

Men's Email Bible Study – Tuesday, September 21, 2021 (8:30am) – Pentecost 18
Bible Saturday – Gideon Presentation with Gary Froiland (September 25)

TEXT: Numbers 11:4-6, 10-16, 24-29 – Craving for Meat! Eldad & Medad Prophecy! Who carries us?

1. While “In the Wilderness,” the Israelites get tired of the bland, tasteless manna they were given each day to eat. They cry out in distress (murmuring), and the LORD who hears them is incited to anger. Moses pleads with God to either let him die or to replace him as leader of the people. **God sends his Spirit on seventy men, as well as Eldad and Medad,** who prophesy in the camp to remind Israel who was in control. The people want MEAT. God gives His people quail 3 feet deep. 60 bushels = a month's worth of meat. Meat coming out of their nostrils. Plague.
2. This lesson comes from the days after the Exodus, when the people of Israel had been wandering in the desert for many months. How quickly they had forgotten what it was like to be slaves to Pharaoh; all they could talk about was **the wonderful “salad bar” they used to have.** Do you think their bland diet was the true cause of their complaining? Might it have been a smokescreen for a deeper sense of anxiety? Moses felt the weight of responsibility in the face of the moaning and complaining of the Israelites. (**Demands of Leadership!** Share the load.) Moses alone had to deal with the continued complaints and resistance of the people. Have you ever been so **overwhelmed** with the day to day tasks of life that you wanted **to throw in the towel** and give up all responsibility? Why does stress make us feel alone? What makes us forget that, with God, we are never alone? God answered Moses' cries with a show of his power. He called for seventy elders to come and receive the Spirit that they too might be able to speak with authority. Meanwhile, two men, **Eldad and Medad, who were part of the seventy elders but were not at the tabernacle, began to prophesy in the camp proper.** Joshua urged Moses to make them stop. Why was Joshua concerned about Eldad and Medad's prophesying? Do we sometimes become concerned with the way others speak in the name of the Lord? In what ways does this story remind us that it is up to the Spirit of God who will speak for him? In what way has **Christ authorized you to speak on his behalf?**

TEXT: Psalm 104:27-35 – The Lord Sustains the Creation

1. The psalmist sings praises to the Lord who created all that exists and continues to care for it, right down to the smallest details. The implication here is that **all creatures depend upon God for their food.** However, as **God provides,** His people gather up the food but do not give thanks. Then, when life gets tough, they are perplexed about God's seeming disappearance. The psalmist insists that he will **rejoice & sing to the Lord** as long as he lives—**through the good and the bad alike.**
2. Our text is just a small piece of a much larger psalm **in praise of God for the wonders of creation.** Here the psalm expresses how God's creation is dependent upon him for life itself. The fact that God faithfully provides his creative and life-giving Spirit is cause for praise. How does this psalm reflect what Job says in Job 1: “The Lord gives and the Lord takes away; blessed be the name of the Lord” (Job 1:21b). How can we give God praise even when God appears to be working against us? It is not just we who rejoice, but **God himself who rejoices in his creation** (v. 32). What does it mean that our life and faith are examples of His many works in the world? (Recite Luther's Meaning to Article 1 of Apostles' Creed.

TEXT: James 5:1-12, 13-20 –Warnings to the Rich: Share! Do Not Hoard! The Prayer of Faith!

1. We've been keeping company with James. James (the Lord's brother; martyred 62 AD) addresses practical issues and enduring problems faced by many mature believers. James is preaching about **"integrated discipleship"**. Many see the Book of James as **a commentary on Jesus' Sermon on the Mount**; the Proverbs of the N.T. (54 direct commands). James is not writing about how to become a Christian, but how to act/live like one. **Luther**: "You are saved by faith alone, but if faith is alone, it is not faith." **Mrs. Phillip's Prayer** – Our Life is a Bible for some folks to read. "I can't hear what you are saying, because your actions are speaking too loudly." Is our faith Credible & Authentic? We may be the only Bible some folks read!
2. Following his teaching on favoritism (2:1-13) and the evils of the tongue (3:1-12), **James speaks about jealousy and selfish ambition; and asks a rhetorical question**, "Who is wise and understanding among you?" "If anyone lacks wisdom let him **ask** God, who is generous to all without reproach, and it will be given him." James urges the Christians to look out for one another, especially for those who are lacking, and to share what they have — not to be like to the **wealthy merchants** who **stockpile their riches and leave the poor to go hungry** (example: Jesus' Parable of the Rich Fool). This is not simply a call to generosity, but a window to a deeper spiritual relationship with the Savior. (Example: Olson Forum-1994; at Concordia College in Moorhead, MN – Jennie O Turkey; \$5 million gift from Earl & Dorothy Olson).
3. **Verses 7-12**: Patience in Suffering as one waits for the coming of the LORD. Patient farming! Our Judge is standing at the door! The steadfastness of Job. Oaths: Matthew 23:16-22.
4. **The Prayer of Faith!** James provides **a practical strategy for the Christian life no matter the situation**. When life is tough, pray. When you are sick, let the church office know. If you sin, seek absolution. If someone has wandered from the truth, bring him back. God is with us, no matter the need. **So pray** for each other. The prayers of righteous people accomplish far more than we imagine—but only if they pray. Notice that in verse 15, physical healing is mentioned in the same sentence as forgiveness of sin. (Compare the story of Jesus healing of the paralytic in Mark 4:1-12.) Anoint with oil in the name of the Lord; and the prayer of faith will save the one who is sick. Example of Elijah's prayer life! Verse 20: Whose soul will be saved from death? The one who is sought or the one who seeks? BOTH!

TEXT: Mark 9:38-50 – In the Name of Jesus. Inward faith; outward action! Making the Necessary Cut

1. The disciples witness **someone casting out a demon** and report it to Jesus with some distress ("he was not following US"). Jesus assures them that no one would be able to do a good work in his name and then turn around and curse him. An act of kindness is always an act of unity in Christ — **as Jesus said, "For the one who is not against us is for us."** He continues his teaching by warning the disciples about causing a "little one of faith—smallest child" to stumble (**millstones** around our necks). Instead of grumbling, we should **be salt in each other's lives**: purifying, healing, preserving, and bringing out the best flavor in each other. Those who give a cup of water in Jesus' name will not lose their reward! The final portion of this text has to do with leading others astray, and the warning to avoid temptations to sin. Hand, foot or eye causing you to sin? **Cut it off!** Better mutilated than eternal **HELL (Gehenna)**—Valley of Hinnom, where humans were sacrificed & garbage was dumped). Text ends with the encouragement to **be "salty" Christians**. Everyone will be salted with fire; salt preserves and fire purifies.