Gaines Congregational United Church of Christ

August 5, 2018

Old Testament Reading; Exodus 16: 2-4, 9-15

Responsive Reading; Psalm 78: 23-29

Epistle Reading; Ephesians 4: 1-16

Gospel Reading; john 6: 24-35

**Sermon Title: Make It Rain**

By Rev. Jim Gardner

Summary: Every time it rains, it rains pennies from Heaven. Be sure your umbrella is upside down.

A long time ago there used to be a singer named Bing Crosby. In his song, Pennies From Heaven, he praises the rain as a good thing that we should be thankful for.

Lots of people seem to criticize weather forecasters and I do too. The difference is I don’t criticize their inaccuracy of forecasts, I criticize their lack of appreciation of rain.

We can be in the middle of a drought and the crops are dying and the livestock are about to die from thirst and we do not have enough water to put out a house fire but that well-meaning weatherman says of a forecast of spotty showers, “But it won’t be a washout.”

In other words, you are still going to die from lack of water but at least your body will be dry when they put you in your casket.

No. No. No. Rain is a good thing. Especially when God sends it to us as a gift.

“Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you. And the people shall go out and gather a certain quota every day.” Or in the Psalm.

“Yet He commanded the clouds above, and opened the doors of heaven, had rained down manna on them to eat, and given them of the bread of heaven. Men ate angels’ food; He sent them food to the full. He caused an east wind to blow in the heavens; and by his power He brought in the south wind. He also rained meat on them like dust, Feathered fowl like sands of the seas.”

Men ate angels’ food. “Who are we that God should regard us? He has placed us just below the angels.”

God opens up the heavens and rains down on us with more blessings then we can count. He gives us blessings as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the beach. He gives us rain, He gives us food, He gives us family, He gives us love, He gives us guidance, He gives us Jesus, He gives us eternity and the list goes on for, well for eternity. God is truly the gift that just keeps giving.

How do we react to the gifts of God?

Too often we react like the spoiled brats that followed Moses out of bondage in Egypt.

And the children of Israel said to them, “Oh that we had died by the hand of the Lord in Egypt, when we sat by the pots of meat and when we ate bread to the full! For you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger.”

You know that these same Israelites were not so anxious to die when they looked back at the chariots of Pharaoh and looked ahead at a trough passing between two mountains of water standing on its own in the Red Sea. If death were such a good option then they sure had their chance.

They did not choose death then but now after they have seen first hand to what lengths God will go for them they are crying in their beer because things are getting a little tight.

God gives them meat, quails, and manna, the bread of the angels. Later on, when water gets scarce they refer to that bread of the angels as, “This worthless bread.” How ungrateful can anyone get?

I would like to say that when Jesus came along everything changed. I would like to say that but I can’t. People were the same in the time of Jesus and are the same today.

After Jesus fed the 5000, the people followed him to try to get more freebies. When Jesus called them on it saying, “You did not follow me because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill on the loaves.” These connivers just kept it up. They challenged Jesus to do signs, i.e. feed them as Moses had fed the Israelites or they would not believe in him.

Yeah, Right!

Jesus offered them what they had asked for but not with the answer they were looking for. Jesus said, “I am the bread of life. He who comes to me shall never hunger, and he who believes in me shall never thirst.”

Jesus was telling them that God was no longer raining on them the “bread of the angels”, God was raining on them a bread that the angels could not touch. God was giving them his son. God was giving them his son’s body to nourish them and his son’s blood to refresh them so that they might share in the inheritance of God’s kingdom for all eternity with all the rights and privileges afforded to the children of God.

Join me now as we partake in this body and blood that makes us one with God.

God, make it rain! Hallelujah and Amen!