

Be Satisfied with the LORD

✦ **Gone the grumbling** (vv.2-8)

✦ **Hearts full of thanks** (vv.9-15)

In the name of Jesus, God's Bread of Life from heaven, dear hungry souls of the saints:

Did you ever see a child insisting he wasn't tired, fall asleep? Did you ever think you weren't hungry, but then polished off your plate in one gobble? As much as we want to deny it, sometimes we are the only turkey at the table. We're dragging everyone else down, which only makes us feel worse. That's when the skies turn gray, your heart turns blue, and you can't remember the sun is always shining above the clouds. Church gets hard to come by. The Holy Sacrament gets neglected. And before you know it, Bible reading gives way to too much TV. Our souls are hungry, but we're in denial.

That's why it's good for us to remember when we pray, "Our Father..." that we're still God's children. Growing up is hard to do. You can't cry your way to maturity. But feeling your hunger is the first step back to God's table. You're already on your way to **Be Satisfied with the LORD** and ...

✦ **Gone the grumbling** (vv.2-8)

Have you seen that new cable show chronicling the lives of some lottery winners of the past? One man lost his investments and found he couldn't even go back to work in his small town because everyone resented his winnings. He finally found other work where people didn't know him, but by then he'd lost his marriage and his children. His lonely trailer with the overused TV seemed like little more than a crashing pad at the end of another long day. What surprised me was seeing his wife and children after hearing his description. She obviously loved and respected her ex-husband and wished he could be home with them. The kids loved their dad and didn't want him to be away. All the food that fed their bodies couldn't soothe their hungry souls. He was **Gone...grumbling** about something deep inside.

That's the nature of this sin. It shows up as real life concerns that drag souls down into death. Memories of the greatest miracles seem lost in Alzheimer's when souls give way to **grumbling**.

If you could fly a plane over the Sinai Desert about 1500 B.C., you'd find a mass of nearly three million people moving toward Mount Horeb. They'd been in the desert over a month, accompanied by the cloud of the LORD's Presence. They had passed through the Red Sea on dry land after Ten Plagues devastated Egypt and her fertile fields. They had seen the dead bodies of Pharaoh and his superpower army washed up on the shore. They would soon be forgiven their first national sin with the golden calf. It should have been only a few months of camping before they could conquer the Promised Land. What none of them knew at the time was that only Joshua and Caleb would survive. The bones of all the other men twenty years and older would litter the desert floor for forty years – all from the sin of **grumbling**.

Can you imagine this twisted logic? Just keep in mind their cruel bondage as slaves in Egypt, then listen to this: *The Israelites said to [Moses and his brother Aaron the high priest], "If only we had died by the LORD's hand in Egypt! There we sat around pots of meat and ate all the food we wanted, but you have brought us out into this desert to starve this entire assembly to death."* You've got to be kidding! Life was that easy making bricks for Pharaoh while his men killed every Israelite baby boy? It would have been a gift of God to die in Egypt? Depression is so full of lies.

Sometimes we're like Sunday School children shaking their heads at the Israelites. "How could they be so stupid?" Their teachers have to remind them, "You're looking in the mirror. That's how we are. God gives us so many blessings, yet we grumble and complain. **Grumbling** is a natural sin not only

for the American media and everyone who griped and complained when they still had a job, but for us Christians who carry around this old sinful nature that moans more than sings praises to God.

Can you feel in your heart of hearts why the Lord's Apostle Paul cries out? ***"What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? Thanks be to God—through Jesus Christ our Lord!"*** (Romans 7:24f NIV) You can't give yourself a thankful heart any more than a little child can make himself grow by playing, "So big!" Sometimes we're so impatient to grow up that God has to comfort us: "Be patient, my little one. Take a closer look at what I did for those **grumbling** Israelites in the desert. I could have rained down bombs and destroyed the whole nation. You know what I did instead? Fly your plane down close to the ground. It's okay. I'll keep you airborne. Swoop down in the evening and look at all those quail. Enough for a fantastic barbeque in the desert. Swing low in the morning. See those flakes on the desert floor? It's not corn flakes. The Israelites don't know what it is either. They call it, 'Manna? – What is it?' I call it food from heaven. And you won't find it better in a bakery. I love to feed my children even when they don't deserve it. I am love." God alone has the recipe for us to be **Gone the grumbling**. He knows He has to help us see our sin, so we can see our Savior. And once He opens our eyes, He can give us an even greater gift:

✠ **Hearts full of thanks** (vv.9-15)

You have to swing your plane suddenly away because ***"while Aaron was speaking to the whole Israelite community, they looked toward the desert, and there was the glory of the LORD appearing in the cloud."*** **The glory of the LORD** would appear at special times like this to reveal how close God really is to our lives. He wants to give us **Hearts full of thanks** as He feeds us body and soul. To know what this all means for us, we need only tune in to the Lord's Apostle Paul in Corinthians:

"For I do not want you to be ignorant of the fact, brothers, that our forefathers were all under the cloud and that they all passed through the sea. They were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea. They all ate the same spiritual food and drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, and that rock was Christ. Nevertheless, God was not pleased with most of them; their bodies were scattered over the desert. Now these things occurred as examples to keep us from setting our hearts on evil things as they did. Do not be idolaters, as some of them were; as it is written: 'The people sat down to eat and drink and got up to indulge in pagan revelry.' We should not commit sexual immorality, as some of them did—and in one day twenty-three thousand of them died. We should not test the Lord, as some of them did—and were killed by snakes. And do not grumble, as some of them did—and were killed by the destroying angel. These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us, on whom the fulfillment of the ages has come. So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall!..."

We don't realize how much we need **Hearts full of thanks**. In the Portland Airport this teenage boy was talking to one of the moms of another student flying home. She listened then asked, "Did you read that article in the *Northwestern Lutheran*?" "Which one?" I asked. "The one by President Toppe about students complaining about our synod schools." All I could say was, "I guess I should read it." Her wise admonition still stands today. And ***"...no temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it."*** (1 Corinthians 10:1-13 NIV)

Moses asked: ***"Who are we? You are not grumbling against us, but against the LORD."*** But look how the LORD responded with the greatest food in His own Son. Jesus says, ***"I AM the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."*** (John 6:51 NIV) His shed blood washes away every sin of **grumbling**. His holy life gives **Hearts full of thanks** to sing: *Ten thousand thousand precious gifts My daily thanks employ, Nor is the least a cheerful heart That tastes these gifts with joy.* (CW 259:2) Ah, that's satisfaction – in the LORD! Amen.