

Let us pray together: **Open our eyes to see your Spirit in our life. Open our hearts to receive the blessings you send each day. Guide us with your wisdom so that through us Christ may walk on the earth once again. Amen.**

Trust. You've probably seen a child squealing in delight as she is thrown up into the air multiple times – and caught before she reaches the ground. Would you be squealing in delight if someone was strong enough to throw you up in the air in play? You'd probably be screaming in fear, not squealing in delight! As adults, we lose trust and worry that the person would drop us. The thought of being dropped is not even considered by the child who's having so much fun!

Trust. A marriage counselor may ask a couple to sit on the floor back to back and then work together to stand up. Yes, this might be physically taxing for some, but it is also an indication of how well the couple trusts each other. Do they trust each other enough to work together to stand up or will they fight, each trying to take the dominate role?

Today's reading from Exodus is about trust. Do you think of the Israelites as complainers and whiners? It seemed from the time they left Egypt all they did was complain. God saved them from being taken back to Egypt by the parting of the Red Sea that destroyed the Egyptian army. Later in the story of their Exodus, the Israelites will complain they had no water. God gave them water from a rock.

In today's scripture, they are complaining that they are about to starve. They're worried that they don't have enough meat or bread. The hunger crisis was so serious in the minds of the Israelites that they thought their time in slavery in Egypt was better than being free in the desert. They had a very short memory. God had just saved them from the Egyptian army. Why were they complaining now? Couldn't they trust God to give them food? Why would God lead them to the wilderness if God wasn't going to take care of them?

Ah, but we're not always rational people, are we?

What does it take to trust? In our passage today God says to Moses: **"I am going to rain bread from heaven for you, and each day the people will go out and gather enough for that day. In that way, I will test them, whether they will follow my instruction or not."** What does it take to trust? Evidently, God thinks you learn trust. The Israelites had to learn to

trust God by following God's direction and seeing the positive results. Through God's actions of the parting of the Red Sea, providing bread and, later, providing water, God was teaching the Israelites to trust God and to trust what God said through his spokespersons, Moses and Aaron.

We live in a world where we are programmed to not trust anyone or anything. Fool me once, shame on you; fool me twice, shame on me. Our society teaches us to always be suspicious of another's motives. As we grow into adulthood, we quickly lose the innocent trust we once had as children. 'Is that person going to take advantage of me?' seems to be the question in most people's minds when they are interacting with another person.

Is the offer too good to be true? Does he really love me? Why is she asking me to do this favor? The questions that reveal our distrust go on and on. We are programmed to not trust anyone or anything. We do this so often that this doubting, this questioning, becomes second nature to us and we don't even know we're doing it.

Now, I'm not saying that you and I don't need to be cautious. There are many people out there trying to take advantage of us. But the trust I'd like us to think about today is the trust the Israelites needed – to trust God.

Do you trust God? Has your habit of not trusting anyone or anything affected your trust in God? Has this behavior, that is second nature to most of us, affected how we trust God and look at God's blessings? It seems we often leave little up to our God. We question everything and come up with what we believe are probable answers which usually leaves God out of the picture.

How would the quail and manna be explained today? Here are two possible explanations. The flock of quail were in a breeding frenzy and landed in the camp in mass. The manna was caused by the dew being mixed with the pollen being produced by the desert plants. Actually, the second is an explanation of what some people believe to have been the composition of manna.

What does it take to unlearn our habit of always questioning and not trusting? What does it take to learn trust? The Israelites were certainly not quick learners as I've already pointed out. Are we the same?

During our Sunday prayer time, I always ask for joys as well as concerns before we start our prayers. I ask for joys because your joys point to God

and God's blessings in your lives. When you think about your joys, you think more about how God is involved with your life. I believe this is the first step to understanding that God is involved in our lives and a step in the right direction to learn to trust God more.

Trust is defined as, 'the belief that someone or something is reliable, good, honest, or effective.' When we start thinking that our blessings are from God and that they are good, then we may better understand that God is reliable and honest. God is never too good to be true.

The Israelites eventually learned to trust God while in the wilderness. But as you know from their history, that trust waxed and waned from generation to generation. Sometimes they trusted God and sometimes they didn't do so well. I think that is also true of most of us. The beautiful part of the Israelites' story is that God took them back and loved them and cared for them.

God does the same for us every day – even on those days we don't trust so well. Not only do we know of God's love from the Old Testament stories, but we also know of God's love for us through Jesus Christ, God's son, who walked on this earth setting the example of what it means to trust God – even to the point that it meant his death. But because of Jesus' resurrection we know that we can be forgiven and that we are loved as we strive to trust God in our daily lives.

So, my challenge to each of you this week is to look at your blessings. My challenge to you is to examine incidents in your life to see how God may be speaking to you. My challenge to you is to fight the urge to give a human explanation for what may indeed be a divine lesson for you. My challenge is for you to change your habits and learn to trust God more and more.

You will be blessed! And I pray that next week during prayer time there are as many joys as there are concerns.