

Sustenance on the Sabbath

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Date: 11 September 2022

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[0 : 0 0] Well, if we could, with the Lord's help and the Lord's enabling this morning, if we could turn back to that portion of Scripture that we read, the book of Exodus, Exodus chapter 16.

Exodus chapter 16. If we read again at verse 25. Exodus chapter 16 and verse 25.

Moses said, Eat it today, for today is a Sabbath to the Lord. Today you will not find it in the field. For six days you shall gather it.

But on the seventh day, which is a Sabbath, there will be none. But particularly the words at verse 25, where Moses says, Eat it today.

Eat it today. For many homes within our island communities, I'm sure it's safe to say that Sunday is not a Sunday without a Sunday roast.

[1 : 1 4] Sunday is not a Sunday without a Sunday roast. Because for many people, it's the one day in the week that a big meal is prepared for a large number or few.

And whether the roast is beef or pork or chicken or venison or duck, depending upon your palate, there will be alongside it. There'll be vegetables and probably a good helping of gravy and some, maybe a Yorkshire pudding as well.

And it makes you hungry just at the thought of it. But for many in our island communities, Sunday is not a Sunday without a Sunday roast. Sadly, for many in our island communities, they also use their Sunday roast as an excuse for not coming to church.

You know, I've lost count. I've asked people so many times about coming to church. And I've lost count the number of times people have excused or even accepted themselves from coming to church because they're making, they are making the sacred Sunday roast.

As if that was their salvation. And as if that was their security for heaven. And as if that was the most important thing to be doing on a Sunday morning. Making the Sunday roast.

[2 : 2 7] And I say all this because in the second half of Exodus 16, we're being taught here, not about our Sunday roast, but that Jesus is our sustenance.

And Jesus is our Sabbath. Jesus is our sustenance. And Jesus is our Sabbath. And there are two headings this morning.

Jesus, our sustenance. And Jesus, our Sabbath. So first of all, Jesus, our sustenance. Jesus, our sustenance. Look at verse 11. We read there, it says, And the Lord said to Moses, I have heard the grumbling of the people of Israel.

So 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.

Now as we resumed our study of the book of Exodus last Lord's Day, we saw that it's now exactly one month since the Israelites made their exodus out of Egypt.

[3 : 3 0] It was on the 15th day of the first month that the Passover and the plague of death took place in Egypt. And now it's the 15th day of the second month that the Israelites are now still in the wilderness.

They're continuing southeast along the coast of the Sinai Peninsula. And they've been walking for weeks on end. They've covered nearly a distance of 370 miles.

And they're nowhere near the promised land yet. And that's because the Lord is leading his people towards a mountain. He's leading them towards Mount Sinai. Because it's at Mount Sinai that the Lord will give his people the Ten Commandments.

We'll see that in Exodus chapter 20. But at this point in the journey, the Israelites, they have just left a place called Elam. They left the bounty of Elam.

And they've now entered the barrenness of a place called the wilderness of Sin. And food is now scarce. And they have nearly three million mouths to feed.

[4 : 33] And so what do the Israelites do? They murmur and moan against Moses. They grumble and groan against their God. And so as we saw last Lord's Day, the Lord tests his people.

He tests his people in order to teach them to trust him. He tests them to teach them to trust him. And the Lord tests his people in order to teach them about daily devotion and daily dependence upon him.

And the Lord did this by providing a daily portion and a daily provision of food. And he did that for 40 years throughout their wilderness journey.

Every day for 40 years throughout their wilderness journey. In the morning, the Lord provided those fine flakes of frost. If you remember last week, we were saying to the children that my immediate thought when I read that, fine flakes of frost, it went to the breakfast cereal, Frosties.

But as we read in verse 31, these fine flakes of frost, they looked like white coriander seeds. And they tasted like wafers made with honey.

[5 : 42] And yet this daily portion and this daily provision, it was so unusual. And it was so unknown to them that they called it manna. Which means, what is it?

That's what it means. What is it? Manna, what is it? But as Moses explained, it is the bread that the Lord has given you to eat. And so for 40 years, the Israelites had morning manna for breakfast and a quantity of quail for dinner.

For 40 years, the Israelites had morning manna for breakfast and a quantity of quail for dinner. That was their menu. That was their daily portion. That was their daily provision throughout their 40-year wilderness journey.

And it was the same portion every day. It was the same provision every day. Morning manna for breakfast, a quantity of quail for dinner. But as we said last week, the purpose of this daily portion and this daily provision was not only to teach them about daily devotion and daily dependence upon the Lord.

It was also to reveal the glory of the Lord. It was to reveal the glory of the Lord. And of course, the glory of the Lord was revealed to us in the portion of Jesus Christ.

[6 : 59] Because as you know, Jesus, he is the perfect provision for his people. He's the bread of heaven. That's what we saw in John 6. He's the bread of heaven who humbled himself from the crown of glory down to the cradle in Bethlehem.

Bethlehem, the house of bread. That's what Bethlehem means. It means house of bread. Because Jesus, he is the one, he is the bread of heaven. He's the one who even preached and proclaimed and said, I am the bread of life.

Whosoever comes to me shall not hunger. And whosoever believes in me shall never thirst. And so Jesus is the perfect provision. He's the perfect provision of salvation and sustenance for his people. He's the perfect provision of salvation and sustenance for his people. And you know, because this passage is a foretaste and a foreshadowing of Jesus, the bread of life, this passage has a lot to teach us about trusting Jesus.

This passage has a lot to teach us about daily devotion to Jesus and daily dependence upon Jesus. And we can actually see that because the Israelites, they were only to gather enough of a portion and provision for that particular day.

[8 : 23] They were only to gather enough for that particular day. The Lord commanded his people, gather of it, each one of you, as much as you can eat.

And as we said, it was the same daily portion, the same daily provision, manna for breakfast, quail for dinner. But we read in verse 21 that morning by morning they gathered their food as much as they could eat.

The daily portion and the daily provision was plentiful. There was no one struggling. No one struggled for sustenance. Everyone had enough.

No one lacked. No one lacked from the Lord's daily portion and the Lord's daily provision. And the reason for that was the Lord was their shepherd.

And that's what we've been shown here. The Lord was their shepherd. Jesus was not only their bread of life, but Jesus was also their good shepherd. Because as the good shepherd, and you see it, you see it in the narrative, as the good shepherd, Jesus is leading them.

[9 : 32] He's leading them beside the still waters of the Red Sea. He led them through the Red Sea, but he's leading them now beside the still waters of the Red Sea. And as the good shepherd, he's directing them towards the green pastures of the promised land.

As the good shepherd, he's guiding them each and every step of the way over the mountaintops and through the valleys of the wilderness. And as the good shepherd, Jesus was providing for them a table in the wilderness with their daily portion and their daily provision.

Jesus was their good shepherd. And is that not the confession of everyone who has Jesus as their good shepherd? Where we can say and sing with David in Psalm 23, The Lord's my shepherd. The Lord's my shepherd. I'll not want. I'll not lack. I'll not be in need. And I'll not be in need because Jesus is my sustenance.

He's the one who gives to me my daily portion and my daily provision. And you know, that's why we need daily devotion to Jesus and daily dependence upon Jesus.

[10:47] Because we need to come to Jesus daily. Not just once a week on a Sunday morning. We need to come to Jesus daily.

That's what this passage is teaching us. But we need to come to our shepherd daily in order to be strengthened and sustained in this wilderness journey. And as some of the Israelites discovered, much to their disgust, they discovered that you can't live off last week's portion and provision.

Why? Because it'll go stale and it'll stink. It'll be overrun and overcome with worms. And my friend, the thing is, you can't rely upon yesterday's bread to strengthen and sustain you for today.

You cannot rely upon yesterday's bread to strengthen and sustain you for today. You need to receive a daily portion and a daily provision from the hand of the good shepherd.

That's why Moses said to the people, he said to them, Don't save it for tomorrow. Eat it today. Don't save it for tomorrow. Eat it today. It's a daily portion from the Lord.

[11:57] And it's a daily provision from the Lord. So eat it today. And you know, this daily portion and daily provision, it was so important and so integral for the Israelites that at the end of their 40-year wilderness journey, the Lord reminded them on the banks of the River Jordan.

He reminded them in Deuteronomy chapter 8 of who it was that fed them every step of the way. He reminded them who it was that gave them that daily portion and daily provision every day of their wilderness journey.

The Lord said to them, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God. Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.

And you know, what this is teaching us, my friend, is that the word of God is to be our morning manna. The word of God is to be our morning manna. And we're to read it, we're to digest it in our daily devotion to Jesus and our daily dependence upon Jesus.

The word of God is to be our morning manna. So we're to take time, just as we do for our own breakfast, we're to take time to read the word of God.

[13:20] And I know that's not easy. I know that's not easy, especially for busy people living busy lives. With so many distractions, distractions within a family setting, or even distractions from social media first thing in the morning.

Not to mention the influence of the world around us, and all the information that has been poured into us all the time. But you know, we need to take time aside.

Because like it is with physical food, like it is with our breakfast, the most important meal of the day, we need spiritual food. We need spiritual food for our nutrition, our spiritual nutrition, and our spiritual nourishment.

And you know, this is Christianity 101. This is basic Christianity. That's what we're being taught here. That's what the Israelites needed to be taught. Take time aside to read God's word.

Read God's word so that you'll grow in grace, and you'll grow in knowledge of your Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. And you know, that's why there are so many daily devotional books, apps, and emails.

[14:33] They come in all forms. They're all there. All these books, apps, and emails, they're all there to exhort you, to encourage you, and to enable you in your daily devotion to Jesus, and your daily dependence upon Jesus.

One book that I often read when I was first converted, my mother always gave it to me, was Our Daily Bread. A fitting name, because that's what it is.

It is daily bread. Another book, I bought it recently at the Keswick Convention, Truth for Life, by Alistair Begg. Great book. Morning and Evening, by Charles Spurgeon.

Might be a bit harder to read. Day by Day, with my good friend J.C. Ryle. You can't go wrong with him. There's also Prayer, Praise, and Promises, by Warren Weersby, another great book that goes through the Psalms every day throughout the year.

And there's also those books, 365 Days, with John Calvin, or William Wilberforce, or John Newton, or D.L. Moody. They're all day one publications. And there's lots of these books, lots of these apps, lots of these emails that we can use, but each and every one of them is there to encourage and enable us in our daily devotion to Jesus and our daily dependence upon Jesus.

[15:51] And if you don't know which one to read, ask someone for advice. Ask someone, what do they read? What are you reading through? I think that's a great thing. We should always be asking one another, what are you reading just now?

But they're all there. All these things are there to encourage us to find our morning manna. That when we wake up in the morning, we go to our morning manna so that we have daily devotion to Jesus and daily dependence upon Jesus.

Because Jesus, as the Israelites learned, Jesus is the bread of life. Jesus is the good shepherd. Jesus is our sustenance. And Jesus is our Sabbath.

Jesus is our sustenance. And Jesus, secondly, is our Sabbath. So Jesus, our Sabbath. That's what we see secondly. Look at verse 22.

We're told there that on the sixth day they gathered twice as much bread, two omers each. And when all the leaders of the congregation came and told Moses, he said to them, this is what the Lord has commanded.

[17:00] Tomorrow is a day of solemn rest, a holy Sabbath to the Lord. Bake what you will bake and boil what you will boil. And all that is left over lay aside to be kept until the morning.

Now this chapter in Exodus 16, it not only sets before us the need for spiritual sustenance, but it also sets before us the need for the Sabbath.

And because the Sabbath was important to the Lord, he highlights it here, the Sabbath should also be important to the Lord's people. And you know, we ought to notice even the timeline of events here.

We're only in chapter 16. And we're walking our way towards chapter 20. And it's in chapter 20 that the Lord issues the Ten Commandments to his people.

So by this point in the narrative, the Ten Commandments haven't yet been given. They haven't been written on the two tablets of stone. But the thing is, the Sabbath has been emphasized.

[18:01] And the Sabbath has been emphasized because, well, as we know from the Fourth Commandment, the Fourth Commandment which relates to the Sabbath, the Fourth Commandment, it doesn't begin with the customary command that we're all used to, thou shalt not.

The Fourth Commandment begins with a word, remember. Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God.

Now, we'll look at this in more detail when we eventually reach the Fourth Commandment in chapter 20. But, you know, the reason the Fourth Commandment begins with the word, remember, is because it refers back to the creation.

It's going back to the book of Genesis. It's telling us to remember what happened at the beginning. That's why we often describe the Sabbath as a creation ordinance because it was at the creation that God ordained and ordered the Sabbath.

We're told at the beginning of Genesis that after God created the heavens and the earth in the space of six days and all very good, He rested on the seventh day. And the Lord sanctified the seventh day.

[19:21] He set apart the seventh day as the Sabbath day. And the word Sabbath, it simply means rest. The word Sabbath means rest.

Therefore, the Sabbath day is to be a day of rest. More than that, the Sabbath day is to be a day of resurrection. It's to be a day of resurrection. The Jewish Sabbath, as you know, it's held on the seventh day of the week, which is Saturday.

But the Christian Sabbath is held on the first day of the week, today. Sunday, the Lord's Day. It's the day on which Jesus Christ rose from the dead.

And since that first Easter Sunday morning when the tomb was found to be empty and the angels proclaimed, He is not here, for He is risen. Since that first Lord's Day morning, the church of Jesus

Christ has gathered together on the first day of the week to commemorate and to celebrate a risen Savior.

Therefore, the Christian Sabbath is not only a day of rest, it's also a day of resurrection. It's a day of redemption. It's a day of renewal. It's a day of restoration. It's the Lord's Day because Jesus, as He says Himself, He is the Lord of the Sabbath.

[20 : 44] In fact, that's what Jesus asserted in a firm, sorry Ivan, in John's Gospel. He said it in John's Gospel. He said that the Sabbath was made for man and not man for, I'm panicking now, I didn't hit him.

The Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath. Then Jesus said, therefore the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath. And you know, I want to be absolutely clear with you on this.

The Sabbath, the Christian Sabbath, the Lord's Day, it's not optional. It's binding upon all mankind because it's a creation ordinance.

The Sabbath is not optional, but equally so, neither is the Sabbath to be an obstacle. The Sabbath is not optional, but it's not to be an obstacle.

And I say this because, sadly, whenever it comes to the topic of the Sabbath, we often view it as, it's a taboo subject. And it's often viewed as a taboo subject because, well, the Isle of Lewis is often remembered for all the wrong reasons out with this island.

[21 : 56] It's remembered for its legalism about the Lord's Day. It's remembered for its protests and its padlocks on the Lord's Day. It's remembered for Christians condemning people, people who have moved into the community for putting their washing out or mowing the lawn on the Lord's Day.

Now, don't get me wrong. I love the Lord's Day. The Bible tells us to love the Lord's Day. I don't like seeing the erosion of the Lord's Day. But, you know, the fact remains, we live in a secular world and we cannot expect anyone to adhere to the Sabbath if they don't, first of all, know Jesus as Lord of the Sabbath.

We cannot expect anyone to adhere to the Sabbath if they don't, first of all, know Jesus as Lord of the Sabbath. And this is where the rubber hits the road because that's our priority as the Church of Jesus Christ.

Our priority is not to be legalistic about the Lord's Day. No, our priority is to make Jesus known. Our priority is to speak to people about Jesus and tell them that Jesus is Lord.

Our priority is to preach and proclaim Jesus Christ as Lord. Our priority is to work and witness the fact that Jesus Christ is Lord in my life.

[23 : 26] And He needs to be Lord in your life too. Therefore, we cannot, we cannot expect anyone to adhere to the Sabbath as much as we want them to.

We cannot expect them to adhere to the Sabbath if they don't, first of all, know Jesus as Lord of the Sabbath. But, you know, the opposite is also true because if Jesus is Lord over your life, if that is your profession and confession, Jesus is my Lord, the Lord is my shepherd, if Jesus is Lord over your life, then He must also be Lord over your Sabbath too.

That's what we're being taught here. If Jesus is Lord over your life, then He must be Lord over your Sabbath. And, you know, throughout history, keeping the Sabbath is what made the Lord's people different to and distinct from the world around them.

Not their legalism about the Lord's day. It was all about the fact that Jesus was Lord over their life and He was Lord over their Sabbath too.

There were many Christians in the New Testament church who had to work on the Lord's day. Something we don't often recognize because the majority of people used to worship on the Sabbath, the Jewish Sabbath, the Saturday.

[24 : 50] But when it became the Lord's day, there was that conflict between working and all these things. And so it's not about legalism on the Lord's day. It's that Jesus is Lord over our life and He's Lord over our Lord's day.

And, you know, sometimes I think we have a skewed view of the Lord's day because, as we said, the Sabbath has been sanctified. The Sabbath is set apart. The Sabbath is a special day for the Lord's people.

Therefore, we are to view the Sabbath as a gift. It is God's gift to us. Not a grudge. We're to see the Sabbath as a delight, not a dread.

We're not to dread the Lord's day. We're to view the Sabbath and enjoy the Sabbath as a benefit and a blessing, not a bind and a burden. And you know, my friend, the Lord's day, the Christian

Sabbath, Sunday, is to be viewed as a day of rest and a day of resurrection, not a day of restraint and a day of restriction.

And so I want to say to you, don't waste your Sabbath. Don't waste your Sabbath. Don't waste your Sabbath shopping or scrolling through Facebook.

[26 : 06] That's not what it's for. Don't waste your Sabbath numbing your mind with TV and social media. Don't waste your Sabbath doing things that you could do tomorrow. Don't waste your Sabbath planning and preparing for the week ahead.

No, the emphasis of the Bible is enjoy your Sabbath. It's a day of delight. It's a day to be enjoyed. So we're to rest on the Sabbath.

We're to read on the Sabbath, reflect on the Sabbath, refocus on the Sabbath, be refreshed on the Sabbath because Jesus is Lord over our Sabbath.

And my friend, if Jesus is Lord over your life, then Jesus must be Lord over your Sabbath too.

Therefore, spend your Sabbath with family. Spend your Sabbath with your church family.

Gather together to worship Jesus, the Lord of the Sabbath, morning and evening. That's what we were singing about in Psalm 92. We're to show forth His praise in the morning and we're also to gather again in the evening.

[27 : 15] We're to gather together and worship Jesus, the Lord of the Sabbath. But you know, more than that, I was reading a book recently and it talked about sanctifying your Saturday night.

Sanctify your Saturday night. So prepare for your Sabbath. Don't come to church sluggish and sleepy, ready to doze off. No, come to church rested. Come to church ready to worship because you're here to enjoy it.

You're here to delight in it. You're here to worship your risen Savior. So sanctify your Saturday night. Prepare for your Sabbath. That's what the Israelites were being taught here about the Sabbath.

They had to gather twice as much morning manna in order to prepare for the Sabbath day. They were to prepare for the Sabbath.

Do you know, I always remember Professor Donald MacLeod. He was my professor of practical theology when I was in the Free Church College. And I always remember him saying to us as students for the ministry, he said, prepare your sermons for the Lord's day because the Lord's day is a high and holy day.

[28 : 30] It's the day on which your congregation will gather before you to be fed from God's word. So feed them. Prepare your sermons, he said to us.

I still remember it. Prepare your sermons so that your congregation will be nurtured and nourished by Jesus, the bread of life. Prepare your sermons so that your congregation will grow in grace and that they will grow in knowledge of the Lord and Savior that is Jesus Christ.

And you know, I've never forgotten what Professor MacLeod said, which is why by God's grace, I seek to prayerfully prepare sermons in the hope, in the hope that they will be a blessing and a benefit to your soul.

Because you know, my love for you and my longing for you is that you'll come to church Lord's day by Lord's day, that you'll come morning and evening and that you'll come expectant, that you'll come eager, that you'll come even excited to be here because this is the place to be on the Lord's day.

My longing is that you'll come excited to be filled and fed with the manna from heaven, the morning manna that the Lord has provided.

[29 : 53] And you know, was it not Jesus who said in the Sermon on the Mount, His own sermon, He said, blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied. My friend, Jesus is our sustenance and Jesus is our Sabbath.

Therefore, we must come to Him and keep coming to Him every single day. And you know, the thing is, however you came into church this morning, you can leave here knowing that Jesus is your sustenance and Jesus is your Sabbath.

If you came here empty, Jesus promises to fill you. If you came in here low, Jesus promises to lift you up. If you feel like you're absolutely nothing, Jesus promises to nurture and to nourish you.

If you're struggling with sin or with stress or with sickness or suffering or sorrow, Jesus promises, Jesus promises from His Word to strengthen and sustain you in your soul.

[31 : 09] Why? Because Jesus is our sustenance and Jesus is our Sabbath. So enjoy your Sabbath. Enjoy your morning manna.

Come each Lord's Day eager and excited to taste and see that God is good. because whoever tastes and sees that God is good, the Bible says, and whoever trusts in Him is blessed.

So eat it today, said Moses. Eat it today, for today is a Sabbath to the Lord. Well, may the Lord bless these thoughts to us.

Let us pray. O Lord, our gracious God, we give thanks to Thee for Thy Word, for that wonderful reminder that man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.

And Lord, our prayer is that today we have heard from God. We have heard about Jesus. Jesus is our sustenance, the one who strengthens us and sustains us day by day, and Jesus our Sabbath, that He is Lord of the Sabbath.

[32 : 25] And help us then, we pray, to enjoy our Sabbath, to realize that it is a day that has been gifted to us, to enjoy with family and with our church family a day to worship and to give thanks to God for all His goodness to us.

Bless us then, Lord, we pray. Help us to enjoy this day, that in everything we say and everything we do, there would be to Thy glory to the furtherance of Thy kingdom and to lift up the name of Jesus. For we ask it in Jesus' name and for His sake. Amen. Thanks. I was wondering what I was going to do without a psalm book.

We're singing in Psalm 92 in conclusion. Psalm 92, it's on page 353. Psalm 92, Psalm 92, Psalm 92, Psalm 92, Psalm 92, Psalm 92, Psalm 92, Psalm 92, Psalm 92, Psalm 92, as we say, this psalm is a song or a psalm for the Sabbath day, and that's how it's described.

A song or a psalm for the Sabbath day, and it begins with those words, to render thanks unto the Lord, it is a comely thing. That's why we're here this morning.

[33 : 47] But in our coming to worship, we are here, and as we are under God's word, we flourish. That's how it's described in verse 12. But like the palm tree flourishing shall be the righteous one, he shall like to the cedar grow, that is, in Lebanon.

Those that within the house of God are planted by His grace, they shall grow up and flourish all in our God's holy place. So we're singing Psalm 92 from verse 12 down to the end of the psalm.

We'll stand to sing, if you're able, to God's praise. But like the palm tree flourishing shall be the righteous one, He shall like to the cedar grow, that is in Lebanon.

those that within the house of God are planted by His grace, they shall grow up and flourish all in our God's holy place.

And in old days, when others fade, they fruit still forth shall bring.

[35 : 53] They shall be fat and full of salt, and they be perished to show that upright is the Lord.

He is the Lord, He is a rock to me, and He from all unrighteousness is altogether free.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all, now and forevermore. Amen. Amen.