hindering my walk with you? That's the question. And some of you that will say, "I'm a teenager. I really don't have much stuff." Some of you teenagers, you have more junk and stuff than anybody else. That you're never ever going to use. I'm not talking about a monetary amount. I'm talking about an issue of the heart that keeps you from giving God your best. Contentment means I have everything I need. And because of the way I'm resourcing God and the kingdom of God, I have to trust him tomorrow and I have to trust him today for what he's going to do in my life. And we don't know much about that in our culture.

Even when we pray, Lord give us this day our daily bread, most of us as men, as we're providing for our families, aren't truly thinking, how am I going to provide food for my family today? Most of us aren't even thinking... I don't think that way when I pray that way. I'm not even saying that's wrong. What I'm saying is wrong is when we're not daily depending upon the Lord and know that the provision is coming from him. That's what I'm talking about. And it's an individual situation because the Holy Spirit speaks individually to all people. He's not saying don't have things. He's not saying don't take

things from me. He's not saying I'm not a God of abundance. Just don't let anything that I'm giving you hinder you from me. In other words, don't place the gift above the giver. It's not about the gifts. It's not about what God pours out. It's about who He is. Seek His face rather than just His hand. Amen?

Paul writes the same thing. As we went through this study of 1 Timothy. I've taught on these verses, but I thought it'd be worth repeating today. In 1 Timothy chapter six verses six and seven, as Paul writes to the church, he says, "But godliness actually is a means of great gain when accompanied by contentment. For we have brought nothing into the world and so we can take nothing out of it either." And that's where you get the illustration of you've never seen a hearse with a U-Haul on the back. I mean, nobody's taking things to their grave. It's not what you're accumulating here that matters. It's how you're glorifying God and advancing His kingdom that you're taking with you into the next life.

So don't let anything interfere with that commission. Don't let anything get in the way. Some of us don't get to see God's healing powers or his delivering powers or all those things because we're just storing up things on this earth. And we're so earthly focused, we can't expect a supernatural move of God. That's what he's saying. He saying, if you want to see God move, receive everything you need from him. He'll give you everything you need. But do it with contentment. Take the things you need to grow in the kingdom. Take the things you need to fulfill what God has for you. And I will tell you. God is an awesome God. He's a providing God. You can ask him for sustenance. You can ask him for provision.

I remember when God called me to seminary. I clearly heard his voice and I knew it was the Lord because, when I graduated from college, I said, "That's the last class I'm ever taking." And I was only off by a decade and three different schools. But the whole point is, when I went back to seminary, I said, "Lord, if you're going to send me, I'm not paying for it. You pay for it. Because if this is the pathway that you're taking me in, this is where you want to go, I'll go, but as I step in it, you do it. If I run out of money, I'm not doing it." And do you know that God provided for all of my seminary? I never paid for it and I graduated debt free. You know what I mean by that? That's worthy of more than a golf clap, by the way.

And here's why. Because God will take you that way. And I'm not talking about pastors. I'm talking about business guys. Two of the wealthiest guys I know, if you sat down with them, they would say, here's my business model. I give generously to the Lord over and above my tithe and I pray really, really hard and live out my identity in Christ and God opens up business deals for me. I know two guys personally that would tell you that and I know several other business guys I've read about. That's their business plan. And I've been in meetings with young bucks that want to learn how to make a lot of money. And I say, "Oh, I got a couple guys I can introduce you to. They'll sit you down, they'll give you two books, and they'll tell you what their business plan is."

And they're sitting there with pen and paper ready to write and they're like, "Two things you need to do. Start giving more financially to your church and start praying more that God will bless your business. That's my business plan, period." And some of

their faces kind of turn long. Like, that's not what I signed up for. No, but when you receive from the Lord and you're generous to the things of God, you cannot out-give Him. And the reason God blesses you is to be a blessing to others. That's what he does. And then you can walk out the fulfillment of your God-given destiny. So freely, freely receive from him, but do it with contentment. Not to hoard, not to take, but to receive and be grateful. Be generous with the things of God. Love the giver over the gift.

And then finally is this. As he's provided water, as he's provided manna or bread, as he's provided meat, he's also provided a sabbath for us. And the fourth way that you can experience God's gracious provision in your life is to weekly rest. That means, every single week, rest in God through your reverence of him. Rest in God through your reverence of him. Notice what he says in verse 22. He says, "Now on the sixth day, they gathered twice as much bread that two omers," which is four quarts, "for each one. When all the leaders of the congregation came and told Moses. And he said to them, 'This is what the Lord meant. Tomorrow is a sabbath observant. A holy sabbath to the Lord. Bake what you will bake and boil what you will boil and, all that is left over, put aside to be kept until morning.'"

So on day six, take two days full, save a day's worth. It won't spoil on day six because day seven is going to be a special day, a sabbath day to the Lord. "So they put it aside until morning as Moses had ordered and it did not become foul and there was no worm in it." Why? Because God commanded them to do it that way. On that sixth day, go ahead and get twice as much. Moses said, eat it today for today is a

sabbath to the Lord. Today, you will not find any in the field. God's only going to provide this bread and quail six days in the week. He's not going to put any out there on day seven. For five days, collect just what you need for that day. On day six, collect for day six and seven. Because on day seven, God's not going to provide. How much more clear can the instructions be? It's clear, right?

Notice what happened. Verse 27. "It came about on the seventh day that some of the people went out together, but they found none." Well, wasn't God clear? But there's some people that are like, oh man, I'm not even paying attention to that because I know tomorrow. So they get up and go out and they're like, where's the manna? Well, God told you it wasn't going to be there and He told you what to do and you weren't earnestly seeking his voice and you weren't daily depending upon Him and you weren't receiving what He wanted to give you, so there's nothing for you because you didn't do it his way. "Then the Lord said to Moses, 'How long do you refuse to keep my commandments and my instructions?'" Why is he talking to Moses? I would've been like, dude, I kept your instructions and commands. Why are you talking to me? Because Moses is leading God's people and he's responsible for them and he loves them.

Verse 29. "See! The Lord has given you the sabbath, therefore he gives you bread for two days on the sixth day. Remain every man in his place. Let no man go out of his place on the seventh day. So the people rested on the seventh day." We have a wrong view of rest in our culture. Some people think there's no need for rest. We just keep charging. We keep charging. We keep charging. We keep charging. God gave us

a model when he created the universe that he worked for six days and he rested on the seventh. Well, why did God need to rest if he's an eternal, self-sufficient, self-sustaining being? He wasn't tired. He was modeling for the nation of Israel. Take a break. For six days, you work really hard, but on the seventh day you rest.

This model of rest doesn't mean sit around and watch your... binge on your favorite Netflix videos. It doesn't mean just get to the mountains. It doesn't mean dip your toe in the ocean. That's okay, but your true refreshment comes from reverencing the Lord one day a week. When you spend time one day a week and you devote that day to the Lord in worship and in prayer and in reflection and in thanksgiving and in reverence and you can look back at this week and see how the Lord's provided for you this week and you can give him praise for what he's done this week, that is where refreshment and renewal comes from. Here's how I know that. I mean, read through the New Testament. I don't read about Paul saying, I've got to get away to the Mediterranean. I got to get on the ship. I mean, when he did that, he almost drowned. It never worked for him. What worked for him is, even when he was in a prison cell, he was rejoicing in the Lord always.

I'll say it again. Rejoice. Spend time one day a week. For many of you, it's today. The early church met on Sunday. Prior to that, Sabbath? Friday night to Saturday night. That's Israel's Sabbath. To this day, they take a day as they have every single generation since the Lord has established the covenant with them. And if you go to Israel, you'll know. You can't even push an elevator button. They go floor by floor by floor automatically so that there's no work done. It means this. Spend some day. For

me, it's about Thursday night at six until about Friday night at six. I try to turn off my phone. I do my best to turn off my phone. I do my best to spend time with my family. I do my best to thank the Lord in different seasons of that 24 hours for everything he's done in my life. Why? Because I need to be refreshed and renewed and see the Lord at work in my own life personally if I'm going to do his work the other six days.

We don't set a time anything for the Lord. It used to be even in our culture as Americans, probably a hundred years ago, everything's shut down on Sundays. There's nothing shut down on Sundays. There's sports going on. There's kids sports going on. We can be busy 24/7 around the clock. And if you don't take time to set aside a day once a week, you're too busy to experience the fullness of God. Pick a time. What does it look like for you? It's different for everybody. You say, "Well, you're mandating that?" I'm going to say, no, God did. But secondly, it's for your own good. Is it not for your good to rest in God and reverence Him and give him refreshment and communion?

So notice what the people did in verse 30. They rested on the seventh day. They've been doing it ever since. "The house of Israel named it manna. It was like coriander seed white and its taste was like wafers and honey. Then Moses said, 'This is what the Lord has commanded. Let an omer full be kept throughout generations that they may see the bread that I fed you in the wilderness when I brought you out of Egypt.' So Moses said to Aaron, 'Take a jar and put an omer full of manna in it and place it before the Lord to be kept throughout generations.' As the Lord commanded

Moses, so Aaron placed it before the testimony to be kept. The sons of Israel ate the manna 40 years until they came to an inhabited land. They ate the manna until they came to the border of the land of Canaan."

Now, an omer is a 10th of an ephah. So what was he saying? God is saying, "Now, listen. I'm going to give you an Omer full, two quarts worth, and I want you to save that. And when we establish the covenant," which he's going to do in about three chapters, "I want you to put it right in front of the testimony or the 10 Commandments and I'm going to keep that. It's not going to turn foul or anything. But every time you open the Ark of the Covenant, in every generation, they will see that I provided for you in the wilderness." It's God's way of saying, would you please continue to pass on the story about how good I am? Would you pass on the story about how great I am?

Some of you have little treasure boxes in your house where you keep certain things that have happened or checks that have come in or great stories in your family for your kids to read. I'm not very administrative. I'm not good at that. We tell stories in my family. We talk about what God has done and how he's done it. We'll tell the same story over and over so my kids can hear them ad nauseam. They're like, "Dad, I already know that one." Well, I'm going to tell it to you again. Because here's how God works. And this is what God was having him do. Save an omer full so that every generation that looks at it will know that I not only provided for you, but I provided for 40 years. 40 years is a long time of provision. We get upset if we have to eat the same thing twice. Got leftovers. God's like, "No, I'm going to give this to you for 40 years. I'm going to provide every single day for 40 years. If you want to take the time

to go get what you need, I will make sure you always have what you need. That's who I am." So He provided for them in a way that was incredible so that the next generation would know.

And he was faithful to his word. Because if you flip forward to Joshua chapter five and verse 12, after Israel gets to the promised land 40 years later, after they cross the Jordan, after they've all been circumcised and observed the covenant, notice what it says. Joshua five verse 12. "The manna ceased on the day after they had eaten some of the produce of the land. So the sons of Israel no longer had manna, but they ate some of the yield of the land of Canaan during that year." When they made it to the promised land, they didn't need manna anymore because they had everything that they needed in the promised land.

Friends, until we make it to the promised land, God's going to provide for us on a daily basis everything we need. But I'm here to tell you. When you make it into heaven, you ain't going to need manna anymore. You're not going to need to have provision every single day. Why? Because you are going to be transformed into his glorious image. You are going to be given an eternal body to be next to the eternal Son. To have all your needs met all the time, forever and ever, which will no longer take faith because you will see it by sight. But until that time, we're to reverence him. We're to reverence him. It means set aside a time. I mean, once a week. It's not too much to ask. And I'm preaching to the choir here because y'all are here today, but come to church. Not because you have to, not because it's boring, not because all these things, but come to give reverence to the Lord and refresh yourself in all that he's done for

you. He saved you from hell. He delivered you from sin. He deposited his spirit. He's giving you favor in your life. He's providing everything you need. Why would you not come just to spend time to thank Him for all he's doing? Amen?

And I love this because God doesn't say this kind of person I'm going to go after. It doesn't matter what vocation you are in life. You can be single or married. You can be male or female. You can work in the church or outside the church. You can be a businessman. You can be an athlete. You can be a coach. You can be a teacher. You can be an attorney. Whatever you are, God will meet you and provide everything you need to fulfill what He wants you to do in this season. If you'll earnestly seek to obey his voice, if he'll daily continue to follow his instructions, if you'll freely receive from him with contentment and you'll weekly rest in God through your reverence of him. When you do that, you hear stories all the time about how God's providing.

God is doing some amazing things in Brave Church. Did you know that? Last week, I taught on the fact that when they came across the Red Sea that the men led out in worship and they began to praise the Lord and sing to the Lord and all these things. On Tuesday, our shepherding elders were meeting here in Inglewood. During that meeting in Inglewood, we were talking about the fact that, as God continues to make us a word and spirit church, we want to see more of his spirit at work. Through healings or through deliverance or through prophetic words. One of our shepherding elders said, "I really wasn't raised in that environment and some of the things I've seen in that environment are a little crazy." And we assured him it is crazy and we're not trying to be crazy, but we want to be open to the fullness of the spirit. And he had said,

"I've never really seen the Lord work in a prophetic way like that." And so as we were talking, he said, "But I'm open to it. I'm willing to see what the Lord would do."

Well, wouldn't you know it. On Tuesday night, God gave him a prophetic word. And so he shared the prophetic word with our campus pastor who then brought it up on the platform. And we tested it. As soon as I heard, I said, "I know this is of the Lord." And you know what the word was? He felt in his heart that the spirit was saying, if Jeff said that the men should lead in worship, then why wouldn't we do that here first Tuesday? And so if you were here in Inglewood, I called all the men up to lead us in worship. How many were here and saw that? It was amazing, right? From here all the way at the first row and all the way around the whole aisle was all men singing with their heart out. I was holding a microphone, helping us lead in worship, which goes to show you it was anointed. And God was doing something special.

I told my wife and my kids... I've told them several times. I've told our church staff. In 52 years, in traveling around the world and being in all sorts of different churches, I have never been in a church where the men have actually stepped forward and led in worship. And it was awesome. It was awesome. Even as I was looking around at the women's faces... I could see in the women's faces. This is awesome. This is the kind of church I want to be a part of. And then we all worshiped together. Why? Because we want to celebrate what God's doing. He's saving people at Brave Church. He's delivering people at Brave Church. He's putting the word of God in people at Brave Church. He's depositing his spirit in people at Brave Church. He's advancing

His kingdom through the people of Brave Church. It's special here.

Many of you are seeing God's gracious provision in your life. And others that are yearning for it, God has shown you in His word now ways in which you can receive it. And one of the ways that God's provided for us is through his son Jesus Christ. Amen? That God the Father sent His son to be the Savior of the world. He sent Him to be both Lord and Christ. And that he came and He lived the perfect life. He shed his blood and died on a cross because you could never be good enough to get to God, but God was good enough to come for you. Three days later, He came out of the grave and He began to offer life to anyone who had turned from their sin and turned to Christ. And he established a supper right before he left that Christians have been commemorating for 2000 years. The body and blood of Christ, which declares the victory of the Lord until He comes.

And so today what we're going to do is prepare our hearts to take that meal together. I invite you to take the elements. And if you're home, you can gather them. Hold them in your hands. We're going to sing this song over you. However you're going to prepare your heart to worship. Whether you have that song sung over you, whether you're going to stand, however you're going to worship, let's do that. And then after the singing of this song, our campus pastors will come forward and lead us in taking of the elements together. Would you pray with me?

Father in heaven, we give you all the glory, honor and praise. Lord, as we worship your name because you are worthy and you are glorious and you're honorable. Lord, help us remember the sin from which you delivered us from. Help us remember

the fact that you are with us and help us remember the fact that, no matter where we are, even if we feel like we're in the middle of a desert wilderness right now, that you go before us. That you are with us, that you will never fail us, you will never forsake us, for you are our God. Father, we thank You for the gift of your son Jesus and all that you are. And You are so worthy. And we pray all this in Jesus' name. Amen.