

Three Sundays ago, after the 10:30 service, I needed to hurry up and get out of town. The reason? Amy and I along with our son, Nathan and his fiancée Ava were given tickets to the Minnesota Twins™ game. Second row, right by first base. These were the best seats I'd ever had for a ball game. It was a beautiful day. And to top it all off, the home team won the game with a walk-off homerun in extra innings! As I stayed and watched the postgame interview taking place down on the field, I was reminded of the Disney World™ commercials from years ago. Do you remember? Like this one from 1987: "Frank Viola, starting pitcher for the Minnesota Twins, you just won the World Series. What are you going to do next?" "I'm going to Disney World!" he exclaimed. And he did! He and other athletes like him, really did get to go to Disney World after winning the World Series™, the Super Bowl™, or an Olympic Gold Medal.

Now picture, if you will, a similar scene but set in Old Testament times: "So, people of Israel, God has sent You Moses Who cried out, "Let my people go!" And after Pharaoh had told you "No" over and over, that evil ruler finally let you go after years of slavery!

People of Israel, what are you going to do next? You've seen the plagues—the blood flowing, the frogs inhabiting, the flies bothering, the hail destroying, the animals dying, the locusts devouring, the gnats pestering, the boils hurting, the darkness blinding.

So, people of Israel, what are you going to do next? You've roasted your year-old, unblemished lamb. You've painted the doorframe with blood. You've heard the wailing throughout the night as the firstborn died, yet God kept your people safe. (As you can tell, this is longer than your average 30-second commercial!)

So, people of Israel, what are you going to do next? You've left Egypt with the spoils, with their gold and silver and clothing (12:35). You've plundered the Egyptians- all with the Lord's favor (12:36). You've followed the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night.

People of Israel, what **are** you going to do next? You've walked on the dry ground with the wall of water to the right and to the left. You've seen the Egyptians who pursued you swept into the sea. You've cried out, "I

will sing to the LORD, for he has triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider he has thrown into the sea. The LORD is my strength and my song, and he has become my salvation; this is my God, and I will praise him, my father's God, and I will exalt him" (15:1b-2).

So, people of Israel, what are you going to do next?

The answer is clear: "We're going to grumble!" Or as they worded it in today's Old Testament reading: "Would that we had died by the hand of the LORD in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the meat pots and ate bread to the full, for you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger" (v 3). Grumble, grumble, grumble. And the Israelites said, "Is it because there are no graves in Egypt that you have taken us away to die in the wilderness? What have you done to us in bringing us out of Egypt? Is not this what we said to you in Egypt: 'Leave us alone that we may serve the Egyptians'? For it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness" (14:11-12). Grumble, grumble, grumble. You stiff-necked people, the Lord has heard your grumbling!

Of course, *you* don't grumble, *I* don't grumble. Nope, *not us!* Never..., but we **do**. You grumble! I grumble. We Grumble when the price of gas is too high and when your miles per gallon are too low, when loan interest rates are too high and when bank interest rates are too low, when the cost of eggs or milk is too high and when the farmers' profits are too low.

We grumble when the cost of cable TV is too high and when the number of TV channels is too low . . . when the calories in food are too high and the opportunities to exercise are too low.

We grumble. . . when we're bored because we have too much time . . . when we're frantic because we have too little time. We grumble! We're worse than Goldilocks. Our porridge is too hot! It's too cold!

Even so, the Lord says, "Behold, I am about to rain bread from heaven for you" (v 4). "He commanded the skies above" (Ps 78:23). God causes it to rain and snow, the wind to blow and the stars to shine. God commands the skies above. God brought manna. "And when the dew had gone up, there was on the face of the wilderness a fine, flake-like thing, fine as frost on the ground. When the people of Israel saw it, they said to one another,

‘What is it?’ For they did not know what it was. And Moses said to them, ‘It is the bread that the LORD has given you to eat’” (vv 14–15).

God commands the skies above. God brought quail. “At twilight you shall eat meat... In the evening quail came up and covered the camp” (vv 12–13).

God commands the skies above. God brought angels who filled the skies above Bethlehem, who sang praises and proclaimed, “Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger” (Lk 2:10–12).

God commands the skies above. And there on Calvary’s hill, “It was now about the sixth hour, and there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour, while the sun’s light failed. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two. Then Jesus, calling out with a loud voice, said, ‘Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!’ And having said this he breathed his last. Now when the centurion saw what had taken place, he praised God, saying, ‘Certainly this man was innocent!’” (Lk 23:44–47).

And He was, except He took your sins, and He took mine. “Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!” (Jn 1:29). “God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God” (2 Cor 5:21). The Son of God breathed His last while the skies were dark.

God commands the skies above. As the darkness lifted from the skies, the morning of the third day, the women went to the tomb and found it empty. “Why are you looking here? Jesus is among the living!” (see Lk 24:1, 5).

God commands the skies above. The skies were bright and filled with clouds. “‘You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.’ And when he had said these things, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight” (Acts 1:8–9).

God commands the skies above (**for you!**). “Then the LORD said to Moses, ‘Behold, I am about to rain bread from heaven **for you**’” (v 4). He did; He does. Still today. He gives you your daily bread.

“Daily bread includes everything that has to do with the support and needs of the body, such as food, drink, clothing, shoes, house, home, land, animals, money, goods, a devout husband or wife, devout children, devout workers, devout and faithful rulers, good government, good weather, peace, health, self-control, good reputation, good friends, faithful neighbors, and the like” (Small Catechism, explanation to the Fourth Petition).

As the Psalmist today says in Psalm 145:16: “The eyes of all look to you, (O, Lord) and you give them their food in due season. You open your hand; you satisfy the desire of every living thing.

Even more than that (daily bread), He gives us *the* Bread, the Bread of Life, the Bread “who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world” (Jn 6:33). He gives us *Jesus*. The Lord graciously provides us everything we need for both body and soul. Always.

So, children of God, with all this in mind, what are you going to do next? The Psalm writer we heard today said it best: “All your works shall give thanks to you, O LORD, and all your saints shall bless you!” (Psalm 145:10) Yes, we will thank and bless God for all of His gifts, because we really have ***nothing*** to grumble about, for God says, “Behold, I Am about to rain bread from heaven ***for you.***” Rest assured, God will take care of you, ***now*** and forever! Amen.