



Sons of Saint Joseph™

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SOSJ: Attitude Adjustment 1 – Demands.
Saturday, December 7, 2024 Numbers 11: 4-34

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The riffraff among them were so greedy for meat that even the Israelites lamented again, “If only we had meat for food! We remember the fish we used to eat without cost in Egypt, and the cucumbers, the melons, the leeks, the onions, and the garlic. But now we are famished; we have nothing to look forward to but this manna.” Manna was like coriander seed and had the appearance of bdellium. When they had gone about and gathered it up, the people would grind it between millstones or pound it in a mortar, then cook it in a pot and make it into loaves, with a rich creamy taste. At night, when the dew fell upon the camp, the manna also fell. When Moses heard the people, family after family, crying at the entrance of their tents, so that the LORD became very angry, he was grieved. “Why do you treat your servant so badly?” Moses asked the LORD. “Why are you so displeased with me that you burden me with all this people? Was it I who conceived all this people? or was it I who gave them birth, that you tell me to carry them at my breast, like a nurse carrying an infant, to the land you have promised under oath to their fathers? Where can I get meat to give to all this people? For they are crying to me, ‘Give us meat for our food.’ I cannot carry all this people by myself, for they are too heavy for me. If this is the way you will deal with me, then please do me the favor of killing me at once, so that I need no longer face my distress.” Then the LORD said to Moses: Assemble for me seventy of the elders of Israel, whom you know to be elders and authorities among the people, and bring them to the tent of meeting. When they are in place beside you, I will come down and speak with you there. I will also take some of the spirit that is on you and will confer it on them, that they may share the burden of the people with you. You will then not have to bear it by yourself. To the people, however, you shall say: “Sanctify yourselves for tomorrow, when you shall have meat to eat. For in the hearing of the LORD you have cried, ‘If only we had meat for food! Oh, how well off we were in Egypt!’ Therefore the LORD will give you meat to eat, and you will eat it, not for one day, or two days, or five, or ten, or twenty days, but for a whole month—until it comes out of your very nostrils and becomes loathsome to you. For you have rejected the LORD who is in your midst, and in his presence you have cried, ‘Why did we ever leave Egypt?’” But Moses said, “The people around me include six hundred thousand soldiers; yet you say, ‘I will give them meat to eat for a whole month.’ Can enough sheep and cattle be slaughtered for them? If all the fish of the sea were caught for them, would they have enough?”

The LORD answered Moses: Is this beyond the LORD’s reach? You shall see now whether or not what I have said to you takes place. So Moses went out and told the people what the LORD had said. Gathering seventy elders of the people, he had them stand around the tent. The LORD then came down in the cloud and spoke to him. Taking some of the spirit that was on Moses, he bestowed it on the seventy elders; and as the spirit came to rest on them, they prophesied but did not continue. Now two men, one named Eldad and the other Medad, had remained in the camp, yet the spirit came to rest on them also. They too had been on the list, but had not gone out to the tent; and so they prophesied in the camp. So, when a young man ran and reported to Moses, “Eldad and Medad are prophesying in the camp,” Joshua, son of Nun, who from his youth had been Moses’ aide, said, “My lord, Moses, stop them.” But Moses answered him,

“Are you jealous for my sake? If only all the people of the LORD were prophets! If only the LORD would bestow his spirit on them!” Then Moses retired to the camp, along with the elders of Israel. There arose a wind from the LORD that drove in quail from the sea and left them all around the camp site, to a distance of a day’s journey and at a depth of two cubits upon the ground. So all that day, all night, and all the next day the people set about to gather in the quail. Even the one who got the least gathered ten homers of them. Then they spread them out all around the camp.

But while the meat was still between their teeth, before it could be chewed, the LORD’s wrath flared up against the people, and the LORD struck them with a very great plague. So that place was named Kibroth-hattaavah, because it was there that the greedy people were buried.

Questions

1. Moses is confronted by incredible ingratitude to God by the people. How do we react when others show little appreciation for all we have done? In conjunction: what is our reaction to when the same people seem to show more appreciation to others for lesser things than we did? What is the best response?
2. Have there been moments where we realized afterward how little we showed appreciation to God? How can we teach our families to show deeper appreciation to God for all the things He has done for us?
3. Do we ever place specific demands on God and unwittingly (or wittingly) make our faith depend on the seeming response? Does our faith get threatened by disappointed prayer?
4. God’s “demands” on us can seem to add pressure but always lead to holiness, and actually less pressure and more freedom? How is that possible? How do we explain that God’s “demands” set us free to teens? That they are actually invitations to love?