

Exodus Chapter 16

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 31 January 2016

Preacher: Peter Robinson

[0 : 00] Let's continue with a gladsome mind in praising God as we pray together.

Let us pray together. We've got every reason now, God and our Father, to be joyful this morning, to rejoice this morning, to have a gladsome mind.

Because, O Lord, those who know you as their Heavenly Father, those who have come into that wonderful relationship with yourself, of grace and mercy and love through your Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, are your children.

We are those who are dear to you, precious to you, loved by you. We are those, O Lord, who you have upon your heart and upon your mind constantly.

We are those, O Lord, that you never forget nor forsake. We are those, O Lord, who in your fatherly care and love provide for all our needs. We're here this morning as evidence that you are the God who's given us food and clothing and homes and transport and all that we need.

[1 : 08] You're the God who's given us the health and strength that we can be here, even though we may feel under the weather. We thank you, O Lord, that you are the one who sustains us and helps us.

But we thank you especially again because you are our Heavenly Father. We are those who've received your loving kindness and faithfulness of which we've sung.

That loving kindness which sent your Son into the world. That loving kindness by which he came as God and yet also man. Lived amongst us, suffered and died in our place and rose again.

We thank you that it's Jesus that we are here to worship and rejoice in. The greatest gift, the greatest provision of God. Giving the one who would rescue us from our sins and grant us forgiveness and life.

The one who now lives by the power of the Spirit in our hearts so that we are new creations. We are those, O Lord, who live because you live. Those who are sustained and helped in our faith, in our struggles, Lord, day by day.

[2 : 12] By the power of God within us. So, Lord, we've got much to thank you for. Forgive us when we are neglectful of that and forgetful of all that we have. Forgive us when we moan and complain about the weather or something else trivial.

Help us, O Lord, again to have hearts filled with thankfulness. And more than that, hearts filled with faith. That we might trust you more. That we might follow you more and obey you more.

That we might serve you more. O Lord, be with us then in this time. And bless us. And meet with us. And speak to us. That each of us may not leave this place without knowing that we have met with you, the living God.

Grant us this wonderful joy, we pray. Of being able to say that we have met with you. And known your help. For we ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.

Thank you, John. Thank you. Page number is 73, if you're using the New Church Bibles. Well, last Sunday we were, we left the children of Israel at that lovely place called Elim.

[3 : 20] And so we're now into chapter 16 of Exodus. The whole Israelite community set out from Elim and came to the desert of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month after they had come out of Egypt.

In the desert, the whole community grumbled against Moses and Aaron. The Israelites said to them, If only we had died by the Lord's hand in Egypt.

There we sat round pots of meat and ate all the food we wanted. But you have brought us into this desert to starve this entire assembly to death.

Then the Lord said to Moses, I will rain down bread from heaven for you. The people are to go out each day and gather enough for that day.

In this way I will test them and see whether they will follow my instructions. On the sixth day they are to prepare what they bring in, and that is to be twice as much as they gather on the other days. [4 : 28] So Moses and Aaron said to all the Israelites, In the evening you will know that it was the Lord who brought you out of Egypt.

And in the morning you will see the glory of the Lord, because he has heard your grumbling against him. Who are we that you should grumble against us? Moses also said, You will know that it was the Lord when he gives you meat to eat in the evening, and all the bread you want in the morning, because he has heard your grumbling against him.

Who are we? You are not grumbling against us, but against the Lord. Then Moses told Aaron, Say to the entire Israelite community, Come before the Lord, for he has heard your grumbling.

While Aaron was speaking to the whole Israelite community, they looked towards the desert, and there was the glory of the Lord appearing in the cloud.

The Lord said to Moses, I have heard the grumbling of the Israelites. Tell them, At twilight you will eat meat, and in the morning you will be filled with bread.

[5 : 42] Then you will know that I am the Lord your God. That evening quail came and covered the camp, and in the morning there was a layer of dew around the camp.

When the dew was gone, thin flakes like frost on the ground appeared on the desert floor. When the Israelites saw it, they said to each other, What is this?

For they did not know what it was. Moses said to them, It is the bread of the Lord has given you to eat. This is what the Lord has commanded.

Everyone is to gather as much as they need. Take an omer for each person you have in your tent. The Israelites did as they were told. Some gathered much, some little.

And when they measured it by the omer, the one who gathered much did not have too much, and the one who gathered little did not have too little. Everyone had gathered just as much as they needed.

[6 : 44] Then Moses said to them, No one is to keep any of it until morning. However, some of them paid no attention to Moses. They kept part of it until the morning, but it was full of maggots and began to smell.

So Moses was angry with them. Each morning everyone gathered as much as they needed, and when the sun grew hot, it melted away.

On the sixth day they gathered twice as much, two omers for each person, and the leaders of the community came and reported this to Moses. He said to them, This is what the Lord commanded. Tomorrow is to be a day of Sabbath rest, a holy Sabbath to the Lord. So bake what you want to bake, and boil what you want to boil.

Save whatever is left, and keep it until morning. So they saved it until morning, as Moses commanded, and it did not stink or maggots get into it.

[7 : 47] Eat it today, Moses said, because today is the Sabbath to the Lord. You will not find any of it on the ground today. Six days you are to gather it, but on the seventh day, the Sabbath, there will be not any.

Nevertheless, some of the people went out on the seventh day to gather it, but they found none. Then the Lord said to Moses, How long will you refuse to keep my commandments and my instructions?

Bear in mind that the Lord has given you the Sabbath. This is why on the sixth day he gives you bread for two days. Everyone is to stay where they are on the seventh day.

No one is to go out. So the people rested on the seventh day. The people of Israel called the bread manna. It was white like coriander seed and tasted like wafers made with honey.

Moses said, This is what the Lord has commanded. Take an omer of manna and keep it for the generations to come, so they may see the bread I gave you to eat in the wilderness when I brought you out of Egypt.

[8 : 58] So Moses said to Aaron, Take a jar and put an omer of manna in it, then place it before the Lord to be kept for the generations to come. As the Lord commanded Moses, Aaron put the manna with the tablets of the covenant law that it might be preserved.

The Israelites ate manna for forty years until they came to a land which was settled. And they ate manna until they reached the border of Canaan.

And omer is one-tenth of an ephah. Well, we're in Exodus 16 and as John read that to us and introduced it to us, he reminded us, of course, that this is God's people on their journey. Travelling, as they are, to the promised land, having been set free and delivered from Egypt, from slavery, from all the terror and horror of that world.

A few years ago, there was a very clever advert, it's not been on for a little while, on the telly, advertising Hovis bread. It followed a young boy as he bought a loaf of bread and then made his way home through the streets of his town.

[10:13] But it was no ordinary everyday journey through the streets because as he ran through each street, he witnessed 120-odd years of history within Britain.

And so along the way, amongst other things, he sees soldiers on their way to the front in 1914. He joins in a street party for VE Day at the end of World War II.

A carload of football fans celebrating the 1966 World Cup drive past and then he walks between striking miners and riot police in the 1980s.

At last, he arrives in the present day and at home to enjoy that slice of well-traveled loaf. And as the advert closes, the words come up on the screen, as good today as it's always been.

As good today as it's always been. There's a natural tendency for us to look at the past with rose-tinted glasses, even to long for those days of our youth or our childhood, which we consider to have been better days than the days today.

[11:19] And you don't have to be all that old, really, to have that sort of perspective. Children starting secondary school often look back to the fondness of their primary school years and of the times that they spent there.

But it's one thing, of course, to view the past with a certain fondness and thankfulness. It's another thing to look back at the past in the way that the Israelites do here at the beginning of chapter 16. They'd only been left Egypt about two and a half months, we're told that there, the 15th day of the second month after they'd come out. And already they look back to their time in Egypt as something idyllic.

They look back to their time in Egypt as a forlorn, lovely place to live. Notice what they have to say. If only we had died by the Lord's hand in Egypt. There we sat round pots of meat.

There they thought of Egypt as a place of abundance, a place where they had all the food they could eat. They'd forgotten the reality of the situation. They'd forgotten in short to short time that the past wasn't so rose-tinted, that in Egypt they were slaves and that their ancestors had been slaves for 400 years, where they were oppressed and persecuted and terribly treated, where they'd been commanded to throw their children into the river alive.

[12:43] They look back and their perspective on the past was distorted. Many of us here who are Christians love to read of church history, of the great things that God did in past generations and past centuries.

Those times when God blessed the church with revival and many people flocked to worship Him and to trust Him. For some of us who've been Christians for some time, there's also that longing and looking back to our own lives.

Those experiences of first coming to Christ and the excitement of following Him, of times of special blessing that we've witnessed and known as well. There may even be a desire within our hearts, if only I could go back in time, if only I could have lived in that generation when the Puritans were there, if only I could go back to when things were so much better, when things were so much more exciting, when things were going well.

There's a great danger in looking back in this way. It's a great danger for us to look back to times of blessing in history or even in our own lives and longing to be there.

And the great danger is this, is that we miss and we don't appreciate what we have now. We lose sight of what God has done for us now and we don't appreciate the blessings that God has given us now.

[14:08] Think what God had done for the Israelites since they'd left Egypt. He'd brought them not only out of slavery, He'd brought them through that incredible miracle of the parting of the Red Sea when their enemies, the Egyptians, who'd been thirsting for their blood, were destroyed and vanquished.

It had been such an amazing time of blessing that they'd sung this great hymn that we looked at last week in chapter 15. The Lord is my strength and my defense. He's become my salvation.

He's my God and I will praise Him. My Father's God and I will exalt Him. They've been singing of God's goodness. They've been rejoicing in His promises, singing about the fact that He was going to take them to the promised land and provide for them and care for them.

And here, just a matter of days later, just as soon as things start to get a bit tough, they fall into that sin of self-pity.

And of course, worse than that, they begin to complain against Moses, grumble about Him, wishing actually that they had died. The Israelites, verse 3, said to Moses, if only we'd died by the Lord's hand in Egypt.

[15:22] But you've brought us out into the desert to starve this entire assembly to death. Now their moaning was directed at Moses and Aaron, but the reality is that the true object of their dissatisfaction was God Himself.

For in verse 8, God says, or Moses says, you're not grumbling against us, but against the Lord. Grumbling against the Lord.

Don't we see a reflection of ourselves here in these Israelites? Aren't we a lot like them, one day singing God's praises on the Sunday, rejoicing in the salvation that He's brought us from sin, the forgiveness that we've enjoyed, the life that we have, the hope we have of heaven.

Just like those Israelites crossing the Red Sea, we've crossed over from death to life. The amazing transformations God's done for us. But then later in the week, Tuesday, Wednesday, when work is piling up, when the bills are coming in, when the pressures are upon us and the difficulties are rising up, we start to moan and complain about our lives, about how difficult it is, about the problems.

And even though we may not feel like we're doing it, the reality is that we are grumbling against God. We're grumbling against Him. We're really saying, God, you've let me down.

[16:47] You've failed me. This trouble, this problem shouldn't happen. It shouldn't be there if you were the God who truly loved me and cared for me. It can even be times in the Christian life when actually we sometimes regret that we're Christians.

We can actually wish, perhaps, that we might be able to go back to the old way of life rather than having to follow Christ. In that old way of life, we could sin as we wanted. We didn't have that prick of conscience.

We had Sunday mornings free to please ourselves. We weren't bothered then about what God wanted, only what we wanted. Life seemed so simpler sometimes before we followed Christ.

And in fact, life was simpler and is simpler if you're not following Christ. It's simple because of this, because we were so blind to the reality of our situation.

Ignorance was bliss for us in one sense. We couldn't see that we were slaves to sin and to Satan. We were ignorant that our lives were headed to eternal loss and damnation.

[17:55] And it didn't matter how much we threw money or time or effort to try to dull the inner cries of our hearts.

Nothing satisfied. Nothing made us content. Nothing helped us reach that place of joy. We were always hungering for the next high, always looking for the next thing.

That would give us a purpose and a reason in life. Yes, life was so simple when we didn't follow Christ because we were so stupid and so ignorant of the realities of the situation.

But you see, there's nothing rose-tinted about a life without Christ. There were no pots of meat in Egypt. There was only hard labour, unremitting pain, slavery, sorrow, grief.

grief. Dear friends, shouldn't we repent of our attitude which says, I wish that I could go back?

[19:06] How's God going to respond to that? How should God respond to this attitude of ungratitude? How should He respond to moaning and complaining after all that He's done for them, after all that He's done for us?

Why doesn't God just send them back to Egypt? Well, if you want the pots of meat in Egypt, go back to Egypt. Or even, why doesn't He just leave them to their own misery in the desert?

Why doesn't He just let the Egyptians kill them? But of course, He didn't do any of those things and doesn't do any of those things. Amazingly, God graciously, wonderfully, gives them something better than they ever had before.

He gives them fresh meat and bread to satisfy their hunger. The Lord says, I've heard the grumbling of the Israelites. So what are you going to do, God? Tell them at twilight you'll eat meat and in the morning you'll be filled with bread.

Then you'll know that I'm the Lord your God. He's so gracious towards them. So what do we learn here? What do we see here?

[20 : 15] What do we learn about God's dealing with us, with you and me, in the midst of our lives, even when we are grumbling and complaining, even when we are thankless of all that He's done for us?

Well, first of all, dear friends, don't we see the patience of God with His children? God is long suffering. God is persevering with those who are unappreciative, forgetful, undeserving. You see, we may feel that God has changed towards us, but He can never change. We change, one minute we're up, next minute we're down, one minute we're trusting Him, the next minute we're complaining, but God doesn't change.

This is what He says to Moses a little later in Exodus. He describes Himself in this way, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion, and sin.

God is graciously patient with you and with me, more than we deserve, more than we could ever earn, because patience is a wonderful aspect, a facet of His grace.

[21 : 25] God doesn't treat us as our sins deserve. God doesn't deal with us as we deserve to be dealt with, with our sins, with our rebellion, with our disobedience, with our self-concern, with our murmuring against Him.

What does God do? Instead of blotting us out, instead of striking us down, He deals with us patiently, graciously, wonderfully, giving to us what we really need.

We may think badly of God. We're wrong to think that way. But God will never cast us off. God will never wash His hands of us, such is the greatness of His grace, that He will continue to do us good, even at times when we wish that He wouldn't, because we think we know best.

God is patient with you, dear Christian, but He's also patient with you, dear non-Christian. And here I have to raise a warning to you.

if you're not a Christian this morning, if you haven't put your faith in Jesus Christ as your Savior, if you're still going your own way, living your own life, if you're still willing and desiring to stay enslaved to your sin and to that course of self-destruction, let me warn you, God has spared you to this point, God has been patient with you to this point in your life, but there is an end to His patience, there is an end to His loving kindness.

[23 : 06] If you continue to reject Him, if you continue to deny Him, if you continue to stand against Him with your fist raised, saying, I will live my life my way, then be sure of this, there will come a day when His patience will be finished.

God Himself speaks to Moses, He says to Moses, how long will you refuse to keep my commands? And God says that to you, dear person, if you're not a Christian, how long will you refuse God's command that you repent of your sin and put your faith in Jesus, your Savior?

How long will you continue to put your fingers metaphorically in your ears when Jesus is spoken about? How many times have I or another person spoken to you of Jesus as your Savior?

How many times have you had opportunities to repent and to receive His grace and mercy? Can you dare continue to reject Him? Will there not come a time when it will be your last opportunity?

Your last opportunity to hear the good news that Jesus saves sinners and that He is willing to receive and save you? There's coming a day when you will stand before God in judgment as we all will.

[24 : 27] And you will have no one to blame but yourself when God says depart from me, you practices of evil. When He sends you and dismisses you from His presence from eternity in hell, you will not be able to say to God, you weren't patient with me, you didn't give me a chance, God, you didn't let me know the truth, God.

You will only be able to spend all eternity kicking yourself with regret and self-blame and self-hate that you never turned to Him who graciously, patiently waited and called.

But why spend eternity in such misery? Why spend forever when God's promise and His encouragement is whoever comes to me, I'll never turn away?

When Jesus says, come to me, you who are heavy laden and burdened, and I will give you rest.

You may say, well, how do I know that God will do that? How do I know that God will meet me?

How do I know that God will accept me? How do I know that God will forgive me? Because the proof of God's patience is seen here in the wonderful way in which God provides for the people who

murmured against Him and complained against Him.

[25 : 43] The proof is the provision of God. What a wonderful and perfect provision it is. Moses also said, you will know that it was the Lord when He gives you meat to eat in the evening and all the bread you want in the morning because He's heard your grumbling against Him.

God is the God who provides. The God is the God who proves His patience by giving. And look how He provided for these people. He provided for them regularly.

Verse 4, I will rain down bread from heaven for you. The people will go out each day and gather enough for that day. There wasn't a day in the week when God did not provide for them the food that they needed.

And wonderfully, when He told them on the Sabbath day that they were to rest and He didn't provide the manna for them, He made sure that the manna they collected the night before didn't go off.

That it didn't have maggots and it didn't stink. The reality is that God is the God who provides and meets your needs and mine for every moment of every single day of our lives.

[26 : 54] We just shouldn't think, as Christians or anybody else, we shouldn't think that, well, we come on a Sunday and we get topped up and we meet with God and that's it for the rest of the week. We've got to live on that supply from Sunday until next Sunday.

None of us would think like that about the way we eat physically. None of us would say, right, I'm going home for my Sunday lunch, I'm going to stuff my face so much that I hope I can last until next Sunday before I eat again.

Of course not. It would be stupid, wouldn't it? Every day we eat and every day as Christians we can feed upon Christ. Every day we can receive from him the nourishment that our souls need.

In John chapter 6, Jesus refers back to this event in Exodus and talks about himself as being the bread of heaven, the manna that God sent down into the world. We've read there already from verse 35, Jesus declared, I am the bread of life, whoever comes to me will never hunger, whoever believes in me will never thirst.

Let me ask you, dear Christian, are you every day feeding upon Jesus? Are you receiving from him the good things that he wants you to have? Well, the only way you can do that is by coming to him. Just as they had to go out and gather it, so you come to Jesus in prayer, you come to him in the word, you come to him and say speak to me, feed me, encourage me, help me, meet with me, and he won't disappoint, he never will.

[28 : 20] Because we see not only does he provide for us every day, regularly, but he provides for us exactly what we need, he provided for them sufficiently. Verse 18 tells us about how they were to gather up the manna.

Israelites did as they were told, verse 17, some gathered much, some gathered little, and when they measured it by the omer, the one who gathered much did not have too much, the one who gathered little did not have too little, everyone had gathered just as much as they needed.

God meets our needs, he gives us all that we need, he provides just the right amount for us according to who we are.

Like these people, we are all different, different, we have different appetites, different tastes, different desires, different needs, different problems, different concerns, yet God meets every single one of them perfectly, completely in the Lord Jesus Christ.

They had the same manna and they had the full amount. No matter who we are, God meets our needs. God has provided for our needs in the Lord Jesus Christ.

[29 : 38] And we are different people. And yet Paul is able to say at the end of his letter to the Philippians, my God shall meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ.

My God shall supply all your needs. In Christ, that's the place where our needs are met. So we are different. Some of us may have committed numberless sins.

We may have lived many years without trusting in Christ. We may be very close to eternity and to death. We may be somebody who's raised in a Christian home.

Somebody who came to hear about the Lord Jesus Christ at an early age. We were preserved by the blessing of a Christian home from all the excesses of sin. But dear friends, whether we are long in the tooth or short, whether we have lived a wretched life of sin or whether we sought to live a good life, the reality is we both need forgiveness and the forgiveness we need is given to us perfectly, completely in Jesus Christ.

There's enough grace to cover the deepest amount of sin. There's enough grace to save even the person who thinks that they're good. And of course we have differences of faith, don't we?

[30 : 56] Some people are really strong, they're able to believe and trust God in the most difficult times. Some really just feel like they're limping along. But Christ is able to meet your need.

Whether you have strong faith or little faith, it's not the amount of your faith that keeps you, it's the God who keeps you in whom you've put your faith. Maybe you've got big troubles, maybe they're just small, maybe your journey through life has been easy, but maybe it's been hard.

In all these things, Christ, your heavenly manner, is the one who provides for you sufficiently, grace and strength to live for him. He's provided.

You know that you can trust him, you know that you can depend upon him, you know that you can come to him. Why? Because he's provided. He is just an example of one provision for these people, which was sufficient, which was daily, which was glorious.

There's one last thing here for us to think about this morning. We thought about the patience of God, we thought about the provision of God. The question really arises, what is the purpose of God?

[32 : 08] Why did God choose to, this strange way of feeding his people, sending them this incredible manner every morning, which tasted like wafers made with honey, which disappeared as the sun came?

A miraculous provision. Why didn't he feed them in a much easier way? When Elijah was in the desert, he would run away. God sent ravens to bring him food morning and evening.

When Jesus fed the 5,000 there on the plain, he took just a small amount of food and miraculously caused it to increase. Whenever God does something, he does it for a reason.

He has a purpose. A purpose for us to understand, a purpose for us to realize. And God had a purpose in what he was doing here. We're told there in verse 4 what that purpose was.

Then the Lord said to Moses, I'll rain down bread from heaven for you. People are to go out each day and gather enough for that day. In this way, I will test them. I will test them to see whether they will follow my instructions.

[33 : 17] God was testing their faith and trust in him. The Bible says elsewhere that really that's all that happens in our lives. As we go through difficulties, we go through trials and sorrows, they are part of God's testing of our faith.

Now, we must understand what that means. It doesn't mean that God doesn't know our faith. God is ignorant of our faith, a bit like the maths teacher who sets the exam, the test for the children.

We don't know what level you're on, so we'll set a test to find out what level of understanding you have. No, that's not God. God knows your faith and mine. He knows your lack of faith and your unbelief as well as mine.

No, God tests them not for the purpose of finding out what their test was like, but rather proving the reality of their faith, whether they really had faith or didn't have faith.

That was the key thing for them. The most important thing in the world, dear friends, for you and me is this. Do we have faith in Christ or not? That's the most important thing.

[34 : 16] That's the thing that's going to make the difference between eternity in hell or eternity in heaven. And that's going to make the difference between living life now and just existing.

That's going to make the difference between everything that we are and everything we do. Do I have real faith? And for that reason, God tested their faith. If they would obey the simple instructions of God, collect manna in the morning, don't collect it on Sunday, get twice the amount on Saturday, they would be fine.

They would be met with. But of course, they didn't, did they? Verse 19. No one's to keep it until morning. However, some of them paid no attention. Isn't that typical of us?

Paid no attention. Went in one ear out the other. Next morning, they went up and they kept, sorry, next morning, they kept a part of it to the next day. They were greedy. They wanted some more, kept it full of maggots and began to smell.

That's a big lesson there about greed. Let me say this to you. If your only desire in life is that you might accumulate things, what you'll find out at the end of the day is this, all you've got is a handful of maggots which stink.

[35 : 21] That's what sin is. That's what self-pleasure is. That's what greed is. No, they didn't trust God. And then verse 22, again, we read there that they were meant to not to take any on the

Sabbath day.

This is what the Lord has commanded. Tomorrow is a day of Sabbath rest, holy day, bake what you need the night before, save what's ever till the morning. What happens, of course, nonetheless, 27, nevertheless, some of the people went out on the seventh day to gather it.

God's word is simple and clear to you and to me. It's simple. It's not complicated. It's not difficult to be a Christian. It's not hard. It's not rocket science.

It's a simple message, a simple truth. God made you to know him. And the only way that you can know him is through Jesus Christ, his son.

Simple as that. You're made for a purpose. You're made for a reason. You're made to know God, enjoy God, and be with him forever. But because we choose to go our own way and do our own thing, then we have broken and ruined and destroyed that relationship with God.

[36 : 39] But in loving kindness, Jesus Christ came into this world to restore what was broken, to bring you back to God and make that way of forgiveness and life and restoration.

And it's simply by receiving Christ. It's simply by taking hold of him. Just saying to the children. They simply had to trust God and pick up the manna in the way that he told them to do it.

You can't stipulate to God. You can't say to God, I'll have you on my terms. Yes, I'll believe in you if you do this for me. I'll believe in you if you do that for me.

I'll have it on my terms. My terms are this. You saved me, God, but I live my life the way I want to live. You can't have it on your terms. It's got to be on God's terms or no terms.

And God's terms are repentance, turning away from your sin, faith in Jesus as your saviour, and trusting him as your Lord. God. Are you one of God's people this morning?

[37 : 44] Do you believe his promise to meet your needs? Now, it may well be that you think you are a Christian this morning. Maybe that you think you're a Christian because a long time ago when you were young you prayed a prayer in a meeting or put your hand up in a meeting.

It may be that a strange feeling came over you and you felt all happy or you felt all gooey. It may even be that you believe you're a Christian because you were baptized with water.

Maybe as a baby, even as an adult. Let me say this to you. The only way that you can know that you're a Christian this morning is this. Are you still feeding on Jesus?

Are you still trusting in him today? Are you still enjoying his wonderful provision for your soul? It's no good looking back to something that happened in the past and say that proves I'm a Christian.

No, the proof of the pudding is in the eating today. Is Jesus your Lord today? Is he the one who's the bread that you can't live without today? Is he the one that you enjoy and delight in today and thank God for every day?

[38 : 52] God was testing their faith. And perhaps you're going through a testing time in your life. Health issues, worries, concerns, family issues. The question is this, are you looking to Jesus?

Are you trusting in him? Because God wants you to know that faith in him is real. This one second thing as we close. God was testing them so that their faith could increase.

God wanted them to trust him more. Verse 12, second part, God says to them at the end, then you will know that I am the Lord your God.

When I give you these things and you taste them and you eat them, then you'll know. Taste and see that the Lord is good, says the psalmist. Verse 34, how can I know that I'm a Christian?

How can I grow in faith because of trusting Jesus day by day? Every morning that they went out and God had given them manna, they knew that God was faithful. Every day they saw his faithfulness.

[39 : 57] Every day they received from him, they knew that his grace was towards them, his love was towards them. Every day that you, dear friend, go to Jesus for forgiveness and to his word and in prayer, every day that you do that, then you will find your faith growing and increasing because you'll prove his faithfulness, you'll prove his goodness, you'll know that he is the one who cares for you.

And if you've never trusted in Christ and you've never known his goodness, the reason is you have never come to him. That's the reason you don't know whether he's good, you don't know whether he's trustworthy, you don't know whether he's faithful because you won't come.

If you came and tasted, you'd know his goodness. If you came and tasted, you'd know his loving kindness. Listen finally as we close this invitation from God.

It's in Isaiah 55. I'm going to ask you, what are you going to do about this invitation, this command, this call to you? For God says to you, come all of you who are thirsty, come to me and you have no money, come buy and eat.

Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost. Why spend money on what is not bread and your labor on what does not satisfy?

[41 : 16] Listen, listen to me and eat what is good and you will delight in the richest of fare. Give ear and come to me. Listen, that you may live.

Let's pray together now. Oh Lord, our God, you are so good to us, patient with us, providing for us. We thank you that you have a purpose for our lives, that we might know you and enjoy you, that we might taste of all the good and rich things you have for us in Jesus.

We thank you that you haven't given up on us. We thank you that you will never give up on those who put their faith in you. You'll never give up on those who trust in you. You'll never fail or let them down.

But Lord, we know in our hearts that some of us have never trusted you and have never come to you and have never sought you. So in our hearts, oh Lord, we don't know whether you're good, we don't know whether you're trustworthy, and we're afraid.

[42 : 28] Oh Lord, give us that faith, that faith that turns to you, that faith that takes you at your promises, that faith that gives up holding on to the past and what we hope and think was good and better.

Help us, Lord, to give up our sins, which have only brought us sorrow, sadness, and discontent. Give us that faith to take hold of you, not just now but every day, to drink and eat from the fountain and from the wonderful gift of life that you have for us in Jesus.

Oh Lord, we thank you that you will never turn us away. Whoever comes to you will never be turned away. But Lord, bring us before it's too late. Soften our hard and stupid hearts before it's too late. Bring us, Lord, into your wonderful arms of love to feed on the good things. For we ask it in Jesus' name now. Amen.