



Manna in the wilderness became sustenance for the Israelite's journey. But the word Manna also a question. "Manna" in Hebrew translates as, "What is it?" The perfect question for the odd stuff that just appeared in the wilderness every morning. The Israelites literally were hungry. After eating what they had brought with them for six weeks until there was nothing left, they hungered and murmured – they complained and grumbled. Most of us do not know hunger like that, but some of us may have experienced or seen real hunger first hand. It breaks your heart and you want to fill the void. Some people today hunger spiritually – even after attending a church or becoming a member – they lack something they just can't name or identify. "What is it that I'm missing?" they ask. Is this all there is?

But nothing great is on the horizon sometimes. At least what can be seen clearly. The Israelites in that predicament raised a ruckus. Probably the worst part of their complaint was that where they had been was starting to look better than where they were. Ah, the good old days. How we long for them when the wilderness seems too dark and too scary, even though at least a part of us knows that the good old days were anything but good. In our memories, they seem so much better than what we have today. They were looking longingly back on slavery and oppression; and suddenly, because they were hungry, it began to look good. They seemed to remember it like it was some sort of resort. ("We sat by pots of meat and piles of bread," they said, conveniently forgetting that they weren't lounging by some pool dining on overladen buffets, but were slaves, living by the whims of the powers that be.) Their faulty memories almost caused them to want to settle—not settle as in live there in the wilderness, but settle as in settle for less; less than what was in store for them; less than what God had intended for them. Their hunger almost caused them to settle for less, to go back to live as slaves because there at least they could eat, instead of living in this freedom that is too scary, too wild, too dangerous.



What is God doing to sustain you
in your wilderness journey?

What is God doing to sustain you in your wilderness journey? What is the providence that God is offering that we might overlook because we don't recognize its usefulness? There might be a difficult situation in our lives that causes us to ask, "What is it?" in a way that allows God's grace to be an AHA! Moment. We should train ourselves, condition ourselves to ask what is it that God is doing in this moment, in this event, in this opportunity or crisis? Our prayers could be prayers of openness to the Spirit of God at work in the mundane things of our lives. We can pray for the faith that says God is acting in our lives each and every day, even when we don't understand, or fail to recognize the divine presence.



God provides and we can trust in that. And we should work alongside others to help everyone experience the abundance of God. One of the realities of the wilderness is that not everyone can see God at work, not everyone can participate in the abundance of God. So, part of the purpose of the community of faith is to help others see God's hand at work and often to be that hand by how we share the abundance we have experienced. Those who serve know of the joy of hearing someone ask in wonder, "What is it?" so that we can respond, "It is the grace of God." Even in the wilderness, there is grace enough for all. God providing manna was about trust. Can others trust us to lead them?



Others can trust us if we know that “God provides” and can tell stories of God providing. What has the Lord done for us, among us, with us? What might have happened if God did not provide or look out for us, or lead me? What is God doing now? What is it that God is providing?