

The God of Now - Week hhh

The Lord in His Word insists that His children learn to *trust* Him with a day-by-day trust, without too much concern today over the needs of tomorrow.

Think of the Lord giving manna to the children of Israel (Exodus 16. 9-31). He told them very clearly what to do: each day, each household was to collect enough for their own needs (vv 17-18), but they were only to collect enough for that day - no manna was to be kept until the next morning (vv 19-21). The only exception was on the sixth day of the week (vv 22-26), when they were to collect enough for two days, to see them through the Sabbath.

Now consider just what these rules taught the people about the “now-ness” of trusting in God. Each morning before their eyes lay the manna – God’s gracious provision for them ***for that day***. But there was far more than they needed. Imagine you were one of the collectors – what would be the greatest difficulty of all for you? Isn’t it this? – ***not*** to fill up every bag and pocket you possess with as much manna as you can carry. It’s like blackberrying – there are always those few more to pick and put in the box!

But the Lord had said ‘No’ to this – they were only to take enough for their needs for that day. Quite deliberately and obediently, they had to turn aside from the manna stretched out before them. This forced them into a daily, very practical trust in ***the God of Now***.

“He has generously provided for today. I am to trust today that He will similarly provide again tomorrow. I demonstrate my trust by walking away from some of His provision for today”.

This is still a simple, vital, precious truth for God’s faithful sheep of today. “I have enough for today? – then thank you Lord, enough is enough, and I will leave tomorrow until it is today”.

Next we come to Elijah, in fear for his life (I Kings 17. 1-7). The Lord had told Elijah to hide beside the little brook Cherith. He was to drink from the brook – and to trust that the ravens would bring him his food. Just imagine: Elijah peering up into the sky, hoping that the ravens would come once more with his supper. Did he ever quietly wonder to himself: “- and if they don’t?”. Wonderfully, they always did come, showing that the God of Now will always provide for Now - when Now is Now.

But the Lord was still teaching Elijah about trust – “And it came to pass, after a while, that the brook dried up, because there had been no rain in the land” (v 7). The brook was drying up because there was no rain, and there was no rain because of Elijah’s own words to Ahab uttered under the authority of God (v 1).

Day by day Elijah saw what was happening to that brook, but he stayed put. He trusted, waiting for the Lord’s new word. What an example for us all about trusting in the God of Now for the needs of Now!

So the Israelites were taught to trust that the Lord would provide again tomorrow – by turning away from the plenty that He had given today. And Elijah was taught to trust that the Lord would provide again tomorrow – by relying on those ravens on a meal-by-meal basis while watching that brook steadily dwindling away.

Of course we have to be mindful of the future sometimes, especially if we have God-given responsibilities towards others. But this is never to be at the cost of living aright under the Lord right here, right now. If a future concern has a right to our attention today, because we have to do something about it, then fair enough – we do what has to be done. But then we give any concerns of the future back to the Lord, where they belong. We do this simply and thankfully, and then turn back to today. For **God is**, right here, right now, to be worshipped, loved and served.

He never intended for us to stagger along under a great burden of worry about the future. So why do we do it? “Don’t worry at all then about tomorrow. Tomorrow can worry about itself! One day’s trouble is enough for one day” (Matthew 6.34, JBPhillips).

As we enter Lent once again, we do well to remember these simple old truths: God is Now; life is now; dependence is now; thankfulness is now. And in God's great mercy, all these truths will still be truths when **Tomorrow** has become **Today**.