

Exodus 16

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Date: 30 November 2025

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[0:00] Well, good morning again, everyone. It's really great to get the opportunity to open up God's! together with you again. Just before we get started, a couple of things. Number one, if there is something to make my mouth a little bit wet, water, coffee, anything, that would be wonderful, because I have a horrible habit. My wife will tell you this. We've been back in Scotland just a few months. I think I've lost about five or six water bottles. I don't know why, I just keep losing them, so something to get me able to speak is another thing. And secondly, off the back of that, you're now going to be thinking, how long are you anticipating speaking for? I don't anticipate speaking to test the candles, okay? So that's, just quickly clarify that. If you can open up your Bibles to Exodus chapter 16 that we had read earlier on, we're going to spend our time thinking about that just now. And as we do that, excellent. Cheers, Cal.

Thank you very much. Thank you. Excellent. Wonderful. Let me pray, and then we'll come to think about God's Word. Father, we thank you that you are a speaking God, that you delight to communicate with those who you have made, and you do that primarily through your Word. And as your Spirit speaks, teaches, and guides us, we ask that he would draw us into understanding more of what you have done for us in Jesus Christ.

Thank you, Father, that you have given us this Word. And we submit ourselves to you now, and we long, Father, to receive food, manna from heaven that will sustain us in the often challenging, rocky, and difficult paths of life. Thank you that we come to a God like you, gracious, who communicates and speaks. So do that, we pray, for your glory. Amen. So the first glimpse of this passage probably makes us think, what on earth has rotten bread in a desert got to do with my everyday life?

Maybe you're also thinking about Christianity today, and you've kind of turned up and thought, well, it's kind of Christmas time. And here we've had a reading from somewhere in the middle of a desert about maggots and bread and all those things. What's that got to do with Christmas and Jesus, the child who comes? What's that all got to do with it? Well, to be honest, quite a lot in both senses, both in terms of what this means for our lives, but also in terms of what this means for God sending his Messiah into the world. This passage is absolutely rampacked full of things which are going to come up time and time and time again across the entirety of God's Word. Many of the antiphonal themes of Scripture are found here in this passage, complaining or rejoicing, accumulating lots or being generous with what we have been given, self-provision or trust, faith in God's provision alone. This passage really is all about testing and trusting and how it is that the people of God are going to respond to where God is leading them to next. And here are the three big things that we're going to see in the passage this morning. First of all, we find out why we complain. You know, you could say, well, we complain. That's great. But why do we complain? The passage tells us why it is that we complain. And then secondly, and we've got a couple of things in here, we find out how God responds to this. God responds by providing and also by communicating. So God responds because he provides and he communicates for his people. And then finally, what we're going to see is this. How do we respond?

How is it that we actually respond to what God does in response to our complaining? That we are to be people who receive, people who receive grace. Okay, so straight away, let's get into why we complain.

[4:20] It's not a surprise that this theme comes up because it has been happening all the way through the book of Exodus so far. Complaining has been taking place. For example, Moses goes to speak to Pharaoh. After God has said, go and speak to Pharaoh, talk to him, tell him that you're to let the people go. And then chapter five, it leads to there being increased labor and challenge for the people of God.

And what is it that they say to Moses? They say, could you just have kept your mouth shut because it's made our life a whole lot more difficult. Thank you very much. Moses is doing what God has asked and the people say, please don't do what God has asked you to do. We then get to them after, in the passage just from last week, we get to them after they've crossed the Red Sea. They have been freed. And then they say, right, okay, so we're out here and we've got nothing to drink. What is going on here? You've been taken to, you've taken us to this place and we've got nothing to keep our mouths wet. You've taken us to somewhere where we're not going to have provision. But now we meet them in chapter 16 after they have had a number of weeks of joyful rest and refreshment at Elam. In chapter 15, verse 27, we can see that they've had a little bit of time of refreshment rest after they have left Egypt. But as we all know, the wonderful feeling of just having had a holiday time and you've got the day before you set off back to work, back to school, back to routine, you go, well, I don't really want to do this. Thank you very much. Here is quite nice. I would quite like to stay in this place where it is simple, safe, and everything is provided for. They're about to set back out again. The people of God are on a journey. And whilst this is cliché and almost sounds a little bit twee and sort of nice, it is also true. Human beings are always on some form of progressive road, either growing closer to knowing who God is or rejecting God and moving further away from who he is. And one of the best gauges of where we find ourselves on that journey and on that road is to do with complaining. Complaining about God is a good gauge as to where we are on that road. It's good to recognize this is not just a small disagreement that we're dealing with here in chapter 16. The people are absolutely furious with Moses and Aaron. You see that in verse 2 of chapter 16.

They are absolutely furious, grumbling against Moses and Aaron. What we've got to have in our mind here is not just somebody saying, excuse me, sir, this is not actually working out very well. What you have got are people in civil uprising saying, what have you done? Where are you leading us? You don't know what you're doing. But it's more than that. We've got to ask the deeper level questions. Why is it that they complain? Yes, they complain, but why do they complain? Okay, they're complaining because they'd seem not to have provision, but is their complaint a valid complaint? It's an understandable complaint, but is it a valid complaint? They say in chapter 16 verse 3, we don't actually have anything to eat, but at the beginning of chapter 17 verse 3, they're going to say, hey, we've not got enough water to feed all of the livestock that we have. Oh, there's a problem. There's a problem, isn't there? It's understandable, but their complaint's not actually valid. They complain in the next chapter about not having enough water to provide for their animals. So it's worth noting that God has actually taken into account for them a provision which they will need for the journey. In chapter 12 verse 28 in Exodus, God has already given them extra people who have come, the mixed multitude, but also gold, silver, everything they're going to need for the tabernacle being set up later on in the book for a place to worship God, but also the livestock who are going to be able to provide provision for them during their time in the wilderness. Today, what you would find is that psychologists would say that the people of God were going through displacement. They're taking their anger out on someone else, Moses and Aaron, but actually deep down underneath everything, they are utterly furious with God. And that's what Moses and Aaron diagnose, isn't it? In chapter 16 verse 6 to 8. They clearly work this out. Moses and Aaron said to all of the Israelites, in the evening you will know that it is the Lord who brought you out of Egypt, and in the morning you will see the glory of the Lord. Where has my notes gone? There you go. Don't tap things too fast.

And in the morning you will see the glory of the Lord, because he has heard your grumbling against him. Who are we that you should grumble against us? You will know that it is the Lord when he gives you meat to eat, you are grumbling against him. Who are we? You are not grumbling against us, but against the Lord. Each of us do this in our own way. Don't we? We become increasingly shaped by our circumstances rather than by what is actually true. Think about it. It is the normal challenge of humanity. Human existence has always wrestled with this problem. We've chosen to believe a very specific thing, a very specific lie. God isn't actually good. And because we choose to believe this lie in pretty much every circumstance that we live through, it means that we begin to perceive God as someone who is distant and not involved. We begin to perceive God as someone who is limiting and not loving.

[10:02] Why is it that we complain? Because deep down we don't believe that God is good. Wrestling right there in the very center of our being is this nagging thought that actually God is not good. And so we consume this lie and it means that our circumstances in which we find ourselves

begin to shape our understanding of reality rather than what is true. Ground it into our lives. It's so easy for life's circumstances to harden us, isn't it? To make us cynical.

It wears us down to the point where we begin to think that, well, actually, all of these problems, all of these things that are going wrong in my life, that is someone else or something else's fault.

It's our kids. If only they would just be quiet, which sometimes is understandable. Okay, we get that.

It's our leaders. They're incompetent. They don't know what they're doing.

It's our spouse. It's our lack of opportunity in work or in education. But really, realistically, underneath all of these things, underneath every complaint, there is a passive-aggressive distrust towards the goodness of God. We don't actually believe that God is able to order our lives and also sustain the universe in such a way that it is going to bring about good for his glory and also good in our lives. Deep down, inside of us, we sit there with this rebellious heart which says, I think I'd actually do a better job of this. Thank you very much.

It might not be outright open rebellion on the surface, but deep down underneath all of these things, there is this thing which is wrestling and grating against us and is saying, hey, I think I would do a better job. There's one more logical step that comes and the people take it and so do we.

[11:55] See, see if you had just left us alone, God. If you had just left us alone in Egypt with some boiled mutton, we'd have had a far better life. Verse 3 of chapter 16. Right, just pause for a minute.

That is utterly outrageous. But that's what happens when we allow our circumstances to determine what is true and not actually truth to determine reality. We come to some ridiculous and outrageous conclusions. They're basically saying to God, we kind of wish that you just hadn't saved us.

Life would have been so much better, would it? Egypt, slavery, genocide, death, destruction. All for what? Some boiled mutton and a regular routine.

See how little it takes for us to sit and say, I would do a better job than God, you're really not that good. It doesn't take very much. It's not unknown to us. Sometimes it may cross our minds or our hearts to say, God, if you hadn't saved me, I'd actually have a better life.

I'd be able to experience a lot more and I'd be not constrained in the same way that I am. And you see, when we allow our desires and our aspirations to run wild in our imaginations with no regard to what is true, we will end up in a similar position as the people of God in the wilderness come to. We come to these outrageous conclusions, forgetting reality, chasing slavery, desiring a meal of poverty, and all so that we can have a routine that we can control.

[13:34] When we enter into seasons of trial, and I want to go gentle on this because it is very important that we always hear these things with pastoral sensitivity, determining of the context and the season where God has placed us in his providence. When we enter into seasons of trial, and I don't just mean I stubbed my toe or the tire has burst in my car, okay? I mean deep pain, darkness, valley, anguish. It can be very difficult to fight this. The pain and the discomfort of the circumstances really can cloud our reality and we begin to forget what is true. Sometimes there is no straightforward answer when we find ourselves in those places. But if that is you here this morning, I want to say to you with genuine loving sensitivity that you need to hear God is good. He is here with you. And although it doesn't seem or feel like it in the moment, he actually is good. He actually is true to his character.

And we're going to come on to see how that comes out in this passage later on because Jesus talks a lot about this passage himself. But for most of us, it's not a deep trial or a darkness or a valley. It's usually normality of life that it becomes the trial for us. It's boredom or fear which cripples our perspective. Those two things usually play off against each other in our lives and that leads us to doubting the goodness of God and seeking to attain some sort of liberation for ourselves.

We become bored because life is just so straightforward. We sit and think, well, hey, wait a minute, bit more excitement, bit more joy. I'll chase this thing or that thing. And so we begin to either complain or rebel. We moan about the people who lead us or we moan about other believers because, well, they don't really meet my standards and actually they're a bit limiting. Or I want to go out and experience something else because it will just bring that little bit more excitement into my life and it will just give me a little bit more spice because you're bored.

Or maybe it's fear. Change itself can be the fear or actually the cost that that change will bring into your life can be the reason that you're scared. And so what we do is we kick back against God's goodness. We can't see that he is actually ordering our lives and leading us forwards. And so what happens is we begin to double down on doing things our own way or just pulling ourselves back into a place of safety where we can have control. It can usually lead to one of these two things. We

begin to complain externally, but my guess is if it's a motivation of fear in our lives, which is causing us to doubt the goodness of God, it becomes internalized grumbling, which then leads to deep resentment and bitterness. What's going on underneath then? It's our heart response to our circumstances when they're not grounded in the truth of God's character. That's one of the biggest things that you see is coming out of this passage. If you're going to move forwards from Elam, you're going to come to Sinai and you're going to enter into the land of Canaan, then you're going to need to trust me that I am good, that I am dependable and that you can 100% stake everything on me.

[16:56] That is what we are going to have to do. Life may be chaotic or boring. The future could be uncertain and we want joy, peace and happiness. And when those things happen in our lives, here is what we do. We want to chase the thing which we think is going to provide us maximum comfort or maximum joy in that moment. And we go in a thousand wrong directions, doubling down on our misunderstanding of God's character, or we even begin to forget the reality of how good he is. Remember, this is a people who only eight weeks before have seen the cloud of glory separate the army of Egypt from them, protect them in every single way, provide for them in every single way, smash open the waters to provide complete and free passage on dry land and throw the water back on top of the people who are chasing them to destroy their existence. And they can come to this conclusion. It is not a huge leap to think that we could come to that conclusion too. So how does God respond? If that's why we complain, because we have a problem in believing the goodness of God, how does God respond? First of all, he responds by providing.

And you see that in chapter 16, verses 4 to 5, and also in chapter 16, verses 13 to 30, big chunks which highlight God's provision. The Lord knows exactly what he's doing. This is a test for his people to see if they will trust him and take him at his word. In chapter 16, verse 4, the second half of that, we see that that's what's laid out. Maybe you think that's a bit odd. You would think, well, if God is actually really that loving, why would he test? Why would God test his people if he really is loving and caring to them? Think about it. That's actually just how life works, isn't it? You don't get up one day and walk out the door and say, I'm just going to run 26.2 miles. I mean, maybe some of you do. All power to you. You train. You test. You have to build up the muscles. You don't squat 150 kg for the first time. You have to build up towards that. You have to test the body, train it so that it can do that. Maths. You don't solve quadratic equations at age five. Again, some of you maybe could and some of you maybe still have the capacity to do that. That left me many years ago. But the point remains the same. We have to be tested, tried, taken along a journey in order to be able to be built up so that our capacity and our abilities grow. Testing is not always bad. Testing is normally actually for our good. It builds up the muscles that we require for life. And this is what the Lord is doing for his people, building up the muscles of faith that they will need for life. It teaches us lessons of endurance and it helps us to look beyond our circumstances to something which is a greater goal. One, there is a time coming in the future that these legs are going to get me across that finish line. It's probably going to be a lot slower than Callum will do it, but it will get me across the finish line. And I can have that goal and I can think, I can keep going, I can keep going. But that comes as a result of the training and the endurance test that I've gone through. The Lord has heard his people grumble against him. So what does he do? He provides for them. He provides two things. First of all, he actually provides the very thing that they ask for. They've grumbled and they said, we want some food. So he's going to send down bread from heaven to sustain them whilst they're in the wilderness. Chapter 16, verse 4. He is also going to give them extra. He's going to provide meat for them. In chapter 16, verses 12 to 13, we see that there is going to be quail provided for them as well. It's clear that this isn't any ordinary loaf of bread that is being provided for God's people. The people don't know what it is. And there are people who have grown up in and around about this environment and this culture. They don't know what it is. It is a heavenly provision. Something else to note from this is that it's not just enough to get by. Verse 16 quite clearly teaches us that this is an ongoing abundance for exactly the amount that everybody needs to eat. And you see, in this section, what we see is that what God promised, he provided. He meant what he said. There was bread and there was meat in abundance for the people of God.

[21:20] He comes to them. He hears what they are saying to him and he provides for them. But it's not just food. He also comes alongside them and he provides something that they didn't actually necessarily ask for. He provides rest. Chapter 16, verse 5 and in chapter 16, verse 22, we hear the

mention of the concept of Sabbath. A time which is set aside. A time which is holy. A time which is not about going out to gather and provide and to do all of those things. But here's the thing. If you've been a slave for many generations as a people, you don't really know what a day of rest is. And so you don't really know that that's something that you are needing or that you are wanting necessarily. You don't realize this is something which should be provided for you and so they don't ask for it. But the Lord knows his people and is establishing a new type of community. The Lord knows exactly what he's doing. He is renewing the world and recovering the deep rhythms of life which have been set out in the first book of Moses in Genesis right at the very beginning where he creates in six and rests on the seventh. The deep rhythms of life which have been established from the foundation of the world,

God is getting them back into line with his people so that this new community will be able to model this for an onlooking world. Our needs and our rest are deeply interconnected.

So when we feel that our needs are not being met, we feel that we need to scramble around to provide for ourselves. I'm not saying this. Work and diligence are very important things. They are very good things. But let's all just be honest with ourselves for a moment. Our busyness is not often motivated by such noble ends. It's not purely because we want to work. It's not always because we are trained to do something diligently. Often it can be as a result of us wanting to get more for ourselves, to maximize every single moment. And usually it can be something like greed that becomes a primary motivator in our lives. We want more. We become discontented with the good things that God has provided for us and it doesn't take anybody with a high level education to work out that that is effectively what Christmas marketing does to every single one of us every single year. You need to get this next thing. You need to get this next thing. And if only you just had this thing, life would be so much better. Or what happens is we begin to hold back only for it to become moldy like we see the bread happens with the people in chapter 16 verse 20. We either want to go out and accumulate lots and lots or we begin to hoard. And both of them really have the same thing at the heart, which is we want to accumulate for ourselves and we lack generosity and trust and delight in the provision which God has given.

Connected to this, we work and we burn ourselves out. We don't rest. And because we don't rest, we are actually ignoring God's invitation to worship and the deep relationship with him and with his people. Just what you see in chapter 16 verse 27. Nevertheless, some of the people, they went out on the seventh day to gather, but they found none of the manna. God had already said there's not going to be any there, but some people got up and went out anyway because they thought, I have to scrape by, I have to struggle, I have to scramble, I have to get this. I have to make it all happen for myself.

In our day and generation, we might not get up early doors in the morning and go out somewhere in Stirlingshire and see if there's manna lying about the ground, but it can be something like this. We push ourselves beyond the extent of time and resources that we have to make a name for ourselves, to get something important, an extra bathroom, an extra thing within our house, to have a better standard of life and we push ourselves and we push ourselves and we push ourselves and we actually begin to fail the test to trust God, to provide. And then we actually begin to live like slaves.

[25 : 22] Not living free from the aspirations and the expectations of a fallen world all around about us. Why is it that we live like this? Believer or non-believer, fundamentally we don't trust that God is good. It comes back to the thing. Fundamentally we don't trust that God is good and that he has my good at heart. And so what happens is we scramble, we scrape to provide for ourselves and yet there is an answer. There is an answer for our human condition of failing to trust in the goodness of God and seeking to provide everything for ourselves. In John's gospel there is a really interesting discussion where Jesus makes sense of why the bread comes down from heaven. It might be helpful for you to turn there and to see this. I don't often do it but it is so explicitly helpful and so explicitly discussed by Jesus that it's totally worth doing. He explains with a group of people who have come to him, who he has provided for in a desert-like situation, all that this passage has to say. He explains that there is no need to scramble and to scrape through life because God cares for his people. If you look at chapter 6 verse 27, do not work for food that spoils but for food that endures to eternal life which the Son of Man will give you. For on him God the Father has placed his seal of approval.

There is a food for eternal life which God is providing for his people. That is the thing that we are to aim for. Okay Jesus, where is that? What is that is my next question. Because he's a fantastic teacher and so much wiser than any of us, he goes on to explain it. So hear what Jesus has to say from verse 48 of chapter 6 to 51 and verse 53 to 58. Jesus says this, I am the bread of life. Here's how it connects, okay? Your ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness yet they died. But here is the bread that comes down from heaven which anyone may eat and not die. I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats this bread will live forever. This bread is my flesh which I will give for the life of the world. And then he goes on in verse 53 to 58 to give further clarification. He says to them, truly I tell you unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood you have no life in you.

Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is real food, my blood is real drink. Whoever eats my flesh, drinks my blood, remains in me and I in them. The living Father sent me and I live because of the Father so the one who feeds on me will live because of me. What's Jesus saying? How is he making sense of this passage? How does that really apply into our lives? It applies like this. It's not a new loaf recipe that he's given to us. It's not a new health regime that you need to go and find. It's not manifesting your future for something to appear. It's not excellent financial management. It's in Jesus that this constant provision and lasting rest can be found. You are crying out and I am crying out for deep joy and everlasting satisfaction. And Jesus is saying and God is saying to his people in the wilderness, it is found here. It is found in my provision. And he comes to us in Jesus and says, it is found here and only here. The only place in the entirety of the universe that you can turn to to find this deep joy, this lasting contentment is me. Don't run after everything else because it will fail you and you will be left wanting. It is only me. Do you see that the manna in the wilderness foreshadows? And what we hear in the

New Testament from the voice of Jesus himself is this, I am the fulfillment of this. I am the one who has come down. God not only sends bread from heaven, he is the bread who comes down out of heaven, Jesus Christ. Not only does he provide flesh to sustain them in the wilderness, he gives his very life for them on the cross so that they can leave behind a life of slavery, scrambling and scraping to provide for themselves so that they can enter into absolutely unbridled joy and freedom and contentment which will last forever. That's the gospel. That's how it connects to Advent. That's how it connects to Christmas because that small child comes down to do exactly that. The bread that comes down from heaven to nourish us, satisfy us and provide everything we will need forever. [30 : 28] I'm going to skip one of the points because we've gone on far too long. So if you want to really know about how God communicates to us, come and chat to me afterwards because we're going to think about how we respond. The best type of gift is this one. One which is beyond what you could ever afford.

One which perfectly meets every single need and provides a lasting joy and contentment. That's exactly what you're going to get when you open stuff up on the 25th. Absolutely. Lasting joy, absolute contentment, well beyond your means. I'm looking forward to my Lamborghini. But the trouble that we have is this. Oh man, my heart is so awful with this. We find it so hard to receive such generosity and love from people, which means we find it super hard to find and receive such generosity and love in God. We can't pay anything towards it. We can never make it up. And that's the wonder and also the problem of the gospel.

Because our hearts want to rebel against it. Our hearts that every single turn want to turn around and say, yeah, but surely there's something that I can give. Surely there's something that I can put towards this. Surely there's something I can add. Surely there's... And God turns around and says, no, all you have to do is receive. The bread comes down on the ground around about and the little quails appear outside the camp. And what do the people do? They don't sit there and say, right, how many coins do I have in order to be able to buy some quail today? No, they just go out and they receive God's abundant provision for them. We have to receive it because we cannot earn Jesus. We cannot earn God's grace.

We are supposed to receive and take that in. And that is all part of the joy that we just can't do anything for it. You can't repay God's provision. You have to stand with empty hands and just say, I receive. I receive all the goodness that you give to me. God's people displayed this in the wilderness, didn't they? The lavish provisions from heaven, which they could not understand.

[32:38] And it was remembered down through generations to generations. Chapter 16, verse 31 to 36. It's important to say that there is something of a sort of historical looking back on this event and saying, here is the amazing way that God had provided for our people. Don't forget it.

I look out and there are some of you who are more mature than I am. And you have lived a lot longer with Jesus than I have. There is something of the testimony of God's goodness to that standing.

They are absolutely helpless just receiving his grace that we delight to receive as those who are younger in faith. Please keep going and doing that. Exemplify that for us. Make it so simple for us so that we don't try and scramble around and create these phenomenal routines which lead us into all sorts of chaos. Just tell us you just need Jesus every single day. That's what's going to get you through.

It was something that they had to receive and it was something that they lived on. And at this Christmas season, God is stepping down out of heaven in Christ. Maybe you're exploring the gospel. Maybe you're exploring Christianity. I want to say to you, it is not a fairy tale. It's the one thing it's definitely not. It is the most lavish provision that you are ever going to encounter. The most wonderful and perfect gift that you are ever going to receive. It meets your need perfectly in a way that you cannot contribute to, in a way that you will never be able to repay. And that is the point. That's why it's a gift. You've got to receive him. You've got to receive God's provision. Do you grumble? Are you cynical?

Do you moan and complain? God is good. He actually is good. You can stake your life on him. And you will find in him when you do that he has a depth of joy that either you've never experienced or you never thought possible. It doesn't mean you'll be dancing up and down the aisles, although you might be.

[34:50] But there is a depth of joy which is unshakable when we truly just lay it all down before him and say, I just receive from you. Like I said earlier on, there are those of us who will be here today and you are going to have so many pains. And you come to a season like this and it just seems to magnify them and intensify them, doesn't it? You're weary on the journey. You're worn out on the road. There are trials. There are pains. And here is what God is saying to you this morning. Receive my provision for you every moment of every day because that is what will sustain you.

Our culture and our society are going to say, chase this thing, do that thing, run after this, all just so that they can kind of semi-deaden the challenges. Only God comes to you and says, I know this is so painful and horrible and so full of anguish in your soul and meets with us in that moment. Jesus comes to you and he says, come to me. I give you rest. As I was just finishing prepping this, this song came to mind and with this we close. Beautiful old song. I came, I heard the voice of Jesus say, come unto me and rest. Lay down, O weary one, lay down your head upon my breast. I came to Jesus as I was, weary and worn and sad. I found in him a resting place and he has made me glad. Do you see that? Not scrambling about to provide for ourselves, simply saying, this is where I am, this is who I am.

And he says, I know all of that. This is what I give to you. A provision which meets every need and which is utterly free in my son, Jesus Christ. Let me pray and we'll finish up.

Father in heaven, we thank you for your word and we thank you that it is alive, that it is active. And I pray, Father, that as we consider what you have said to us this morning, that your spirit would be pleased to apply and minister healing, joy, faith, trust, hope in just the ways that all of us need to receive from you.

Thank you that you are the God that we can stake our lives on. You are so committed to us as your people. Forgive us when we forget that and when we begin to grumble and complain and to moan against you.

[38:02] Forgive that sin. And sometimes the outrageous things we say or think in our minds and hearts. Lead us, Father, we pray, through times of testing to deeper trust and where there are people here today who are experiencing great suffering, anguish and pain.

May the words, may the truth of your word dwell deeply and richly in their lives to know that they don't need to come with all the perfect answers because they are coming to the perfect saviour who knows them and who loves them.

So hear us, we pray, oh Father, and place your word deep within our hearts and our lives. We ask it in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.