

November



Shady Shores Baptist Church

2018

From The Pastor's Heart . . .

"Manna from Heaven—A Thanksgiving Story" Numbers 11:4-9

⁴ "And the rabble who were among them had greedy desires; and also the sons of Israel wept again and said, 'Who will give us meat to eat?' ⁵ We remember the fish which we used to eat free in Egypt, the cucumbers and the melons and the leeks and the onions and the garlic, ⁶ but now our appetite is gone. There is nothing at all to look at except this manna.' ⁷ Now the manna was like coriander seed, and its appearance like that of bdellium. ⁸ The people would go about and gather it and grind it between two millstones or beat it in the mortar, and boil it in the pot and make cakes with it; and its taste was as the taste of cakes baked with oil. ⁹ And when the dew fell on the camp at night, the manna would fall with it."

"Goodbye! Thanks for coming. Thanks for everything!" As the caravan of cars and trucks pulled out of the driveway waves were exchanged and a thankful greeting sailed out across the front yard to each vehicle as it passed their view. The young couple stood there basking in the glow of friendship, steeped in a feeling of deep appreciation. It had been an evening to remember, that would live on in their memories for years. Times had been hard for their young family, especially over the last six months or so. Jim had lost his job early on in the year and Sally was pregnant again. With three mouths to feed already, a house payment, a truck payment, and numerous other bills to pay, the past few months had been very difficult. Sally had had to go back to work to supplement the meager part-time income that Jim was able to bring in. There were times when they simply didn't know how they were going to get through tomorrow, let alone through the week or the month. They tried not to look too far down the road anyway since that tended to frighten them more than reassure them. Now, just when things looked their bleakest, the holidays were approaching. There would be gifts to buy and somehow they needed to find a Christmas Tree. Thanksgiving? Well, there would be no turkey and the fixings this year. They would have to do with a nice meat loaf and be happy about it.

That's when it happened. On Thursday morning after going to church, they had come home to find their driveway filled with cars and trucks. They were parked everywhere, even on the frozen lawn. Their little ranch house was ablaze with light and there was a barbecue chugging away in their open garage. They got out of their truck, looking at each other in amazement. "Where did all these cars and trucks come from and what are they doing in our house? There's smoke coming from the garage, and ..." Jim's amazement was cut short by the sudden appearance of a stout neighbor lady pushing through their side door cradling a bowl of potato shavings that she was about to toss into the garbage. "They're here!" she shouted. And suddenly, neighbors and friends began pouring from the little house like ants from a hill, descending upon the stunned couple and their children. Thanksgiving had arrived at their little house with the morning dew still wet on the ground. It was everywhere. The smells of baking turkey and cooling pies permeated the crisp autumn air. Thanksgiving had arrived, that's for sure; and it had come without any investment or labor at all. Friends had made it happen.

The young couple and their kids were royalty for the day. They were guests in their own house, a house that

was bursting at the seams with warmth, bounty, and fellowship for the better part of the day. Now, as all the guests departed, they returned to their now empty home. It seemed strangely quiet after hours of noise and commotion. The smells of food and drink still lingered there, but the only evidence of that bounty were the several bags of trash sitting placidly at the back door and a refrigerator filled with imprisoned, sleeping left-overs. The kids were already sleeping, even the dog seemed worn out from the day's commotion. Jim and Sally were alone with their sudden silence. As he put his arm around his beaming wife, a sudden expression of concern spread over his face. "You know," he stated. "You know what I'm afraid our biggest problem is now?" Sally looked up with an inquisitive smile. "What?" "It's making this last. I mean," he paused. "I mean, not the leftovers. Those will be gone soon enough. I mean, the appreciation. For nearly the entire day we didn't hardly think about ourselves at all." He blurted, arms outstretching as if to embrace the whole scene. "Do you know how long it has been since that happened? We didn't think about our troubles at all. The only thing that changed was the fact that we spent this entire Thanksgiving Day truly being thankful. And, I guess, when you are buried knee-deep in this kind of appreciation, you just can't think that much about anything else." Sally looked into the living room at her oldest son sprawled out on the sofa. "I guess you're right. I wish I could just box up the feeling I have now and keep it handy. I'm almost afraid how I might feel tomorrow. If I could just peek into the box a little every day, well, it would be a help." Jim held her closer, and closed his eyes in prayer. "We don't need a box or anything else, honey. We've got each other, the kids, and we were blessed this day from heaven above. We didn't do anything for it. It was, like, manna. You've just got to believe that it will be there again tomorrow. You just got to believe!"

James 1:17 **"Every good thing bestowed and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation, or shifting shadow."**

We have so much for which to be thankful. Happy Thanksgiving!

See you Sunday: Looking Up, Reaching Out, Going Forward.

From My Heart To Yours,

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