

**“Take only what you need.”** We were so excited. The Creator had rescued us and we had safely made it through the waters of the Red Sea while all of Pharaoh’s armies were drowned behind us. We were **free**. We were no longer slaves. We were **out of Egypt**. But it only took a few days for all of our positive energy to be wiped away. How on earth were we going to survive apart from Egypt? How were we going to survive in the wilderness without the comforts and technologies of Civilization?

First the water ran out. Where were we supposed to find water in the wilderness? We didn’t know, we were city people. We finally came across some water, but it was bitter and poisonous. It was not drinkable, just as the Nile River had been before we left. We came to Moses and complained, **“What are we to drink?”** Then Moses took the branch of a tree and put it into the water and it became drinkable. We were shocked and amazed. Even though the Creator had brought plagues upon Egypt to save us and had made a way for us through the Red Sea, we were struggling to trust him—we were struggling to see how anyone could live apart from Civilization. Through Moses, the Lord urged us, saying **“If you listen carefully to my voice, then you will be free of the plagues which came upon the Egyptians. I, the Lord, am your healer.”**

But then the food ran out. Where were we supposed to get food in the wilderness? We didn’t know, we were city people. We complained to Moses and said, **“It would have been better for the Lord to kill us in Egypt where we had pots of meat and ate all the bread we wanted! Now you have brought us out into the wilderness to starve to death!”** We were angry. This new life sucked. We hated being hungry. It was the whole reason our family had moved to Egypt in the first place. We had been hungry and starving and Egypt had fed us. Now we had left Egypt and we were hungry and starving again. Moses assured us that the Lord would give us bread from heaven. And sure enough it came. Every morning we found it on the ground, like a flaky frost. We looked at each other in confusion and said, **“What is it?”** Was this supposed to be food? Was this supposed to be bread? It sure didn’t look like the food of Civilization we were used to. Moses said to us, **“It is the bread which the Lord has given you to eat.”**

Then Moses commanded us, **“Take only what you need. No one is to save anything for tomorrow.”** What?! We couldn’t save anything for **tomorrow**? That was insanity. Saving for tomorrow was **why** we had all the food we wanted in Egypt. Saving for tomorrow was how Joseph had gotten us through the famine. Of course, saving for tomorrow had made us slaves. But how else were we supposed to live?! So we did not listen to Moses. His request was crazy. So we took and saved as much of the bread as we could for the next day. It was the sensible, practical, and responsible thing to do. But the next day it was foul and **rotten**. And if we ate it, it made us sick. Moses was angry with us that we were not listening.

But then Moses said we needed to take **extra** bread for ourselves the day before the Sabbath. So we did. We took twice as much leading up to the day of rest. And this time, it did **not** rot. When we saved for tomorrow in obedience to the rhythm of the Sabbath, to the rhythm of the order of creation, it was **good**. But when we saved for tomorrow out of fear and a desire to be in control of providing for ourselves, it rotted and decayed, making us **sick**. Then Moses filled a container of this bread from heaven to save for future generations. He said we needed to **never forget** that the Lord provides everything his people need and that we are to live by faith **one day** at a time.

But then we ran out of water again. We were angry and said to Moses, **“Give us water to drink!”** And Moses said to us, **“Why are you fighting with me? Why are you testing the Lord?”** But we were thirsty. We thought we were **dying**. So we complained to Moses again, **“Why did you bring us out of Egypt just to kill us?”** We truly wondered if the Creator was even real, whether he was even with us. We said among ourselves, **“Is the Lord with us or not?”** Moses was frustrated and he cried out to the Lord, **“What am I to do with these people? They are about to stone me to death!”** The Lord told Moses to strike a rock that was there and when Moses did, water came pouring out for us to drink. The Creator had provided for us once again.

Everytime we didn’t get **what** we wanted, right **when** we wanted it, we wondered, **“Is the Lord with us or not?”** Everytime life didn’t go our way we wondered, **“Is the Lord with us or not?”** After years in Egypt, in Civilization, we did not understand at all what it meant to live by faith and trust—what it meant to live **one day** at a time, what it meant to live while not being in control of everything. We had satiated and satisfied our **flesh** so often and so regularly that we were **soft** and **weak**—we were blind and hardhearted. We didn’t understand the difference between what our flesh **wanted** and what we actually **needed**. When the Lord told us, **“Take only what you need.”** We didn’t understand how to do that. We thought we **needed** food and water everyday, all the time. And when we didn’t have them, we panicked and complained. But the Lord was trying to teach us that the only thing we **needed** was him. It wasn’t water and food that we needed, we had plenty of those things in Egypt and had been miserable slaves. What we **needed** was the Lord and his Word of promise to take care of us. What we needed was **faith**, to fill our agitated and anxious hearts with peace.

**“Take only what you need.”** It is our lack of faith and trust in the presence of the Creator that causes us to be greedy, causes us to take more than we need and save for tomorrow. We think we are alone. We think we have to provide for ourselves and take care of ourselves. **“Is the Lord with us or not?”** We live as though the Creator is not real. We live as though the Creator is absent. We live as though the Creator is powerless to take care of us. The way we live in anxiety and worry, the way we take and save for tomorrow shows that we do **not** have faith in the Creator’s presence and care. **“Is the Lord with us or not?”**

**“Take only what you need.”** How much do we really **need**? Civilization has filled our stomachs and flesh so much that we have become soft and weak. Civilization has fearfully taught us that we need an abundance every single day just to survive. But the reality is we need **very little** to survive. We can live with very little because our source of life and strength is **not** food and drink. Our source of life and strength is the Creator and his Word. As the Apostle Paul says, **“I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.”** Christ gives you the strength to live off very little. Christ gives you the strength to let go and **share** with others. Christ gives you the strength to **“take only what you need.”** To take only what you need is the most profound act of faith and trust in the Creator. To live one day at a time is to live by faith. To **not** save up for tomorrow is to live by trust in the Creator who is there to provide for you and take care of your every need. You never need to take more, you do not need to save anything for tomorrow, because you know the Creator gives you his daily bread. **“Is the Lord with us or not?”** The Lord is here. The Lord is in your life and he is your strength. The Lord loves you more than you could possibly imagine. The Lord is watching over your every need, every moment of your life. So trust in the Lord this day and **“take only what you need.” Amen.**