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| **Bread for the Journey**  *Promise: we are fed Christ’s body and blood to sustain our pilgrimage* Pastor Timothy A. Duesenberg Exodus 16:2-15; Ps 145:10-21; Ephesians 4:1-16; John 6:22-35 (11th Sunday after Pentecost, Pr. 13), 8/4/24)  *And Moses said to them, “It is the bread that the Lord has given you to eat.”* – v. 15  **Lead In –** When the Lord God delivered the congregation of Israel from their enslavement in Egypt, the people needed to depart in haste. A long journey of freedom ending in the promised inheritance of a land flowing with milk and honey lay ahead. There was not ample time to pack all the necessary provisions. Very quickly Israel’s former masters would pursue after them to recapture and return them to bondage. Lacking adequate traveling provisions the congregation of God’s people would need to learn to rely on the Lord to supply and provide for them. Such trust did not come easy.   1. **When People of God Bellyache and Complain**    1. Looking back to the past with rose colored glasses…    2. Ostensibly against leaders and messengers, but…    3. Distinguishing between a lament and a complaint… 2. **A Gracious God Provides for an Undeserving People**    1. Frosted flakes in the morning, and pheasant on glass…    2. Manna – the bread from heaven - daily…    3. Bread for the journey. Will they walk in My Law… 3. **All This Points to the True Bread from Heaven**    1. Jesus claims that He is the Bread of Life…    2. We are situated in Christ as pilgrims…    3. Viaticum (voyage) – bread for the journey…   **Final Word –** Some of you will be familiar with J.R.R. Tolkien’s epic, fantasy novel “The Lord of the Rings”. For those of you who are not, suffice it to say that the protagonists in the story are on a mission which involves traveling into the heart of Mordor. The journey is fraught with hardships, danger, and encounters with malevolent beings. Frodo and Sam, two of the central characters, have minimal provisions. But they have been blessed with Lembas, given them by the elves. This elven bread had special properties to invigorate and sustain them. Tolkien, a devout Christian, no doubt intended this as a symbol of Holy Communion. For in Holy Communion Christ’s body and blood given baptized believers to eat and drink, provides ongoing forgiveness. It is life-giving. Indeed, it is bread for the journey. For it is bread from heaven, our Lord Jesus Christ.  **Nu 11:4-6** Now the rabble that was among them had a strong craving. And the people of Israel also wept again and said, “Oh that we had meat to eat! We remember the fish we ate in Egypt that cost nothing, the cucumbers, the melons, the leeks, the onions, and the garlic. But now our strength is dried up, and there is nothing at all but this manna to look at.”  **He 13:17** Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you.  **Ps 73:23-25** Yet he commanded the skies above and opened the doors of heaven, and he rained down on them manna to eat and gave them the grain of heaven. Man ate of the bread of the angels; he sent them food in abundance.  **Ps 73:26-28** He caused the east wind to blow in the heavens, and by his power he led out the south wind; he rained meat on them like dust, winged birds like the sand of the seas; he let them fall in the midst of their camp, all around their dwellings. | **Exodus 16:2-15 ESV**  *Bread from Heaven*  2And the whole congregation of the people of Israel grumbled against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness, 3and the people of Israel said to them, “Would that we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the meat pots and ate bread to the full, for you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger.”  4Then the Lord said to Moses, “Behold, I am about to rain bread from heaven for you, and the people shall go out and gather a day's portion every day, that I may test them, whether they will walk in my law or not. 5On the sixth day, when they prepare what they bring in, it will be twice as much as they gather daily.” 6So Moses and Aaron said to all the people of Israel, “At evening you shall know that it was the Lord who brought you out of the land of Egypt, 7and in the morning you shall see the glory of the Lord, because he has heard your grumbling against the Lord. For what are we, that you grumble against us?” 8And Moses said, “When the Lord gives you in the evening meat to eat and in the morning bread to the full, because the Lord has heard your grumbling that you grumble against him—what are we? Your grumbling is not against us but against the Lord.”  9Then Moses said to Aaron, “Say to the whole congregation of the people of Israel, ‘Come near before the Lord, for he has heard your grumbling.’” 10And as soon as Aaron spoke to the whole congregation of the people of Israel, they looked toward the wilderness, and behold, the glory of the Lord appeared in the cloud. 11And the Lord said to Moses, 12“I have heard the grumbling of the people of Israel. Say to them, ‘At twilight you shall eat meat, and in the morning you shall be filled with bread. Then you shall know that I am the Lord your God.’”  13In the evening quail came up and covered the camp, and in the morning dew lay around the camp. 14And when the dew had gone up, there was on the face of the wilderness a fine, flake-like thing, fine as frost on the ground. 15When the people 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 that the Lord has given you to eat.  **Jn 6:32** Jesus then said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but my Father gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.”  **Jn 6:35** Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst.”  **Jn 6:27** “Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you. For on him God the Father has set his seal.” |