

Dried up      Numbers 11 19th Sunday after Pentecost, Sep. 30, 2018

And the people of Israel also wept again and said, "Oh that we had meat to eat! We remember the fish we ate in Egypt that cost nothing, the cucumbers, the melons, the leeks, the onions, and the garlic. But now our strength is dried up, and there is nothing at all but this manna to look at." Moses heard the people weeping throughout their clans, everyone at the door of his tent. And the anger of the Lord blazed hotly, and Moses was displeased. Leviticus 11: they were afraid to ask, afraid to hear

Dear friends in Christ, have you ever had no strength left. Where you know you are supposed to be getting up to go to work but you just can't find the strength? Where you can barely stand to think about your day? Where at the day's end you just don't feel like anything was accomplished, that the work still needs to be done, the house to be cleaned, the clothes to be washed, the dinner to be made? Where even the things you remember you enjoyed seem like too much trouble, and bed may not seem pleasant and may not bring sleep but it takes less energy than anything else? The Israelites said that they have no strength left but we have a different word for it now. We are just burnt out.

And we think we have lots of ways. Now some we try knowing they aren't useful -drugs, alcohol We know our addictions won't help.

But we think others might be more useful. We might say, try a new job, but that isn't always possible. Instead, take a vacation. Take some time for yourself and maybe things won't seem so bad Longer term, take time for self-care, to exercise and sleep. Or sometimes we agree with the Israelites -we need to eat better. In fact, in my house the kids know I say spicy food makes you happy. We are always pretty sure that we know that if things would just change, if we get the changes we want, everything will be better.

And so it is with the Israelites. They have nothing to eat but manna. They are burnt out. Their strength is dried up. They want something different to eat. They remember the vegetables. And they want meat. That will make everything better.

And so it is with Moses. He's been leading the Israelites for years, and they are still complaining. And nothing he does seems to help. He's burnt out. He tells God to kill him now.

Burnout is a real problem, but our solutions do no better than the Isrealites. Go back to that egypt vacation spot? Eat some spicy meat? Right after our text, God gave them meat. He sent quail. But it didn't save them. They died with the meat in their teeth.

But God does care for his people. He cares especially for those who are burnt out in caring for others. In seminary, they told us the solution for burn-out. In synods documents, they admit that pastor's often feel like their work is useless, that it doesn't matter what they do, that they are burnt out. And they say this comes from a neglect of God's word. They say this usually means the pastor needs to focus better on God's word in his devotional life. So if you are burnt out, spend time in seeking God in his word in bible study. If your strength is dried up, seek God in his word in family and personal devotions.

They didn't make that up. Moses and the people are burnt out, and God is gracious to them. They ask for meat, but God gives them what they need. The elders are called and God gives

them his word. He puts his spirit in them, and the prophesy. They speak God's word not only in his presence at the tent of meeting, but in the camp. God reaches people with his word not only at church but in their lives. And he gives his spirit.

But burnout goes further. We are helpless against sin. We are helpless against death. WE turn to distractions, but one more bite to eat, one more show to watch, one more drink from the bottle, won't help. They are temporary solutions with no real power . Our strength is dried up. But God sent his son, the word of God made flesh. He let his word be proclaimed through his son, at the temple and outside Jerusalem, that all may hear and see the salvation God has wrought. And he defeats sin. And he defeats death. And God's word goes forth in scripture and pastors and people. And we hear the news of Christ. And we believe. And his spirit comes to us. And we are saved. Our strenght is renewed. And then we can do the only thing that is useful. We can proclaim in his spirit what God has done for us. We can proclaim the salvation of our God.

Today, if you are burnt out, don't turn to temporary solutions. Certainly not drugs or alcohol. But not even your hobbies or yourself. Your strenght is dried up. Turn to the one who is your strength. Seeek the salvation of our God in his word. PRay to your God, and sing his praises.

And the peace that passess all understanding will keep your hearts And minds in Christ Jesus our lord.