

Deuteronomy 8:1-10 (NIV 1984) Be careful to follow every command I am giving you today, so that you may live and increase and may enter and possess the land that the LORD promised on oath to your forefathers. ² Remember how the LORD your God led you all the way in the desert these forty years, to humble you and to test you in order to know what was in your heart, whether or not you would keep his commands. ³ He humbled you, causing you to hunger and then feeding you with manna, which neither you nor your fathers had known, to teach you that man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD. ⁴ Your clothes did not wear out and your feet did not swell during these forty years. ⁵ Know then in your heart that as a man disciplines his son, so the LORD your God disciplines you. ⁶ Observe the commands of the LORD your God, walking in his ways and revering him. ⁷ For the LORD your God is bringing you into a good land—a land with streams and pools of water, with springs flowing in the valleys and hills; ⁸ a land with wheat and barley, vines and fig trees, pomegranates, olive oil and honey; ⁹ a land where bread will not be scarce and you will lack nothing; a land where the rocks are iron and you can dig copper out of the hills. ¹⁰ When you have eaten and are satisfied, praise the LORD your God for the good land he has given you.

Chances are you have seen at least one by now, a cornucopia. You maybe didn't remember what it was called but it looks like an oddly shaped basket full of produce of all kinds. Cobs of corn, squash, pumpkins, gourds, even a few leaves. All of them to remind you that another year has come and harvest have been collected. The full cornucopia symbolizes that life has been full of blessings. We have plenty.

Today we are going to start with an empty cornucopia and fill it up. I'm sure you don't like to see it empty. Why would you? With it empty, it shows that you have needs. It shows that you will struggle just to get what you need most or possibly you won't even make it. That's not nice to see. But that's how it would be if we were to try to fill it with the works of our own hands and the sweat of our brows. It's humbling to see how much we need to rely on someone else. Just think of the hunger you would feel.

Hunger is what we feel when we forget who fills our life with blessings. God reminded the Israelites of their emptiness without his blessings. In the wilderness he had made it impossible for them to get food of their own. Since they traveled all over the place, they didn't have time to plant, cultivate, and harvest. Plus, they were walking around in a wilderness that wouldn't produce enough for their multitude of people. So God humbled them and caused them to feel hunger. He let them know that they would die without him.

Then he gave them manna, the what-is-this-bread, to eat. He took care of their daily needs as they found enough food to nourish their bodies on the ground and were able to eat and be satisfied.

It wasn't just with food that God provided for them in the wilderness. He led them. He took them to places where he could strengthen their faith. He set trial before them for forty years to test their faith. He wanted to see if they believed in him or if they were only there while times were good. He wanted to see if they would keep his commands with humble hearts that said, "Yes, God" or if they would in sinful arrogance forget him. **He humbled you, causing you to hunger and then feeding you with manna, which neither you nor your fathers had known, to teach you that man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD.**

Those struggles to have what was needed also brought them to see that without God's help they could do nothing. Without God himself, they would die. All this done to show them their lack of perfection and their need for the Savior. To test their heart to see if they carried around a life they tried to fill by themselves or if they carried a life that was filled by God. God let them see that without him they were void of any blessings.

Without God we to are void of any blessing. Without God we stand empty and lack meaning. During our emptiness without God it is a struggle to grab anything that might bring a momentary happiness. Life becomes living on bread alone that does not satisfy the hunger of your soul tainted by sin. Your soul is only fed by every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD.

Those words give food for your soul. And what a feast it is. In his Word, God has prepared for you a banquet that satisfies what your soul craves with course after course for rich nourishment. To you the hungry sinner, God places a diet of his gospel. He tells you to chew on that good news of Jesus, your Savior. There you taste the goodness from God. There you receive the forgiveness of sins Jesus supplied for you when he died on the cross. There you partake in the fullness of redemption that Jesus bought with his blood. There you get filled with a new life that does not carry around the emptiness of sin but the fullness of Christ.

Please bow your heads with me to remember God. Pray: **I will exalt you, O LORD, for you lifted me out of the depths and did not let my enemies gloat over me. ²O LORD my God, I called to you for help and you healed me. ³O LORD, you brought me up from the grave; you spared me from going down into the pit. ⁴Sing to the LORD, you saints of his; praise his holy name. ⁵For his anger lasts only a moment, but his favor lasts a lifetime; weeping may remain for a night, but rejoicing comes in the morning. ⁶When I felt secure, I said, “I will never be shaken.” ⁷O LORD, when you favored me, you made my mountain stand firm; but when you hid your face, I was dismayed. ⁸To you, O LORD, I called; to the Lord I cried for mercy: ⁹“What gain is there in my destruction, in my going down into the pit? Will the dust praise you? Will it proclaim your faithfulness? ¹⁰Hear, O LORD, and be merciful to me; O LORD, be my help.” ¹¹You turned my wailing into dancing; you removed my sackcloth and clothed me with joy, ¹²that my heart may sing to you and not be silent. O LORD my God, I will give you thanks forever. (Psalm 30 NIV 1984)**

This spiritual food that God gives you in the Gospel isn't a meal that you will eat all that is there and then wonder where you can find more. In the Gospel God has supplied more than your soul can consume. The more you ingest of God's good news the more you crave and there are always huge portions made ready for you by God. Your whole spiritual life has been filled completely by God.

Now your cornucopia of life isn't empty but overflowing. God has packed into you so much of his gospel that there is nothing else that you need spiritually. On top of all this abundance, God grants more.

For the Israelites, God blessed them beyond the Savior with a promise of a good place to live. **For the LORD your God is bringing you into a good land—a land with streams and pools of water, with springs flowing in the valleys and hills; ⁸a land with wheat and barley, vines and fig trees, pomegranates, olive oil and honey; ⁹a land where bread will not be scarce and you will lack nothing; a land where the rocks are iron and you can dig copper out of the hills.** Each of these was a reason why the Israelites would give thanks to God. All of these material blessings were also supplied by the God of all grace. They didn't replace what he had done for them as their God to save and protect them but came to them over and above.

God's blessings also come upon us in these more natural ways that he continues to sustain the earth. Think back to those days where you looked at the 1st article and learn what God does to provide for your physical needs. I learned it this way, "I believe that God still preserves me by richly and daily providing clothing and shoes, food and drink, house and home, wife and children, land, cattle, and all I own and all that I need to keep my body and life." You may have learned that truth with different words but that same is true for you now.

These blessings are easy for us to forget. So common and usual that we don't consider how great a blessing each is but take them for granted. So here is what we are going to do, let's come up with a list. If you feel like helping me please do by raising your hand to tell me a blessing that you remember....(List)

Each of these comes for God. As you receive each of those blessings here is what God instructs you to do. Praise the LORD your God for the good he has given to you. Observe the commands of the LORD your God, walking in his ways and revering him. Be careful to follow every command so that you may live and increase. Shamefully we forget this part. But let's not overlook it at least today.

Please bow your heads again with me to remember God. Pray: ¹ **Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; his love endures forever.** ²**Let the redeemed of the LORD say this— those he redeemed from the hand of the foe,** ³**those he gathered from the lands, from east and west, from north and south.** ¹⁷**Some became fools through their rebellious ways and suffered affliction because of their iniquities.** ¹⁸**They loathed all food and drew near the gates of death.** ¹⁹**Then they cried to the LORD in their trouble, and he saved them from their distress.** ²⁰**He sent forth his word and healed them; he rescued them from the grave.** ²¹**Let them give thanks to the LORD for his unfailing love and his wonderful deeds for men.** ²²**Let them sacrifice thank offerings and tell of his works with songs of joy.** ³⁵**He turned the desert into pools of water and the parched ground into flowing springs;** ³⁶**there he brought the hungry to live, and they founded a city where they could settle.** ³⁷**They sowed fields and planted vineyards that yielded a fruitful harvest;** ³⁸**he blessed them, and their numbers greatly increased, and he did not let their herds diminish.** ³⁹**Then their numbers decreased, and they were humbled by oppression, calamity and sorrow;** ⁴⁰**he who pours contempt on nobles made them wander in a trackless waste.** ⁴¹**But he lifted the needy out of their affliction and increased their families like flocks. (Psalm 107 NIV1984)**

Now God tells us to continue to remember him. We aren't walking around with lives empty of spiritual and physical blessings. Instead we carry the full array of his forgiveness of our sins and overflow with riches to supply our physical needs. Our cornucopia is full of God's blessings. Now Remember the Lord your God, walk in his commands and revere him. Remember the Lord. Amen.