

3/26/20 - Enough

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 it?" For they did not know what it was. Moses said to them, "It is the bread 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 l 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. 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 morning, but it was full of maggots and began to smell. So Moses was angry with them. - Ex. 16:13-20

I know it's already becoming overworn, but I'm still amazed at what people do when they panic. Afraid that stores would close and roads become impassable due to COVID-19, everyone, even the most reasonable people I know, ran out to stock up on... toilet paper? Not gas, not milk or flour or sugar, but toilet paper. For an upper respiratory infection, toilet paper seems an odd thing to hoard. But it wasn't the only thing. Shelves soon emptied at grocery stores, who had to begin limiting purchases of water, milk, and certain other products. Afraid of going out to church, people still ran (and some still run) to the store daily to get just one more roll, one more gallon, one more package.

It is natural for us as humans to hoard, but even more so in America. Why? It's not a status symbol to have more toilet paper than someone else - in fact I've begun to see some social shaming against those who hoard, thereby keeping resources away from those in need. No, we hoard because we don't trust that there will be enough. And the reality is, even in calm, normal times, there is never enough for us.

Some have defined America as the land of plenty, but others have defined it as the land of More. We live lives defined by a deep felt need for more - more Facebook friends we don't connect with, more technology to make our lives "easier", more activities in our overly-busy lives, more food for our obese families, more, more, more. Theologians and sociologists together call this a "scarcity mindset", meaning that we all believe there is not enough to go around so we are always focused on all we don't have.

But this is not God's way. God is a God of abundance. When the Israelites wandered in the desert, they grumbled about not having bread. Boom, God gave them bread. Then they grumbled about not having meat. Boom, God gave them meat. Then they grumbled about not having water. Boom, God gave them water. But God only gave them enough for the day. If he hadn't restricted them to one day's worth, they would have hoarded, stolen from others, and even tried to "corner the market", I guarantee. They were, after all, human just like us. So God limited the food to one day's worth, by command or by spoilage, whichever was necessary.

Are you able to move from a mindset of "MORE" to a mindset of "enough"? Can you trust God to provide all you need (and more!) rather than trying to provide for yourself? Can you trust God to answer when you pray, "Give me THIS DAY my DAILY bread..."?