

**GOD'S DAILY CARE OF BODY AND SOUL UNTIL WE REACH  
THE PROMISED LAND OF HEAVEN*****Deuteronomy 8:1-19***

Scripture Readings

**Romans 3:21-28****Matthew 7:21-29**

Hymns

**14, 284, 434, 54:1,3**Hymns from The Lutheran Hymnal (1941) unless otherwise noted

+ In the Name of Jesus Christ +

*“Every commandment which I command you today you must be careful to observe, that you may live and multiply, and go in and possess the land of which the LORD swore to your fathers. And you shall remember that the LORD your God led you all the way these forty years in the wilderness, to humble you and test you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not. So He humbled you, allowed you to hunger, and fed you with manna which you did not know nor did your fathers know, that He might make you know that man shall not live by bread alone; but man lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the LORD. Your garments did not wear out on you, nor did your foot swell these forty years. You should know in your heart that as a man chastens his son, so the LORD your God chastens you. Therefore you shall keep the commandments of the LORD your God, to walk in His ways and to fear Him. For the LORD your God is bringing you into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and springs, that flow out of valleys and hills; a land of wheat and barley, of vines and fig trees and pomegranates, a land of olive oil and honey; a land in which you will eat bread without scarcity, in which you will lack nothing; a land whose stones are iron and out of whose hills you can dig copper. When you have eaten and are full, then you shall bless the LORD your God for the good land which He has given you.”*

In the name of our Savior God who takes care of all our needs throughout our lives, dear fellow redeemed;

During the summer months, one popular form of recreation is camping. Some camping trips are longer than others. It usually isn't too difficult to camp for a couple of days or a week or so. But if it's for a longer period of time, conditions can be such that folks might be longing to get back home with all its conveniences and comforts. For example, think of having to contend with hot and humid air, or rainy conditions, or an ongoing battle with mosquitoes, gnats or biting flies for days on end.

Consider what the Israelites went through on their extended camping trip that lasted 40 years. During those many years as they made their way to the promised land of Canaan, they lived in

tents which they had to set up and take down repeatedly from campsite to campsite. It certainly wasn't an easy experience camping for 40 years in very hot, arid, windy, and dusty conditions.

And yet, every day and every step of the way the LORD was with them as He mercifully, lovingly, and powerfully tended to their every need. This faithfulness of the LORD should serve as a reminder to us of the abiding care He provides for our bodies and souls every day of our lives as we make our way to the promised land of heaven.

As you may recall, the camping trip to the promised land originally wasn't supposed to take that long. It was lengthened to 40 years, because many of the Israelites questioned God's power and faithfulness to give them the land of Canaan. Not only did they voice their unbelief in this, but they also accused God of bringing them out into the wilderness to die. On account of their faithlessness, the LORD said that those who were 20 years old and older would never enter the Promised Land. They were assigned to wandering around in the wilderness until they all died off, with the exception of faithful Joshua and Caleb.

This could well serve as a reminder and warning to people in every generation that anyone who does not believe in the LORD's powerful and gracious salvation through Jesus Christ will not enter the blessed eternal life in heaven. May God preserve us all from suffering such a dreadful fate.

The LORD in His great love and mercy doesn't want this terrible fate to befall anyone, and it is for that reason that He goes to great lengths to bring sinners to repentance and faith, and then to preserve them in the faith. God didn't want any of those Israelites who rebelled against Him to also be prevented from entering heaven, and it is for that reason that He gave many of them 40 years of grace to be brought to repentance and faith.

Now while the Israelites were on that 40 year camping trip, there weren't any grocery stores, clothing stores, or any other kind of store along the way to buy provisions. Nor were they in one spot long enough to have a vegetable garden to grow food. They were in every respect totally dependent upon the LORD to provide them with all their needs. And during all that time the LORD never let them down once.

We learn from our text that the LORD miraculously provided for all their bodily necessities. Each and every day for 40 years, with the exception of Sabbath days, the LORD sent them food from heaven called "manna." This manna was a sweet tasting seed that could be ground up into flour and baked into cakes or bread. The LORD also supplied them with quail to eat.

This daily blessing of food from above is a good illustration of what the Lord Jesus taught us to pray about in the Lord's Prayer as He invites us to pray to the heavenly Father, "***give us this day our daily bread.***" You will notice that the LORD didn't tell us to pray for enough food for a week or a month or a year, but rather to give us what we need day by day. In other words, the LORD wants us to look to Him in faith each and every day of our lives to provide for our body and life.

Our text not only tells of God miraculously supplying the children of Israel with food each day for 40 years, but also seeing to it that they had clothes to wear. When looking back to those days in the wilderness, the Jews were reminded concerning this, ***“Your garments did not wear out on you, nor did your foot swell these forty years.”*** Since there weren’t stores to purchase clothing, the LORD saw to it that their clothes didn’t wear out. During our camping trips, we may wear the same clothes for a few days, but for the Israelites they wore the same clothes for many years and the children wore hand-me-downs from their older siblings.

The manna from heaven and the clothes that didn’t wear out were all miracles through which God provided for the children of Israel. The LORD could also use miracles to supply our needs. But ordinarily, He provides for us through natural means, such as, blessing us with abilities, health, strength, and the opportunity to work for a living so that we can acquire food, clothing, and shelter. And in nature, the LORD causes the sun to shine and the rain to fall so that food can be grown in the fields for us to gather in or buy at stores. So then, through these natural means we too are completely dependent upon the LORD to supply all our earthly necessities just as it was for the Israelites in the wilderness.

Since the LORD faithfully provided for the Israelites every day for 40 years, this should reassure us that the LORD will never fail to take care of us. Look to the LORD for daily bread. Pray to Him for daily requirements. And have faith in Him for everything.

During the 40 year camping trip of the Israelites, they not only learned the importance of looking to the LORD in faith for daily bread to nourish their bodies, but also for spiritual food to nourish their souls. We read in our text, ***“So He humbled you, allowed you to hunger, and fed you with manna which you did not know nor did your fathers know, that He might make you know that man shall not live by bread alone; but man lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the LORD.”***

Physical food can sustain our bodily life only so long before we die. Whereas spiritual food that comes from God sustains our souls eternally. And that life-sustaining food is the Word of God which reveals Jesus as our Lord and Savior from sin, death, and the devil. Listen to how Jesus refers to Himself as spiritual food for souls, ***“I am the bread of life. Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which comes down from heaven, that one may eat of it and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven if anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world.”*** (Jn.6:48-51) Jesus reminds us that He is the food for our souls that gives us eternal life, because He offered up His flesh and blood on the cross so that we could be blessed with the gifts of forgiveness, spiritual life, and eternal salvation through Him.

That we might ever have and enjoy the gift of spiritual life that extends into eternity, it is of paramount importance that we continue to feed on Jesus, that is, continue to listen to and receive in faith His gracious words and teachings. Time and again we find the LORD instructing us in Holy Scripture to read, learn, and inwardly digest this spiritual food for the soul. We need these reminders, because we are not always so conscious of the great importance of it. When it comes to the matter of realizing the requirement of food for our bodies, no one has to tell us that we must eat. When we feel hungry, we go and eat.

However, with regard to spiritual food for our souls, it can be quite a different matter. We can go days on end without reading or hearing the Word of God and not realize we are starving souls so that our faith grows weak and faint. So then, to prevent us from depriving our souls and not completely lose our faith in our Savior, we find in the Bible such exhortations as, “***Search the Scriptures,***” and “***Blessed are they who hear the Word of God and keep it,***” and “***Do this in remembrance of Me.***” God help us to ever feed on His gracious words and teachings so that we never grow weak and faint, but rather grow strong in the LORD.

The Promised Land that the children of Israel were heading for at the end of their 40 year camping trip was truly a splendid land. Listen to how it is described, “***For the LORD your God is bringing you into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and springs, that flow out of valleys and hills; a land of wheat and barley, of vines and fig trees and pomegranates, a land of olive oil and honey; a land in which you will eat bread without scarcity, in which you will lack nothing; a land whose stones are iron and out of whose hills you can dig copper. When you have eaten and are full, then you shall bless the LORD your God for the good land which He has given you.***”

This Promised Land of Plenty is a symbolic picture of the Promised Land of Heaven that we are heading for at the end of our temporal life. When Jesus returns on the last day, He will bring forth a new perfected earth like the one Adam and Eve lived in before it was cursed by sin. Not only will this dwelling place be perfect in every way, but we will also be perfected both in body and soul. The difference between the first earth and the second one is that the latter one is a perfected world that will last forever.

As we live out our days in this present world, may the LORD grant us the grace to ever look to Him in faith to supply both our bodily and spiritually needs until we are brought safely home to heaven. Amen.

—Rev. Mark Gullerud

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