

"Complaining"

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[0 : 0 0] Well, good morning, church. It's good to see you all this morning. Would you turn with me to the book of Numbers? That is the fourth book of the Old Testament. It begins on page 101 in the Pew Bible.

We're picking up in chapter 11 today on page 111 or page 112 if you have one of the new Pew Bibles. Now, the book of Numbers gets a pretty bad rap, I think, because the first few chapters are just that, a long list of counting the people of Israel before they leave Mount Sinai, chapter after chapter of Numbers. How spiritually edifying could that be, right? Now, of course, in a congregation like ours, I know some of you love math and numbers and spreadsheets, so maybe you crack into the book of Numbers and you feel like Han Solo stepping onto the Millennium Falcon. You're like, Chewy, we're home. But numbers does get a pretty bad rap on the whole, I think, as being somewhat impractical and somewhat boring. And yet, and yet, that is not the way that the New Testament and the early church saw the book of Numbers. In fact, the Apostle Paul spends a whole chapter of 1 Corinthians almost, 1 Corinthians chapter 10, talking basically about Numbers. Listen to what Paul says in 1 Corinthians 10, 1 through 6. He says,

Then Paul says this, he says, Now, these things took place as examples for us. And then after giving a bunch of examples from mostly Numbers, Paul again says, now these things happened to them as an example, but they were written down for our instruction on whom the end of the ages has come. Now, do you see what Paul is saying here?

Do you see what the apostles in the early church understood about the Old Testament, even the book of Numbers? They understood that God had written down these things not just for people long ago, but also and especially for us. They understood that the church, having received the fulfillment of the Old Testament promises, needs those Old Testament examples so that we might live faithfully today in the fulfillment of those promises. Now, we get the title Numbers from the Greek translation of this book, but do you know what the Hebrew title is? Hebrew title of this book is called Bamidbar, In the Wilderness, In the Wilderness. That's a much cooler title, don't you think? In the Wilderness, and a much more accurate one for the bulk of what this book is about. As Pastor Matt laid out last week, this book is about a journey through the wilderness, a journey with our faithful, holy, gracious, and sovereign God. It's about the temptations and trials that the Old Testament church faced as they traveled to the promised land, and it's about the trials and temptations that the New

Testament church faces as we head towards the new heavens and the new earth. And above all, this book is about the God who goes with us in the wilderness, who's faithful to His people, and who's faithful to His promises. And today, in Numbers chapter 11, we're going to look at the first step of that journey. Remember last week, Pastor Matt took a bird's-eye view of chapters 1 through 10, and in chapter 10, the people are ready to go, the trumpets sound, and they march forth from Sinai with the tabernacle in their midst. The cloud and fire of God's own presence is guiding them.

[4 : 1 4] What could go wrong, right? Well, let's read the first nine verses of Numbers 11, and let's see how their journey begins. And Josh, on the slides, I'm going to take it in chunks, so just kind of follow along with me throughout the sermon. Sound good? Good. All right, so let's look at verses 1 through 7. They just left. They just started walking through the wilderness.

This is how it starts. And the people complained. And the people complained in the hearing of the Lord about their misfortunes. And when the Lord heard it, His anger was kindled. And the fire of the Lord burned among them and consumed some outlying parts of the camp. Then the people cried out to Moses, and Moses prayed to the Lord, and the fire died down. So the name of that place was called Tabarah, because the fire of the Lord burned among them. 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. Now the manna was like coriander seed, and its appearance like that of bdellium. The people went about and gathered it and ground it in hand mills or beat it in mortars and boiled it in pots and made cakes of it. And the taste of it was like the taste of cakes baked with oil. When the dew fell upon the camp in the night, the manna fell with it. Okay, so no sooner have the people struck out on their great journey to the promised land, no sooner have they finally begun their march with God Himself at their head, no sooner have they set forth, then they start complaining and grumbling. Now Numbers 11 actually records two separate instances of grumbling and complaining. The first at a place they come to call taberah, which means burning in verses 1 through 3, and the second in verses 4 through 9 at a place kind of not too far away, just down the road, that they'll come to call kibroth hatah avah, which we'll see what that means at the end of the story. And the complaint in the first instance seems to be about something, you know, it seems to be about what they're facing. And the complaint in the second instance seems to be about what they're lacking. They're facing in verse 1 misfortunes or hardships, and they're lacking in verse 5, as they say, meat to eat.

Now perhaps at first grumbling or complaining, it doesn't strike us as the sort of greatest spiritual danger facing the church today, right? I mean, who cares if we grumble or complain, right?

[7 : 12] Is it really all that bad? Sometimes we can even excuse our complaining spirit by saying, well, that's just my personality, you know, I'm a bit of a curmudgeon.

But, you know, Numbers 11 would have us reassess, maybe, our carefree attitude towards grumbling and complaining. When the complaining of the people reaches the Lord's ears in verse 1, what happens?

His anger burns, and fire circles the edges of the camp. Now, Numbers doesn't say how the Lord sends fire, maybe it was some lightning or something like that, nor does it say if anyone is actually hurt in that burning. But the people realize suddenly that they are in danger, and in response they cry out to Moses for help, and Moses intercedes for them, and the fire dies down. Are we willing to hear this warning about a complaining and grumbling spirit? Perhaps complaining and grumbling is worse than we give it credit for. Why? Well, notice some things that we learn about grumbling and complaining in this passage. Notice in this passage how complaining is contagious. The complaining in verses 4 through 6 starts with what our ESV calls a rabble. One Jewish commentator on Numbers translate this word as rirraff in verse 4. So, the rirraff starts complaining, but then suddenly what happens?

The whole camp is grumbling and crying out. You see, a complaining spirit infects those in contact with it. It's like a virus that spreads. And notice in this passage how it's not just contagious, but complaining kind of grows in its intensity. What starts out as a kind of general grumbling about their hardships in verses 1 through 3 grows in verses 4 through 6 to a specific longing, even a craving, for the food they used to eat in Egypt. The general murmur about it being kind of tough to walk through the wilderness becomes more specific and more intense. Suddenly, the man is no good. They want fish and cucumbers and garlic. Oh, garlic. They want to go back to Egypt.

And now we start to really see why complaining is so spiritually deadly. Ultimately, complaining is a spirit that rejects God's provision. Manna was God's gift to them. Manna was His miraculous way of sustaining them in the wilderness. What an incredible dishonor to God to look back at melons and cucumbers and say, rather than God's presence guiding me, rather than God's miraculous provision sustaining me, I'd rather go back to Egypt. Complaining takes our eyes off of God's goodness and steals His glory.

[10 : 15] But lastly, complaining, it narrows our vision and it begins to distort reality. God is taking His people. What is God doing in this part of Numbers? God's taking His people to a land that's flowing with milk and honey, as the metaphor says. He's promised to protect and provide for them the whole way. He's already sent plagues on Egypt. He's already parted the Red Sea. He's already given them manna to eat. He's already displayed His glory on Mount Sinai. They are a people who have been freed, who have been liberated by the God who created all things, and God is leading them to a home. But instead of that vision filling their sights, a spirit of complaining takes root, and they'd rather go back to slavery in Egypt so long as they could eat some cucumbers and melons and garlic. Complaining has narrowed their vision and distorted reality. Complaining has narrowed

their vision of what God truly has in store for His people. I mean, wouldn't a few months in the wilderness be worth dwelling in the promised land, generation upon generation upon generation?

And complaining distorts reality. Complaining and grumbling has made their slavery in Egypt seem not so bad after all. They seem to have forgotten that Pharaoh had institutionalized the killing of their male children, had forced them to labor under the oppression of his regime, and had treated them like property to be disposed of. I mean, in their complaining, the people have in essence said, I'd rather have that than God. And that's why fire breaks out on the edges of the camp, you see. It's God's warning to His people. The way of complaining, the way of grumbling, the way of discontent, it's the way, actually, of spiritual death. What does fire do? Fire, it disintegrates things, right? It takes something that's solid and substantive, and it turns it into ash. The fire is basically saying if the people persist in complaining, then it will be their spiritual disintegration. The fire is a warning, and it's on the edges of the camp. Why is it on the edges of the camp? Because it's driving the people back to the center, right? And what's in the center of the camp?

Do you remember from the first chapters of Numbers? Why did...what did God tell them to build right in the middle of their camp? The tabernacle, the tent where God's presence would symbolically dwell in their midst. God's trying to discipline them, to warn them, to come back to Him, and not go along the paths of spiritual disintegration and grumbling, complaining, craving. But as we see in verses 4 through 6, the complaining grows. So the opening of chapter 11 helps us to see this danger of complaining, the danger. But it's not just the people who complain. It's also Moses. After the general grumbling about hardships in verse 1, Moses intercedes for the people. But when the complaining grows in verses 4 through 6, Moses begins to despair. All right, let's pick up the story in verse 10. In verse 10, Moses heard the people weeping throughout their clans, everyone at the door of his tent, and the anger of the Lord blazed hotly. And Moses was displeased. Moses said to the Lord, why have you dealt ill with your servant? And why have I not found favor in your sight, that you lay the burden of all this people on me? Did I conceive all this people? Did I give them birth that you should say to me, carry them in your bosom as a nurse carries a nursing child, to the land that you swore to give to their fathers? Where am I to get meat to give to all this people? For they weep before me and say, give us meat that we may eat. I am not able to carry all this people alone. The burden is too heavy for me. If you will treat me like this, kill me at once if I found favor in your sight, that I may not see my wretchedness. Sounds like parents on a road trip, right? With kids in the back seat. What does Moses complaining teach us? Well, for one thing, notice how often Moses says in this section, I or me.

[14 : 56] Complaining, you see, makes us kind of curve in on ourselves, and it just fosters self-pity, and out of self-pity comes despair. The people wanted to go back to Egypt, but Moses, completely overwhelmed, collapsing and complaining in self-pity, would rather God just put him out of his misery right now. Friends, perhaps you're not like Moses, utterly despairing. Perhaps you're not like the Israelites, wishing a return to slavery just so they can eat a few fish with melons. But listen to what the Apostle Paul writes in Philippians 2 that Peter read for us earlier. He says, Do all things without grumbling or disputing, that you may be blameless and innocent children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation among whom you shine as lights in the world. You see, the New Testament gives us a picture of the church being a people who shine like stars in the midst of the dark. And what is one of the marks of our brightness as the people of Christ, that we can do all things without grumbling or disputing, or grumbling and complaining, as the NIV translates it. Complaining makes our lives very narrow, very self-centered. In the midst of hardship, the Israelites started looking back to Egypt, and Moses couldn't stop thinking about himself in self-pity. But instead, the New Testament calls us to shine like stars without complaining or grumbling, with our vision wide to God's goodness and God's future, with our eyes not on ourselves, but on Him. So what are you or I prone to complain about? Perhaps like the Israelites in Numbers 11, you complain about the hardships or misfortunes that you're facing. Or maybe you complain about the material things you're lacking. Are you and I willing to hear the warning of Numbers 11, that this complaining will only narrow our vision, distort our reality, fill us with self-pity, and ultimately dishonor the God who saves us?

But what's the solution? What's the solution? How do we stop being a people of a complaining spirit?

Well, let's continue to follow the story of Numbers 11, and let's see how God responds. Let's pick up in verse 16. Then the Lord said to Moses, "Gather for me seventy men of the elders of Israel, whom

you know to be the elders of the people and officers over them, and bring them to the tent of meeting, and let them take their stand there with you. And I will come down and talk with you there, and I will take some of the spirit that is on you and put it on them, and they shall bear the burden of the people with you, so that you may not bear it yourself alone. And say to the people, consecrate yourselves for tomorrow, and you shall eat meat, for you have wept in the hearing of the Lord, saying, who will give us meat to eat? For it was better for us in Egypt. Therefore the Lord will give you meat, and you shall eat. You shall not eat just one day, or two days, or five days, or ten days, or twenty days, but all month, until it comes out of your nostrils, and becomes loathsome to you, because you have rejected the Lord who is among you, and have wept before Him, saying, why did we come out of Egypt? But Moses said, "The people among whom I am number six hundred thousand on foot, and you have said, I will give them meat that they may eat a whole month? Shall flocks and herds be slaughtered for them, and be enough for them? Or shall all the fish of the sea be gathered together for them, and be enough for them?"

And the Lord said to Moses, "Is the Lord's hand shortened? Now you shall see whether my word will come true for you or not." So the Lord speaks to Moses, and He answers both Moses' complaint and the people's complaint. God promises to send help to Moses and to send meat for the people. And when Moses expresses doubt that God could send meat for so many people, God says to Moses, "Is the Lord's hand shortened?" In other words, Moses, do you think I'm not powerful enough to do this? And that's perhaps the first step out of a complaining spirit, to look again to God's mighty, sovereign, redeeming hand.

You face trials and hardships. You don't know how you're going to go on. Your job is a mess. Or parenting has you at your wit's end. Or your friends are leaving you. Or your neighbors are difficult. Or your marriage is in a rocky spot. And you can feel the complaining spirit rise in your heart. "Why me?"

[20 : 14] Why does this have to happen to me? God's led me into this wilderness, and He's abandoned me. Why do I even bother?' But then the Lord speaks and says, "Is my hand too short to save you, to provide for you, to preserve you?' The hand of the Lord that brought Egypt to its knees, the hand of the Lord that parted the Red Sea, the hand of the Lord that drowned Pharaoh's army, the hand of the Lord that gives you manna, gives you daily bread every day, the hand of the Lord that shaped the mountains, and filled the seas, and put the planets in their orbits around the sun. Is this hand of the Lord too short to meet you in your need, in your misfortunes, in your lack?' No, brothers and sisters, the Lord's hand is never too short. His sovereign, sustaining, almighty hand will give you exactly what you need to persevere in every circumstance. He will always fulfill His promises. This is what God says to

Moses after pointing Moses to the hand of His power. He points Moses then to His word. Is the Lord's hand shortened? Now you will see whether My word will come true for you or not. After setting our minds on the power of God, we can set our minds on the promises of God. Here's the next step out of a complaining spirit, God's promises. God's promises are good, and His promises are transforming. Listen to what Peter says in 2 Peter 1, verses 3-4. He says, "God's divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness through the knowledge of His own glory and excellence by which He has granted to us His precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of His divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire." How do we begin to shine like stars? We look to God's promises because if complaining narrows our vision, if complaining distorts our understanding of reality, the power and promise of God starts to expand our vision again. It brings us back to what's really real. So how does God fulfill His word then to Moses? Well, let's continue in verse 24 of Numbers 11.

So Moses went out and told the people the words of the Lord, and he gathered seventy men of the elders of the people and placed them around the tent. Then the Lord came down in the cloud and spoke to him and took some of the spirit that was on him and put it on the seventy elders. And as soon as the spirit rested on them, they prophesied, but they did not continue doing it. Now two men remained in the camp, one named Eldad and the other named Medad, and the spirit rested on them. They were among those registered, but they had not gone out to the tent. And so they prophesied in the camp. And a young man ran and told Moses, Eldad and Medad are prophesying in the camp. And Joshua, the son of Nun, the assistant of Moses from his youth, said, "My Lord, Moses, stop them." But Moses said to him, "Are you jealous for my sake?' Would that all the Lord's

people were prophets, that the Lord would put His Spirit on them." And Moses and the elders of Israel returned to the camp.

So God promises that He will empower seventy elders of the people, seventy officers, to come alongside Moses with the spiritual task of shepherding the people. And that's exactly what He does. God sends His Spirit, and as a sign that these men have been set apart, they prophesy.

And not as an ongoing ministry. Verse 25 says they didn't continue doing it, but they prophesy once as a sign that they're now equipped and set apart to fulfill this co-shepherding work with Moses.

[24 : 19] It's not clear what the nature of this prophecy was. Most likely they spoke words of praise and adoration to God and words of encouragement and exhortation to the people. But from here on out, Moses wouldn't have to be the only one spiritually caring for the people. Moses would still have a special and unique role as the leader of God's people. We'll see more about that in chapter 12 next week. But the burden for caring for the people would now continue to be shared.

And how does Moses respond to this work of the Spirit of God? Notice that two of these seventy men, Eldad and Medad, weren't able to be at the tabernacle when God's Spirit came down that day. We aren't told why they couldn't be there, but nevertheless, God's Spirit comes and rests on them and they too prophesy. And then Joshua, getting news of this, afraid that this might steal some of Moses' authority and take away some of Moses' honor, tells Moses, Moses, you have to make them stop. But how does Moses respond?

Notice, notice Moses' change of heart here. In verses 10 through 15, Moses couldn't stop thinking about himself. But now, Moses has given up his self-pity and his self-centeredness and says, don't be jealous for my glory, Joshua. If God wants to put His Spirit on all of God's people, then that would be the greatest gift of all.

You see, now Moses is thinking about God's glory and God's honor. And of course, one day God would fulfill this word that Moses spoke.

When Jesus Christ ascended on high to the Father's right hand and poured out the Spirit at Pentecost, all of God's people were now filled with the Spirit. And that is true of every believer in Jesus Christ today.

[26 : 16] God's Spirit causes us to be born anew, grants a saving faith, empowers us, and equips us for service, preserves and keeps us throughout our days.

The Spirit dwells in us richly. And doesn't that strike a blow to our complaining hearts? God has filled us with His Spirit.

We're not left alone or abandoned in this wilderness journey. The church is not wandering aimlessly. We have the Spirit of God in us.

And Paul says in Philippians 2.13, it's God who works in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure. Rather than giving in to the self-pity of a complaining heart, we have hearts that are dependent on the Spirit's work in us.

Yes, we will face trials and hardships in this wilderness. What did you expect? Anything worth doing is going to have challenges and hardships.

[27 : 23] But how much greater is the provision that God has given us, the provision of His own Spirit dwelling in us to face these challenges, to face these hardships? In 1 Corinthians 10.13, after giving all those examples from Numbers of the evils we should avoid, Paul then writes this.

He says, no temptation has overtaken you. That is not common to man. God is faithful. And He will not let you be tempted beyond your ability.

But with the temptation, He will also provide the way of escape that you may be able to endure it. Brothers and sisters, let our complaining be turned instead to depending on the Spirit for strength and endurance and wisdom and help.

So God's provision to Moses helps us to see God's provision to us today. But the chapter ends, the chapter ends with a warning. At the beginning of chapter 11, the people started to despise the manna and instead they longed for meat, like the meat they used to eat in Egypt.

And God, in judgment, gives them exactly what they ask for. Let's read the rest of chapter 11, picking up in verse 31.

[28 : 48] Then a wind from the Lord sprang up, and it brought quail from the sea and let them fall beside the camp. About a day's journey on this side and a day's journey on that side around the camp and about two cubits above the ground.

And the people rose all that day and all night and all the next day and gathered the quail. Those who gathered least gathered ten homers and they spread them out for themselves all around the camp.

While the meat was yet between their teeth, before it was consumed, the anger of the Lord was kindled against the people and the Lord struck down the people with a very great plague.

Therefore, the name of that place was called Kibroth Hata'avah because there they buried the people who had the craving. And from Kibroth Hata'avah, the people journeyed to Hazeroth and they remained at Hazeroth.

Even after the warning of verses 1 through 3, even after the outpouring of the Spirit in verses 24 through 30, the people still craved meat.

[30 : 00] So in judgment, God gave them exactly what they asked for. The Lord sends a wind and it pushes a massive flock of migratory quail right to them and the quail begin to come down and fall in quantities that allow everyone who wants it to gather basketful upon basketful.

And as the meat is drying and curing in the sun and as those who left the camp to gather the quail are starting to fill their bellies with it, as it's sticking in their teeth, a plague breaks out and many die. They got what they asked for, a belly full of meat. And perhaps the implication seems to be that the meat was full of a disease that killed many of those who ate it. Romans 1 says that the wrath of God is often expressed in this age when God gives us over to the disordered desires of our own fallen hearts.

What if, what if God gave you all the money and the sex and the power that you crave? What if He gave it all to you, everything you complain about, everything you crave?

Would that be heaven or would that be hell? The truth is, it would be hell because it would be a life separated from God who alone is life and goodness and beauty and truth.

[31 : 39] You can have everything this world has to offer, but without a living relationship with God, none of it will satisfy because only God can truly satisfy our souls.

And look at what God had already provided for them. Did God want the Israelites to be miserable as they journeyed through the wilderness?

Did God, was God intention for them to be dour and unhappy and emaciated as they traveled through the promised land as a sign that they were really spiritual and holy?

No! That's not the sort of God He is. How do we know that? Well, look at what God had provided for them. In verses seven through nine, there's this seemingly extraneous description of the manna.

We get this description of the manna that God provided for the people every day of their journey through the wilderness. The people are sick and tired of manna in verse six. But what do we learn about this manna?

[32 : 56] Is it crusty, stale bread that barely satisfies? Is it something you just as soon feed to the birds rather than feed to yourself? No. Look at those verses again.

What do we see about this manna? First, in verse seven, it's something that's kind of pleasant to look at. Bdellium is a kind of golden resin. It's like amber or like orange glass. It would have shown in the sun and given off this kind of warm glow.

And in verse eight, we learn that this manna was sort of versatile. They could boil it. They could make cakes out of it. Yes, it was the same starting point, but they could adapt it. They could be creative with it. Like the wall of bread at G Cafe.

There's dozens of styles and shapes and colors and textures. You can have challah one day. You can have that round one that looks kind of gross the next day, you know. But it wasn't just pleasant to look at or versatile to cook with.

The end of verse eight tells us that it tasted really good. And the taste of it was like the taste of cakes baked with oil. Compare that with Exodus 16, 31 where we're told that the taste of manna was like wafers made with honey.

[34 : 10] So what did God want the Israelites to eat as they journeyed through the wilderness? He wanted them to eat something that was beautiful to look at, that was versatile to cook with, that was delicious to the taste.

Was God out to make His people miserable in the wilderness with His provision? Not at all. God is a good Father who gives good gifts to His children to enjoy. It's as if God was giving them fresh baked croissants every day.

And miraculously, these croissants were actually nutritious enough to sustain them. I mean, that sounds awesome, right? Like, if I could eat croissants every day and have enough energy and nutrition to hike through the wilderness, I would take that deal hands down, wouldn't you?

The tragedy of Numbers 11 is that the people are more eager to leave the camp for a basket full of dead quail than to remain in the camp with the bread of heaven that tastes like honey and butter and always keeps them satisfied for the journey ahead.

But friends, here's the good news. If the manna that God provided in the wilderness was miraculous and satisfying, as a church, we have something even greater today.

[35 : 26] We have a manna that's sweeter and more satisfying than anything the Old Testament people of God experienced. We have a bread from heaven that doesn't just satisfy the body or the tongue, but that satisfies the soul and will never leave us hungry again.

In John chapter 6, Jesus feeds the 5,000, and when the crowds later come back to Him, and some of them kind of start grumbling because they're not really sure what to make of this Jesus. Jesus says in verses 48 through 51, He says, I'm the bread of life.

Your fathers ate manna in the wilderness and they died. This is the bread that comes down from heaven so that one may eat of it and not die. I'm the living bread that came down from heaven.

If anyone eats this bread, he'll live forever. You see, friends, Jesus is telling us here that He's the true and better manna.

The manna was pleasant to look at. Ah, but the beauty of Jesus Christ is even greater. His love, His mercy, His forgiveness, His kindness, His glory.

[36 : 32] We will behold Him forever and never cease to adore Him. The manna was versatile, but Jesus Christ is able to meet us in all of our needs.

There is no soul that His grace cannot fulfill. Every tribe, tongue, and nation, male and female, young and old, rich and poor. Jesus is the Savior of all people, no matter who you are or where you've been, no matter how great your sins and failures, no matter how deep your scars and shame.

He's the all-sufficient Savior. But the manna wasn't just pleasant to look at or versatile to use, it was sweet to the taste.

A friend of you tasted the sweetness of Jesus. I know that sounds kind of weird at first, but do you know the sweet comfort that He brings to the soul better than honey, better than rich oil or wine?

In that same passage of John 6, Jesus compares believing and trusting in Him to eating His flesh. That's an arresting metaphor, isn't it? And Jesus meant it to be.

[37 : 40] It means that faith in Jesus Christ is intimate. It's the sort of trust you put in a friend, in a parent, in a lover.

It's a whole life embrace. And Jesus says, come, come embrace me and I'll embrace you and I'll keep you and I'll protect you and I'll strengthen you and I'll be like honey to your soul.

But last, you see, the manna wasn't just pleasant to look at, it wasn't just versatile, it wasn't just sweet, it was free. It was free. God gave it to His people freely every evening with a dew that fell on the ground.

But if the manna came freely, how much more did Jesus Christ come to us with all of His blessings free of charge? When our sins and our complaining had put us outside the camp, when our rebellion against God deserved nothing but God's burning wrath, Jesus came down from heaven freely into the night of our sin, went outside the camp and endured on the cross the penalty that our sins deserved and rose on the third day ensuring that our sins would be washed away and offering eternal life to all who repent of their sins and believe in Him.

You see, this bread of life comes free of charge. There's nothing you need to do to earn it or deserve it. Jesus did all the work so that you could enjoy His beauty and sufficiency and sweetness utterly without cost and without payment.

[39 : 12] He paid the cost so you don't have to. You just have to receive it to take it in your mouth and feel the sweetness on your tongue. So now you can be satisfied in Him.

You see, Jesus is the one who is meant to satisfy the cravings of our soul and drive out our complaining.

You can be satisfied in Christ and now your cravings don't have to leave you in the grave. That's what kebroth hatah avah means, the graves of craving.

No, you see, if you place your desire upon Jesus Christ, He will satisfy and save you. You see, there's a food for us in the wilderness, brothers and sisters.

There's a food for us in Christ and it will turn our complaints into praise. It will turn our grumblings into rejoicings. Jesus is the bread of heaven.

[40 : 16] Let's feast on Him and be satisfied. Let's pray together. Oh, Lord, you came down from heaven to earth like the manna so long ago, Jesus, to fill the deepest longings of our heart, to fulfill the longings that we need for forgiveness, to fulfill the longings that we need for meaning and significance and satisfaction for hope and a future.

Lord, it is all in you. Help us by your Spirit to truly enjoy you, to not take you for granted, to embrace you, to let your love fill our hearts that we might do all things in your service without grumbling or complaining and shine like stars in the midst of our generation.

Amen.