

The God Who Gives Life

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[0 : 00] Now, it's a bit of a warm day out. Some of you will probably start feeling thirsty at some point during the sermon.

I know I will, because I'm going to be doing the talking. How many of you feel confident that when you leave from here this afternoon, that you're going to go home and that you are going to be able to turn on the tap and you're going to have wadden tree?

If you feel confident in that, raise your hand. Some of you don't look very confident at all. Wow. Better call the plumber. How many of you feel confident that when you go home, when you go to bed tonight, when you wake up the next morning, there is going to be food for you to eat in your pantry, in your refrigerator tomorrow morning?

Hands up. Hey, we're all doing pretty good for ourselves here. That's not a bad situation to be in. Well, in the historical account that Chris read for us at the beginning of the service from the book of Exodus, God's people, the people of Israel, were not in that situation.

They didn't have that confidence. At one point, thousands of years ago, they're not feeling the same confidence you're feeling right now that you know where your water is going to come from, you know where your food is going to come from.

[1 : 15] Where we last left them back in April, we saw that the Lord God has brought the entire nation on this great exodus from slavery in the land of Egypt.

And God has told the people that he is going to bring them to a land that he has promised to their ancestors. He's going to bring them to the land of Canaan, their new home, the promised land. Now, what the people of Israel hadn't considered carefully in their slavery is a geographical fact. There is a desert between Egypt and Canaan.

There is a desert standing in between where they were and where they're going to. The Sinai Desert. This is a land that, at the time, it was inhabited only by pockets of nomadic tribes, many of them warlike, as we're going to learn next week.

This wilderness, this desert, this is not the sort of place that can sustain, that can support a huge nation-sized caravan that includes children, that includes herd animals.

[2 : 24] And the wilderness brings with it a difficult set of circumstances. It's going to bring with it one crisis after another that the Lord is going to use to challenge, to test the faith of the people of Israel.

As he prepares them, he's preparing them to receive his law. He's preparing them to receive the clearly defined terms of his new relationship with them.

So the first crisis that the people encounter in the wilderness, a crisis they encounter as they just barely start their journey, is found in Exodus chapter 15, verses 22 through 27.

Now, if you're using one of the blue Bibles that our ushers handed out, that's on page 57. Exodus chapter 15 will start in verses 22 through 27. And today we're going to continue all the way through the end of chapter 16.

But the circumstances that lead to the very first crisis that they face, the circumstances are laid out in verses 22 and 23. Then Moses made Israel set out from the Red Sea.

[3 : 29] And they went into the wilderness of Shur. They went three days in the wilderness and found no water. When they came to Mara, they could not drink the water of Mara because it was bitter.

Therefore, it was named Mara. Now, as you've probably figured out just from reading about it, the word Mara simply means bitter. They named the place after they tasted the water.

And the people, they are running out of water to drink. Now, those of you who've taken any sort of survival training, you probably have a pretty good idea of how long a human being can survive

without water.

We can survive maybe three days without water in a desert climate. Maybe more if you're in a place that isn't as hot and dry. The people of Israel, they're out of water.

And what's good, it seems to them, is they finally encounter a source of water. They're desperate.

They encounter a source of water. They're thrilled to get that. I can just imagine they are racing down to the source of water, whether it's some sort of pond or lake, something like that.

[4 : 38] They race down there, take a drink, only to have their hopes absolutely dashed, crushed. When they discover that the water they thought was going to keep them alive is in fact a thing. It is fantastic.

It's undringing. Now, about a year and a half ago, our journey class, we studied together a series that was titled How People Change. How People Change.

How People Change. And we learned there that when we encounter difficult circumstances, when we encounter desert heat in our lives, you and I respond in one of two ways.

We either respond to the heat by bearing fruit, or we respond to the heat by growing thorns. But the same is true for the Israelites.

You see that in verse 24. The people grumble against Moses, saying, What shall we drink? Now, I want to save for next Sunday our discussion of what it means to be grumbling.

[5 : 45] I feel absolutely free to do that because Randia Camp a few weeks ago stole all of my thunder and spoke about that. So we can save that for next week because the grumbling is not going to stop here.

It's going to keep going. But there is one thing that we can notice. Notice on the surface of this. That's a complaint they give.

What shall we drink? That's a pretty straightforward complaint, isn't it? And it seems fairly reasonable. I mean, that's a good question. What shall we drink? I want to know the answer to that too.

The problem here is not what's being said. What's being said is a legitimate question. The problem is what isn't being said. Notice here, no one is appealing to the Lord.

I mean, this is a God who has just showed his signs, his wonders, his power in the land of Egypt.

This is the God who brought them, opened up the Red Sea, brought them through it. As the army of Egypt was chasing them, he brought the Red Sea back down that army.

[6 : 48] You'd think that's where they would go. But that's not who they're going to. No one's appealing to the Lord. No one's even offering any suggestion that they think the Lord is going to be of help to them.

They're just going straight to Moses and grumbling against him. Now one commentator on this passage observes, No sooner do the Israelites leave Egypt under the most miraculous of circumstances, than they within one month of their departure lapse into an old pattern.

They again use their own perception of their circumstances as a standard by which to base reality. So the problem here is not the difficult circumstances.

It's not the desert heat. The problem here is their perception. The problem here is their interpretation of the difficult circumstances. Here's what they perceive.

All they feel are dry mouths. All they touch with their sides are empty flasks. All they see is endless desert. All they taste is bitter water.

[7 : 55] All they perceive is misery and impossibility. They don't perceive here an opportunity.

But an opportunity, a challenge, that is what the Lord intends. Moses brings the people's complaint to the Lord. Verse 25. He cried to the Lord.

And the Lord showed him a log. And he threw it into the water. And the water became sweet. Now notice the progression in that verse.

So Moses, instead of just grouching about the problem to Aaron and its other people, Moses, where does he go? First he speaks to the Lord. He pleads with the Lord for help.

Then the Lord reveals his commanded response, what Moses should do in response to the situation. Moses obeys the command. The water becomes sweet.

[8 : 56] Now this week in our elder board meeting, we were talking about this, discussing these events together. Carl, I think, put it really succinctly when he observed this. Obedience leads to an experience of the Lord's goodness.

Obedience leads to an experience of the Lord's goodness. Obedience turns the bitter water sweet. That's why the Lord tells Moses in verse 26.

If you will diligently listen to the voice of the Lord your God, not the voice of other people, if you will diligently listen to the voice of the Lord your God, and do that which is right in his eyes, not what's right in your own eyes, not your own ideas about how to respond to this problem, and give ear to his commandments and keep all his statutes, not the advice and suggestions that other people are giving you to cope with your problem, In other words, the Lord is teaching the people of Israel two things.

Disobedience brings pain and suffering, like the great plagues that the Lord brought on the Egyptians.

The commentator that we read earlier makes this observation. The first thing that Israel does after crossing the sea is to rebel by not trusting in God's goodness.

[10:37] An Egypt-like faith awaits them if they continue down this course. God's threat is severe, but it is precisely so at the outset of their relationship together.

The Lord's making it clear right from the start, don't think like the Egyptians. Don't start acting like the Egyptians. Or I'll respond to you like I did with the Egyptians.

Don't go back. Because God is not only great. They seem to get that. God is not only great, God is also good.

And the Lord is making it clear that in their new relationship with Him, it is obedience that is going to lead to an experience of the Lord's needs.

Here's the point. In difficult circumstances, the Lord challenges us to trust and obey Him. In difficult circumstances, the Lord challenges us to trust and obey Him.

[11:41] That phrase, trust and obey, I will fully admit, I ripped that off of a very well-known thing. That chorus, some of you know, trust and obey, for there's no other way to be happy in Jesus.

Trust and obey, for there's no other way to be happy in Jesus. And I used to think for a long time that was so simplistic. This sounds like something you teach a child. It is. And something you need to teach adults and you just don't get it.

It really is that simple. If you're a Christian, there's only one way to truly be happy. Trusting in the game. That's the only way.

You're never going to find happiness if you don't trust Him in the game. I know that many of you are in the middle of a desert right now. I've mentioned earlier, our church as a whole, we're going through a wilderness right now as well as we look for an interim lead pastor in our immediate future, a permanent lead pastor as well.

It's easy to think that our own perception of our circumstances is the standard by which to face reality. So that all that we see is the hardship. All that we see in our own personal lives, in our families' lives, in our church's situation, all that we see is the hardship, all that we see is the possibility, all that we see is an uncertain future.

[13:01] And that's it. In difficult circumstances, the Lord challenges us to trust and obey.

When Moses trusts and obeys, the bitter water turns and sweep. The Lord promises to be the one who is going to bring His people healing. That's what happens.

Verse 27, where do they go next? The Lord brings them to a place called Heal. Well springs of water, 70 promises. This is an oasis in the wilderness. After what they've just gone through, this is just that taste of the promised land that has yet to come.

A promised land that He's prepared for His people. Now you'd think after that experience, the people of Israel would have learned. They would have said, okay, well, the Lord is great.

I guess He's good as well. You'd think they would have learned that lesson. Well, fast forward a month. Their faith is tested yet again because now they've left Elam. They're on their way, on a journey, heading towards Mount Sinai in the middle of the desert.

[14:06] And as they travel through the desert, the second crisis happens. And this time, the crisis is not a water crisis. It's not a water shortage. It's a food shortage. Now, running out of food, that's a problem.

It's somewhat less of an urgent problem. In the desert, you can really only go for three days without water. You can go for, you know, maybe 30 days without food. You can last quite a bit longer.

Now, try telling that to a mom and a dad who are rationing the last crumbs of bread among their hungry, screaming children. Right? For all the families going through this, this is a difficult, traumatic

event.

I don't know, maybe some of you guys, anyone here get hangry? You know, when you're hungry, you just start to get really short-tempered and irritable when you miss a meal or when you go a long time between eating.

Right? The Israelite camp right now is filled with thousands of restless and hangry people. That's the attitude. That's the atmosphere right now in the camp. And once again, the people of Israel, they're in desert heat.

[15:14] And they can respond to that desert heat of their circumstances either by growing thorns or by bearing fruit. Guess what happens? Well, the thorns come out again.

Chapter 16, verses 2 and 3. The whole congregation of the people of Israel grumbled against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness. And 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. Ha! Doesn't sound like they're thinking too clearly about their problem, does it?

We have a perception problem here. We have an interpretation problem. These are just wild accusations. You've brought us out into the desert to kill us.

That's why we're here. That's why you're doing what you're doing. Notice this creative reimagining of their time of slavery in Egypt. Oh, when we sat by the meat pots, we ate bread to the full.

[16:24] What a wonderful place that was. You guys were slaves! Pharaoh was trying to exterminate you! Oh, but it was so nice we had so much fear.

Notice, the people are blaming Moses and Aaron for all of their problems. Where's the Lord here? Well, this time they do mention the Lord. Do you notice that? How do they describe it? Would that we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt?

It was one-dimensional view of God. They only think of the Lord as the God who inflicted great plagues on Egypt. They know that the Lord is great. They've got that.

That lesson was hammered home by the ten plagues. That lesson was hammered home by the crossing of the Red Sea. They get that. They know that the Lord is great.

[17:23] They don't buy that he's good. They don't buy that he's good. They think of him as the kind of God who would destroy them along with the Egyptians. They don't think of him as the kind of God that they can rely on day in and day out to supply their needs to give them life.

To satisfy them. In short, the people of Israel, they think that their new master, they think he is just basically a bigger, badder version of their old master. They think that Yahweh, the Lord, he's just a super-sized pharaoh.

Their old master, he really cared very little if they died from the heavy labor that he inflicted on them. In fact, that was kind of half his purpose in doing that. Moses didn't bring them out in the wilderness to die, but Pharaoh sure wanted them to die.

The people believe that their new master is just a bigger pharaoh. he doesn't really care about them. This is why their difficult circumstances are so necessary.

This is why all of these things have to take place in their lives first before they reach sign. They need to learn that their new master, before their relationship with him is confirmed in a covenant, they need to learn that their new master is totally different from Pharaoh.

[18:50] They need to learn not only that God is great, but that God is good. They need to learn the words that Jesus Christ spoke in John chapter 10.

The thief comes only to steal, kill, and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it above. That is why God's people in the wilderness found it so hard to trust and obey. And that is why you and I as God's people that's why we still find it so hard to trust and obey.

You know, it's very rare that professing Christians give in to sin, indulge in sin, and devote themselves into that, into disobedience to his commands. It's very rare that they do it because the commands are just too complex, too tough to figure out.

God's commandments are actually very simple. They're straightforward. They're simple, but they're not easy. They're simple, they're not easy.

[19:56] Obedience to God's command is not easy. It's hard. And the reason it's hard is that you and I don't really believe that God is. You don't really believe it.

Deep down, here's what you're thinking. This is something that you and I, we would never say aloud. We wouldn't admit to believing. Here's the core that we're operating out of, this core of

unbelief in our hearts.

Deep down, you think that God is a thief, that he has come to steal your happiness, he has come to heal your joy, he has come to destroy your life. And you think that following this command is that something that's going to trap you, that's going to enslave you.

It's your unbelief that's warping your perception, your interpretation of your circumstances. It's that unbelief that paints our God as though he's a bridge.

and it paints Egypt as though it's a paradise. Oh, wouldn't it be great if you go back to our meat pots and our bread? The people of Israel, they don't perceive, they don't understand the Lord's intent to their crisis.

[21 : 08] The Lord has to spell it out for Moses, verse 4. 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.

In order that, I may test them whether they will walk in my law or not. So the Lord's intent here is to challenge them. Challenge them to trust him. To trust that he is going to give them each and every day their daily bread.

that he is a God who is good. And that the law he is going to give them, it's not only good for them, it is the very best way for them to live.

And so God's instructions for them, that he gives them in these verses, are to go out each morning and there's going to be bread for you.

Gather the bread that accumulates on the ground around the town. And, we have catch, only gather enough for one day's meals. Don't be storing up.

[22 : 22] Don't ration any of it. All that bread that you gather, about two liters worth per person per day, you eat it all in one day, leave nothing left over for tomorrow.

You go to bed in your pantry, nothing in the cupboard. Now, if you've just gone through, if you just spent your life growing up in Egypt with a pharaoh who doesn't care about you, we'd be perfectly happy for you to starve to death.

If you've just gone through a traumatic desert and experience in which you just ran out of water and now you're running out of food, you've been rationing your food among your family so you don't run out, tell you what, this sounds like really bad advice.

This sounds like a terrible idea. Are you really going to bank your family's life on the word of a God that you're not really sure you can trust, on a God that you aren't convinced is good?

Well, many of the people are rather pragmatic in their approach, they're a bit too pragmatic to take such a crazy risk. Verse 19, Moses said to them, Let no one leave any of it over till the morning.

[23 : 40] But they did not listen to Moses. Some left part of it till the morning and it bred worms and stank and Moses was angry with them. Moses didn't like the smell.

So many of these people, you know what they are doing? They are hedging their bets. Because, keep in mind, this is an agrarian society. They're not used to just going out and collecting food each day and saving none of it for later.

That's not what you do in an agrarian society. You collect food, you store it up, you save it for later. It's never the case that there's going to be food out there each and every morning.

They don't have grocery stores. Maybe this would be a little easier for us. But they don't have grocery stores. They don't store up their food. They don't go without storing up their food. They have got their own way of living that they are used to, that makes sense to them.

They're not just about to abandon that. What works for them, what's practical, they're not about to abandon that for the Lord's impractical instructions. And then on top of that, the Lord has given them, if that alone didn't make sense, then the Lord gives them very specific instructions.

[24 : 55] Hey, the seventh day of the week, that's a special case. That's a Sabbath day. That's a day in which the Lord is going to rest from providing them food. And they are going to rest from collecting food, gathering food.

Now, they do need to be fed on the seventh day, so here's the plan. The Lord tells them collect twice as much as you normally do on the sixth day. And then store some of it overnight for the Sabbath to eat them.

Now, if you're the kind of person who has a very scientific mind like me, you've been gathering data, you've started to figure out over the course of the week, okay, this is how it works.

I gather the food, it'll last for one day, if I try to keep it stored overnight, it goes bad. Well, you're probably thinking, man, that's a dumb idea.

Why would, why would I just store it overnight and not gather food the next day? The food's just going to rot again. And then I'll have nothing to eat on the seventh day.

[26 : 01] So what do you do? Well, once again, you act pragmatically. Once again, you hedge your bets. So I'm sure, you know, maybe you saved some of that food you told.

They said, okay, we can gather twice as much. Well, what's the harm to that? Sure, I'll gather twice as much. I'll eat half of it today and then I'll save half for tomorrow. But you know, maybe I'll wake up the next morning, the food's okay, but who knows how long that's going to last.

Maybe it's going to rot before a couple hours are up and then we'll have nothing to eat all day. So just in case that food's going to rot halfway through the day, I'm going to go out the next morning as usual and I'm going to collect some more.

That way I've got all my bases coming. Verse 27. On the seventh day, some of the people went out to gather but they found none. I say all this to help you understand their thinking is understandable. Look, they're just like you and me. Honestly, if you were in this situation, would you have done any different? Would you not have hedged your bets?

[27 : 06] I don't know that we would have been all that good. Their thinking is understandable. But you know what? They're difficult circumstances. They are not an excuse for disobedience.

Difficult circumstances are never an excuse for disobedience. The Lord responds in verse 28. 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.

So the people rested on the seventh day. At least they finally figured it out. In difficult circumstances, the Lord challenges us to trust and obey.

Why does he do that? So that he alone will remain our source of refreshment and rest. So that he alone will remain our source of refreshment and rest.

[28 : 08] The Lord doesn't want us to hedge our bets. He is not only providing water and food, he refreshments to the people of Israel. The Lord is providing them with rest as well.

That's something that Pharaoh never would have done for them. Pharaoh wanted them, he demanded work from them until they dropped dead from exhaustion, make bricks without straw. the Lord demands rest. Rest from them so that they may have life.

Because he is the God who gives life. In verse 23, he calls it a day of solemn rest, a holy Sabbath for the Lord.

Now once we arrive at the giving of the law at Mount Sinai, we'll talk then more about the Sabbath. We'll talk more about how it's significant for you and me today.

[29 : 11] One thing we see here though is that the Sabbath is a law that is given. It's not a burden, it's a burden. It's something that ensures that the Lord's people are planning on it, that they're intentionally, thoughtfully, creatively, setting aside time to rest, time to devote themselves to him, time to draw life from him.

The Lord has challenged his people to trust and obey so that he alone will remain their source of refreshment and rest. The people of Israel there feel a lot like you and me.

They respond with pragmatic, half-hearted, half-trusted, half-obedience. They're not all hidden. And that is why they are not enjoying a refreshing, renewed, resting relationship with the God in his life.

Obedience leads to an experience of the Lord's goodness. There's an American pastor, Ray Ortlund, Jr., who wrote down the words that his own father passed on to him. He said, half-hearted Christians are the most miserable people of all.

They know enough about God to feel guilty, but they haven't gone far enough with Christ to be happy to be all out of work. Half-hearted Christians are the most miserable people of all.

[30 : 48] Our town, the town of Squamish, it is already filled with people who don't believe in Jesus Christ. They're not half-hearted Christians, they're not Christians at all. And you know what?

They don't want to be miserable. I can't say I blame them. If we as individuals, if we as a church, if we are responding to the Lord with pragmatic, half-hearted, half-trusting, half-obedience, if we don't really buy that our God is all satisfying, that our God is all good, we're functioning like this flashing billboard telling our friends and neighbors, stay away from Jesus.

He's not good. He's not satisfying. Go find the good life somewhere else. Get on your mountain bike and go find it there. He is good.

I say this not to guilt us into obeying him. Don't you see he is good? Be all in or all out.

The Lord challenges us to trust and obey him so that he alone will remain our source of refreshing and best. That him trusts and obey, it puts it this way, but we never conclude the delights his love until all on the altar will be.

[32 : 21] We never can prove how good his love is, how delightful it is, how lovely it is, how lovely he is, until we take everything that we have and everything that we are, we put it all on the altar and say, it's yours.

It's yours. It belongs to you. I am all in. I'm leaving nothing behind. No half measures. No half hearted obedience. I'm all in.

No obedience will lead to an experience of the Lord's business. Notice that that's what happens to the people of Israel. Notice the way that this refreshing food the Lord gives to people, the way it's described in verse 31.

The house of Israel called its name Manna. It was like coriander seed, white, and who tasted it was like wankers made with honey. Now keep in mind that they don't exactly have Coca-Cola in the ancient areas.

They don't exactly have delicious sugary snacks and desserts. The refinement of sugar wasn't a thing back then. The only sweeteners you had available to were fruit juice and honey.

[33 : 34] Oh man, honey was great. Because honey is basically just pure sugar. Honey was like the nectar of the gods. And you could only find a wild. There weren't beekeepers.

And you'd only find a wild if you happened across a bees nest or some story. Honey was a rare delicacy. Really only the rich could afford wafers made with honey.

Which would have been amazing. That was the day we'd ride. Every single day by which the Lord's estate was being. It was delicious. It was amazing.

hasty seed of the Lord. And the Lord promises to continue sustaining his people.

It's not just for that one generation, for that one week. Verses 32 through 35. Moses said, This is what the Lord has commanded. Let an omer of it be kept throughout your generations, so that they may see the bread with which I fed you in the wilderness when I brought you out of the land of Egypt.

[34 : 42] And Moses said to Aaron, Take a jar and put an omer of manna in it, and place it before the Lord to be kept throughout your generations. As the Lord commanded Moses, so Aaron placed it before the testimony to be kept.

The people of Israel ate the manna forty years, until they came to a habitable land. They ate the manna, until they came to the border of the land. The Lord continued providing manna, and He gave it to them, day after day after day, year after year after year, until they arrived in the promised land.

The Lord commanded them to save one of those daily portions of manna, put it in a jar, save it. Now once again, remember how long does manna keep?

A day? Maybe two days? Well this portion is going to remain unwrought generation after generation after generation to remind them, to remind their children, to remind their children's children, I am the God who gives life.

The Lord is not only great, He is also good. He's good. Jesus Christ Himself, our Lord, He knew this.

[36 : 00] He knew that obeying the Lord leads to an experience of life sustaining goodness from Him. He told His disciples in John chapter 4, He said, my food, my food, where I get refreshment, is to do the will of Him who sent me and to accomplish His work.

Jesus found refreshment and rest in obeying the mission His Father gave Him. Jesus found life in His trusting relationship with His will of Father.

And Jesus gives this life to everyone who believes, everyone who trusts in Him. You can see this take place in the life of Jesus in His ministry.

John chapter 6 tells about a series of events that took place on the shores of the Sea of Galilee.

There, at that place, Jesus Christ, He, He took five loaves of barley bread and He multiplied them into this huge feast that fed 5,000 people quite a well-known event in Jesus' ministry, the speeding of the 5,000.

It's in all four gospel accounts. Now, I recently saw, because it's well-known, the comedian Jim Gaffigan took it up in a sketch he did that I saw several months ago.

[37 : 20] Actually, it was pretty funny because he portrayed Jesus, the crowds as coming to Jesus, and asking Him to be a fancy bread factory for them. Jim Gaffigan portrayed them as asking Him to make them all sorts of different kinds of bread.

Why would we want, why do we care what He says, just make us more bread? I don't think Jim Gaffigan realized it when he was delivering his sketch. that's exactly what happened. They wanted a bread factory.

The day after Jesus fed these people, they followed Him to the synagogue in the town of Capernaum. And then in the Gospel of John, chapter 6, verse 30, the Apostle John reports what happens next.

they said to Him, then what sign do you do that we may see and believe you? What work do you perform?

They're going to give them a little bit of a hint here. Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat. Jesus then said to them, Truly, truly, I say to you, it was not Moses who gave you bread from heaven, but my Father gives you the true bread from heaven.

[38 : 35] For the bread of God is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world. Obviously they didn't quite get what He was saying. They said to Him, Sir, give us this bread always.

These people are in it for the bread. They're thinking with their scum. All they want, all they want is cheap life.

All they want is life of a lower quality than the way Jesus is offering. They realize these people are living, they're living and thinking the way that people in Squamish live.

And like many of you today are even big here. They're settling. Why are you settling? Why are you settling for something less than the good life that Jesus has come to offer you?

They are settling for fleeting, momentary bursts of this thing that, you know, what they call happiness, which is shallow satisfaction. When they could have the true, lasting life that Jesus has come to offer.

[39 : 45] And Jesus tells them in verse 35, I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me shall not hunger.

Whoever believes in me shall never thirst. Christ, Jesus is offering them something that absolutely satisfies.

He is offering them something that gives them true life, eternal life, what really is the good life. And you know what is absolutely heartbreaking?

they don't want it. Verse 41, the Jews grumbled about it because he said, I am the bread of the ground of heaven.

Grumbled. They responded just like their ancestors did. They are grumbling because the Lord hasn't given them what they wanted.

[40 : 50] What they were demanding from him was short term happiness that requires no obedience that requires no relationship that requires no trust in the Lord. They want the bread back.

They are grumbling because the Lord has given them something that is so much better. He is giving them himself, his very own self.

I am the bread of life. It's me. Don't you see? Because he is not only the God who gives life.

He is the God who is life. Life himself. And Jesus then tells his grumbling audience, truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes has eternal life, I am the bread of life.

The fathers ate the manna in the wilderness and they die. This is the bread that comes down from heaven so that one may eat of it and not die.

[41 : 56] I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. And the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh.

What that means is that Jesus has given his own flesh, his own body. his own body, his own body, so that you may have life real.

Jesus was crucified, his own body, hung, put to death on a rolling cross, punished for our disobedience, crushed for our sins, punished for our distrust of the God who is with you.

Jesus was buried, his body was sealed in the tomb, and then Jesus rose again, giving life. And Jesus invites you to believe in him, to take the bread, to be united with him by faith, to find life in the bread of him.

He invites you to a new way of life in which we obey God our Father. We don't obey him to prove we're worthy. We don't obey him to establish a new relationship.

[43 : 28] And we don't obey him in order to win his favor and approve. We're all ready to do we love to do because he loves Jesus Christ.

And we believe in Jesus Christ. We're united with him by faith. He loves us. His children. What do children want to do? They want to be just like they're bad. It's a real bad.

God. And the Holy Spirit living in us is the power. He gives us power to it. And once you have tasted that bread of life, once you know the delight, the joy of laying it all on the altar, holding nothing back, laying it all out there in obedience to God, you'll find that the things that you once thought were joy and life, the things you once used to cope with the suffering and the pain in your life, the things that you once thought were the best that life could offer you.

They're pale limitations. They're the sad counterfeits of that true eternal life found in Jesus Christ.

The writer John Barrett, he once wrote these words that were his own story in which he called you and me to do life in Christ.

When Jesus graciously has touched our eyes and ears, oh, what a dreary land the wilderness appears.

[45 : 01] No healing balm springs from its dust, no cooling stream to quench the thirst. In other words, our perception becomes active when we start to see that we are in the wilderness and there is nothing here rust.

What a dreary land. Yet long I vainly sought a resting place below that sweet land for God where living waters flow.

I hunger now for heavenly food and my poor heart cries out for God. How long have you been daily seeking in vain a place of rest, a place of hope?

Have you forgotten that there is a land of pure delight? a place of hope? Here is a promise. Even here in the wilderness those living waters of that promise land are still abandoned.

The good light is still you. May you hunger for heaven and food and settle for nothing less. May your poor heart thrive out of your life.

[46 : 20] The Lord has challenged people to trust and obey you so they we alone will remain their source of our freshness. To close the service we are going to sing the greatest by faith we are going to sing one more song and then after that we are going to be eating and drinking together.

We are going to be enjoying the blessing of Christ's body broken for us to our shepherd. We are going to trust and obey the God who gives us life. Let's be it life.

Let's pray.