

Goodness of God God is Joy

Numbers 11:1-6

11 Now when the people complained in the hearing of the Lord about their misfortunes, the Lord heard it and his anger was kindled. Then the fire of the Lord burned against them, and consumed some outlying parts of the camp. ² But the people cried out to Moses; and Moses prayed to the Lord, and the fire abated. ³ So that place was called Taberah, because the fire of the Lord burned against them.

⁴The rabble among them had a strong craving; and the Israelites also wept again, and said, 'If only we had meat to eat! ⁵We remember the fish we used to eat in Egypt for nothing, the cucumbers, the melons, the leeks, the onions, and the garlic; ⁶but now our strength is dried up, and there is nothing at all but this manna to look at.'

1. Do you find the attitude of the Israelites surprising here? Have you ever been in a situation where someone wasn't grateful?
2. Manna was a flaky physical substance of some sort, but also symbolises God's gifts and God's caring for us. Do you find it hard or easy to believe that God will provide for you? Do you think there's sometimes a temptation to prefer the certainty of cucumbers and onions to the fleetingness of manna?

Luke 12:22-34

²²He said to his disciples, 'Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat, or about your body, what you will wear. ²³For life is more than food, and the body more than clothing. ²⁴Consider the ravens: they neither sow nor reap, they have neither storehouse nor barn, and yet God feeds them. Of how much more value are you than the birds! ²⁵And can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life? ²⁶If then you are not able to do so small a thing as that, why do you worry about the rest? ²⁷Consider the lilies, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these. ²⁸But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, how much more will he clothe you—you of little faith! ²⁹And do not keep striving for what you are to eat and what you are to drink, and do not keep worrying. ³⁰For it is the nations of the world that strive after all these things, and your Father knows that you need them. ³¹Instead, strive for his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well. ³²'Do not be afraid, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. ³³Sell your possessions, and give alms. Make purses for yourselves that do not wear out, an unfailing treasure in heaven, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys. ³⁴For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

3. Read the text to yourself quietly. What words or phrases stand out to you? What might God be saying through them?
4. Jesus tells us not to worry or be anxious. Why do we get like that in life, and what does Jesus teach about it?
5. Activity: Part of what Jesus is saying is to focus on the here and now and not dwell on the past or speculate about the future. Take some time now to simply enjoy the present. Write down or draw some things you have to be grateful for right now. Once you're done, close your eyes and take time to thank God for each one of them, and for

this time with him. Why not try doing this for ten mins each day for a week, and try to make it a habit of it?