



Sunday, April 19th

Preacher: Pastor Howard-John Wesley

Sermon Title: 'The Ministry of Manna - Wandering in the Wilderness Part 1'

Scripture: Deuteronomy 8:1-5

Be careful to follow every command I am giving you today, so that you may live and increase and may enter and possess the land the Lord promised on oath to your ancestors. Remember how the Lord your God led you all the way in the wilderness these forty years, to humble and test you in order to know what was in your heart, whether or not you would keep his commands. He humbled you, causing you to hunger and then feeding you with manna, which neither you nor your ancestors had known, to teach you that man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord. Your clothes did not wear out and your feet did not swell during these forty years. Know then in your heart that as a man disciplines his son, so the Lord your God disciplines you.

Sermon Summary:

This sermon is Part 1 of a series on the examination of the signs of God's presence and guidance in the wilderness. The forty year journey of the children of Israel in the wilderness mirrors the uncertainty of the pandemic journey we find ourselves in today. Wilderness seasons bring scarce resources, difficult grief, political upheaval, and fear, but they teach us how to trust God in a way we never had before. In the midst of the wilderness we always find out that God provides. The first sign of God's presence and guidance over the children of Israel in the wilderness was **manna**.

Ministry of manna:

1. Manna is a question.
 - a. The literal Hebrew translation of manna is "what is it?" In the wilderness sometimes we have to live with questions.
2. Manna had to be collected early in the morning.
 - a. In the wilderness how you start your morning will determine how the rest of your day goes.
3. Manna had to be distributed among all the people.
 - a. In the wilderness God forces us to examine our greed and our need.

4. Manna could only be collected day-by-day.
 - a. In the wilderness, God is teaching us to live one day at a time.

Life Application Questions:

1. Pastor Wesley notes that God gave the children of Israel instructions to *gather the manna first thing in the morning*. This instruction reminds us that in a season of uncertainty, we must wake up, go outside, and see what God has provided; we must wake up and find our manna. During this season, how do you start your mornings? Do you focus on the manna that God has provided or other things?
2. Where in my faith walk have I trusted or not trusted God's manna before, and what was the result?
3. How has God shown God's self to me in past wilderness seasons? Where do I seek God in the present? Where can I see 'manna' appearing in my daily schedule during quarantine?
4. We learn from the sermon, that the ministry of manna is that God provides. When the Israelites saw the manna on the ground they called it manna because they did not know how it got there. Think about all the manna moments you've experienced in your life. How did you know it was manna?
5. Wilderness is a period of renewed appreciation and gratefulness. What active steps can you take to center your focus and perspective on being grateful?

Spirit Work:

1. In order to fully understand the ministry of manna, we must read Exodus 16. This week reread Exodus 16 line-by-line while asking the Holy Spirit to reveal something new. After reading, journal your notes and reflections.
2. *Manna prayer*: When going through a wilderness it is easy to feel overwhelmed with uncertainty— and to feel as if you have more questions than answers. Take one day this week to be honest and transparent with God. Write down all the questions of uncertainty you are currently facing. Next to each question right down the answer: manna. Pray over your questions and uncertainties believing that God will provide manna to supply all your needs.
3. God's restriction on how much manna the Israelites could gather each day was to force them to only collect what they need. During this time examine your greed vs. your need. Reflect on your finances, wardrobe, home appliances, books, accessories and identify what is enough. How can you use your excess to be a blessing in the life of someone today?