

Exodus 16:1-36

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- [0 : 0 0] Lord, we are satisfied with you, our life source, our living bread, our all in all.
Blessed be your holy name. A sound of satisfaction.
We find our satisfaction in you. A mist in the midst of the husk of this world that bid us come and gorge and partake.
We find satisfaction in you. You are the living bread. You are the living word. You're the living water.
You're all that we need. And we confess that and acknowledge that today. Blessed be your worthy name. Amen.
- [1 : 0 4] Jesus is the living bread, the living word. Our all in everything. And we bless him this morning.
If you've ever found yourself in one of life's many difficult places, you know that difficult places are not fun places to be in.
Some of you understand very well. What that means. If you haven't quite got it yet, just keep on living.
You will understand it better. You will understand it better. By and by. Complicated relationship that's filled with conflict rather than harmony.
Difficult place. Difficult place. Difficult place. A physical or mental illness that defies the best of medicine.
- [2 : 0 9] Difficult place. Difficult place.
a difficult place as can underemployment. You're not quite using your potential. Academic or professional pursuits can be very, very difficult places. You wonder if you're going to ever get out from under them.
Parenting is that place for some of you, isn't it? A difficult child. And you don't quite know what to do. You've tried one thing or another.
Something seems to be missing. Difficult places. The rugged place between here and there. Between where you are and where you really would like to be.
The list can go on, couldn't it? For ancient Israel, it was among other places, the stretch of road between the Red Sea and the Promised Land.
- [3 : 3 7] Very challenging. and with great intention, we've entered into a stretch in Exodus where the narrator is showing you the struggles along the way.
On the one hand, it's revealing something about the people of God. On the other hand, it's revealing quite a bit about God himself. I want to highlight three things for you today, and I trust that you will pray with me and hear me as we walk this together.
One of the things that I love about being a proclaimer of God's word is that we get to taste it first and hold up the mirror to ourselves first, and then we get the opportunity to hold up the mirror to you.

But it's not just for you, it's for all of us because you and I, all of us need it. First thing I want you to see is in verse 1, and yeah, that's where we see a difficult place.

In verses 2 and 3, we go from there to a difficult people. Difficult place on the one hand, but from what we've heard and seen in the text, we know that we're dealing with some difficult people.

[5 : 02] But then in verses 4 and 5, we encounter a very gracious provider. This text is about the sufficiency of God to sustain his people.

That's what, if you were looking for a theme or big idea, the sufficiency of God to sustain his people.

And of course, before I wrap things up, I want to, I want to help you to see the, both the reflections in Christ and reminders from Christ as far as his sufficiency for the people of God.

first of all, look at the difficult place. You see that there? Chapter 16, verse 1. They set out from Elim. All the congregation of the people of Israel came to the wilderness of sin, which is between Elim and Sinai on the 15th day of the month after they had departed from the land of Egypt.

One month removed from Egypt. and the difficult place particularly here, it's known as the wilderness of sin. Rightly so.

[6 : 16] When we think of wilderness, we think of a barren wasteland. Water and other resources are not necessarily absent, but they are scarce.

And they, and sustaining life, though not impossible, can be difficult and hard in the wilderness. It's a rough country. It's a difficult place.

While the wilderness was not meant to be Israel's permanent home, it did serve a purpose in the purposes of God for his people.

As a matter of fact, it was a sanctifying, educational purpose purpose that God had in mind for his people. Moses would later write these words in Deuteronomy chapter 8 verses 2-4.

And you shall remember the whole way that the Lord your God led you these 40 years in the wilderness. Check this out. That he might humble you, testing you to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep his commandments or not.

[7 : 27] The wilderness. A sanctifying, maturing purpose for God's people. Huh?

Have you ever seriously pondered the value of deprivation or an empty cupboard or an empty bank account or prolonged illness or a broken relationship?

Have you ever thought about what's good about this bad? situation? What is it that God might be teaching me through this less than the best situation?

Hmm? The wilderness of sin. Now, on the one hand, Israel, they were big time sinners in the wilderness, but that's not why it's called the wilderness of sin because of what they did.

Huh? It could well be base for from which Sinai itself is derived, Sinai Peninsula there in Palestine.

[8 : 33] Huh? But also, it may be associated with the worship of the moon god, sin. Huh? This was but one of several wilderness kind of places in the Sinai Peninsula, which was a very difficult place for them to be.

It was foreign. It was strange. And for them, it was not a safe place. Did not have the familiarity, the predictability, and the comfortability of Egypt.

It was a new place for them. And while a difficult place, it was a place with a potential for growth and development and maturity.

You know, we're not rough places so ordered by the Lord with such and mine. And should we not, in view of that, be rather optimistic as to how the Lord might use difficult places, challenges in life for our growth and our development?

Some of you all know about that. If I were going to your house, I would see those barbells. Five pounds, ten pounds. Some of you all have those that I'm not even going to try to lift.

[9 : 44] Why are you doing that? So you can bulk it up. So you can sort of strut a little bit. Let people see your six-pack, twelve-pack, whatever it might be.

It's for your growth, for your development, for your maturity, for your strength, if you will. Count it all joy, my brothers James Wright, when you meet trials of various kinds.

For you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness, the muscle of steadfastness. You're packing that today? And let steadfastness have its full effect that you may be perfect, mature, complete, lacking nothing.

More than that, Paul writes, we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, endurance produces character, and character produces hope, hope, and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.

Find yourself in a difficult place today? Challenging, strange, uncomfortable, foreign?

[11 : 08] You've got flashback of the good old days. Living at home when you were single, our marriage, our different geographical place, our different job.

For some of you, you in Chicago have not warmed up to one another just yet. Yours might be a health or relational challenge, but how are you handling it?

The Christian journey will take us through some very difficult, strange places, but here's one of the things that you need to know. Strange places can be very sacred places, if we understand that they're designed by God for our growth and for his glory.

The wilderness was a difficult place, but the text also reveals a difficult people. You see that in verses two and three? Check it out. The whole congregation of Israel grumbled.

Can somebody give me a good grumble this morning? Oh, it was a grumble and it was a mass kind of grumbling, if you will.

[12 : 20] They grumbled against their spiritual leadership, Moses and Aaron in the wilderness and the people of Israel said to them, and listen to this, would that we had died by the hands of the Lord in the land of Egypt when we sat, check this out, meat pots, by the meat pots and ate bread to the full, for you brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger.

Grumbling, these are the people that he has saved and rescued. He was wanting them to get to know him as savior and healer.

They had experienced his hand on the one hand, but they still needed to understand his heart and his desire for their growth and their maturity.

Grumbling, difficult people. You can tell them by the talk, the speech. Grumbling people, we can tell them, and grumbling, another way to describe a grumbling, it's baby talk.

Grumbling, some synonyms, murmuring, complaining, pouting, and here's a good one, y'all will love this one, whining.

[13 : 51] Yeah? The language of the immature, the language of the untrained. And according to what we read in verse 2, there was an epidemic outbreak of grumbling.

No restraint. They felt it and they said it. Huh? Just what did they say? Oh, remember when we had meat and bread to the full.

Check that out. Think about it. Meat and bread, God's got something for them. Huh? God's going to have some meat and he's going to have some bread for them.

They enjoyed it by, at least they said that they did it. They weren't so fond of it when they were around the pods. But the flashback, I mean, this is the reflection of an immature person.

Their dissatisfaction is evident in what they said. Underneath that dissatisfaction was discontent and underneath that discontent there was an unbelief had not arisen to trust in the Lord.

[15 : 06] Like children on a journey who leave familiar things behind, they reminisce and they whine about the good old days in Egypt.

Imagine you on a vacation to a very great place and you got the kids in the car and little Johnny said, I want to go back home. And T'Nana chimes in with you, I want to go back home.

They're thinking about returning and you know you've got this great, great journey in mind for them and all they can think about is what's in back of them.

Difficult people are known! as far as the pattern of rest that was established even in creation and he set up a system that would meet their needs and mimic his character and his mode of operating and he wanted them to embrace not only it but he wanted them to embrace him.

But notice what they did. Look at verse 20. they did not listen to Moses. The instructions were clear.

[16 : 50] Six days and don't leave any of it but they left some of it to the morning. Bread worms and stank.

Moses was angry with them. Morning by morning they gathered to eat as much as they could eat. But when the sun grew hot it melted. There was a prescription for the Lord's provision.

And again they did not obey. Notice what they did after they're told that heaven's supply would not be dispensed on the Sabbath. Look at verses 27 through 30. Seventh day some of the people went out together but they found none just like he had said.

It wasn't going to be there. The Lord said to Moses how long will you refuse to keep my commandments and my laws? See the Lord has given you the Sabbath therefore on the sixth day he gives you bread for two days remain each of you in his place let no one go out of his place on the seventh day.

And finally they rested on the seventh day. Difficult people in a difficult place but we must not allow those things to obscure our view of the gracious provider the Lord who saves.

[18 : 02] And particularly look at verses 4 and 5. the Lord said to Moses the Lord comes into view here again they had grumbled against ultimately against God and the Lord he's not going to be outdone by Pharaoh in Egypt as far as the meat pots and the bread of Egypt.

Notice what he says I am about to rain bread from heaven for you and the people shall go out and gather a day's portion every day I've got something for you daily that I may test them for what reason to see if they're going to walk in my law or not and in ways they failed the test they had to be corralled again they had to be corrected on the sixth day when they on the sixth day when they prepare what they bring in it will be twice as much as they gather daily we saw where they validated that so Moses and Aaron said to all the people at evening you should know that it was the Lord who brought you out of the land of Egypt he's going to prove himself because he is going to provide for them and it's going to be the Lord who I mean his glory appears so it's

God is at work in the midst and amongst his people the Lord laid out a plan to sustain a difficult people in a difficult place bread from heaven those who had been saved by grace would be sustained graciously sustained by God the food of their slave existence was meat and bread but God in his efficiency would do no less for those who he had brought out in their freedom his way of working was revealed in verses four and following the God who saved them had more than enough to sustain them according to the text the bread was regular daily provision for God's people seems like the meat was occasional a sort of a special treat we see it here where God gives it and then we see another incident where God provided quail and certainly there are those who would give somewhat of a naturalistic explanation for the quail flying low onto the ground at a particular season of the year but on the other hand this was something that God in his own wisdom and sovereignty provided for them for this particular time a clear indication that it was God who was at work who was doing the work at that particular time and there of course there are those who would provide a naturalistic explanation for manna but as we look and see

God's provision for all of those years daily and then it was cut off on a certain day and started again it was God at work in the midst of his people just think about it if you had to be sustained on manna for all of those years I'm sure there were some sisters who were around the camp who were sharing manna recipes with one another girl you need to see what I did with this today I mean me and my children we really ate some manna have you borrowed it have you baked it a long time on manna bread from heaven that the Lord would provide from God clearly the supernatural kind of way God showed up and when

God showed up his provision showed up for his people look at Moses words in verse 15 very classic when the people of Israel saw it well verse 16 this is what the Lord has commanded it let me back up Moses said it is the bread that the Lord has provided for you God's provision from him to his people here's some descriptions of it he miraculously and consistently provided food sustenance from heaven the provision matched their circumstances manna was wilderness food manna from the Hebrew what is it and they then it was described as far as what it looked like and what it tastes like and all of that he provided for them both efficiently and proportionally exactly what they're needed and he taught them in ways that provided for them in ways that taught them about the character and the ways of God

[23 : 34] God's provision for difficult people in a difficult place but then are there not reminders and reflections of God's provision in a great way through the person and the work of Jesus as Christians we read this through Christian eyes and we see in this the reminders and reflections of the all sufficient person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ I want you to turn with me to a couple of passages because this really helps bring it to light for us on today what about the hunger test in the wilderness turn with me to Matthew chapter three because on the one hand Israel failed the test in the wilderness but

Jesus passed the hunger test God's people in the wilderness did not fare well when they were tested there and the experience of Jesus when tested clearly contrasted with their experience matter of fact look at Matthew chapter three and verse 17 this was at Jesus baptism where there was a voice from heaven affirming his sonship and behold a voice from heaven said this is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased right before this temptation in the wilderness there's the affirmation from God of his son and notice Satan's temptation if you are the son of God or since you're the son of God do A B C and D look at chapter 4 verse 1 then

Jesus was led up by the spirit notice where in the wilderness to be tempted by the devil and after fasting 40 days and nights he was hungry there it is the tempter came and said to him if you are the son of God command these stones to become loaves of bread and so forth and so on where Israel failed the hunger test Jesus passed the hunger test in others passed the test in the wilderness where Israel failed check this out the test time for Jesus was not grumbling time test time was trust time for him think about it how do you respond in difficulty Jesus leads the way for us does he not it's trust time test time is not wine time it's trust time when you find yourself in a tough place a difficult place a remember a wilderness remember the test time is trust time and when you do that you will find that he is a gracious provider in all of the difficult places of life

Jesus passed the test in the wilderness and in doing that he teaches us how to do the same man shall not live by bread alone but by every word of God it is written you shall not tempt the Lord your God don't tempt him trust him huh Jesus shows us how to pass the test in the wilderness huh but not only did Jesus know the life giving power of trusting in God's word he also knew that he was the real source of life that had come into the world turn up over to John chapter six and look at verse 30 and following very interesting what we see in John chapter six because there are things that clearly mirror what we see in

Exodus chapter 16 look at verse 30 and following so they said to him then what sign do you do that we may see you and believe what work do you perform our fathers ate manna in the wilderness as it is written he gave them bread from heaven to eat huh Jesus 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 they said to him sir give us this bread always 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 but I said to you you have I said to you that you have seen me and yet do me will come to me and whoever comes to me

[29 : 20] I will never cast out for I have come down from heaven not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me and this is the will of him who sent me that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me but raise it up on the last day for this is the!

so the Jews what grumble about him because he says I am the bread that came down from heaven look at Jesus words in verse 43 Jesus answered them do not grumble among yourselves no one can come to me unless the father who sent me draw him and I will raise him up on the last day there's another grumbling verse 2 look at verse 61 Jesus here speaking to his disciples Jesus knowing in himself that his disciples were grumbling about this said to them do you take offense of this and what if you see the son of man ascending to where he was before John chapter 6 an unbelieving dissatisfied group of people who voiced their complaints and dissatisfaction with

Jesus the deliverer who had provided for hungry people and they wanted him to get on board with their agenda and Jesus explained to them his agenda that he in fact was the bread of life huh as an exodus the provision of God was sufficient for his people for them and he demanded trust from them even so with Jesus the bread of God come from heaven who gave himself for the life of the world how will you respond to him Isaiah reminds us may it not be true of us he was despised and rejected of men a man of sorrows acquainted with grief huh let's not despise and reject him the provision of God who the person and work of his son is more than enough for our satisfaction in life whether there are difficult places or wherever you are wherever you find your feet today huh remember that difficult places need not make you a difficult person huh don't allow them to bring out the worst in you when you find yourself in a difficult place trust in the one who has declared himself to be the very bread of

God that's come down from heaven and be nourished in him be strengthened in and through him huh test time is training time through the difficult places of life you and I can grow in our trust and thereby grow in our likeness to Jesus huh test time regardless of where you are it's test it's trust time for you the passage is about the sufficiency of God what we see in John chapter 6 compliments that and speaks about the one in whom we need to ultimately place our trust and some of you really need to hear this today huh cause you in a difficult place don't allow yourself to be a difficult person huh trust in the one who is our savior our sustainer and ultimately the one who satisfies us with bread from heaven even the

Lord Jesus Christ I urge you to place your full trust in him today let me pray father we love you and we give thanks unto you this morning and we exhort and encourage your people today regardless of where we find our feet may our hearts be warmed and inclined to place our full trust in you the very bread of life in whom we find our ultimate life satisfaction we would say with the songwriter of old bread of heaven bread of heaven feed me till I want no more and we say with a more contemporary songwriter that you are more than enough for us blessed be your name let us stand and sing together