

Grace, Mercy, and Peace be unto you from God our Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior. Dear brothers and sisters in Christ:

[Introduction]

[1] The year was 1446 BC—some 3,466 years ago.

The children of Israel had been in Egypt for 430 years and had suffered bitterly.

But the God of Israel heard his people's cry
and raised up his servant Moses to lead Israel out of Egypt
and into the land promised of their forefathers.

Through Moses, God performed miracles to bring them out of bondage.

Once they were in the wilderness,
they grumbled and grumbled and complained.

They accused Moses of bringing them out into the desert to die.

Still, God had a purpose for these ungrateful people.

And he would provide for them miraculous food in the wilderness
—manna sent from heaven (Ex 16:1–21).

[2] Martin Luther wrote about God the Father:

“He also gives me clothing and shoes, food and drink, house and home, wife and children, land, animals, and all I have. He richly and daily provides me with all that I need to support this body and life”

(SC, explanation of the First Article).

[3] The heavenly Father provides for all creation,
not just in the extraordinary way of manna from heaven during the exodus,
but also in the ordinary way of our everyday needs
—a provision we too often take for granted.

Even more important,

the Father provides for our greatest need, far beyond the needs of the body.

[4] and in Jesus our provider is revealed.

[*All Creation Looks!*]

[5] The words of Psalm 104 is a familiar prayer said by many before a meal:

[6] "*The eyes of all look to you, O Lord*" (cf. Ps 145:15).

In these words, we acknowledge that all creatures, including each of us,

[7] "*look to you, to give them their food in due season*" (v 27).

It is the entire created world that looks to the Father.

That is why the psalmist wrote,

[8] "*In wisdom have you made them all; the earth is full of your creatures*" (104:24).

And that means that all his creatures wait and hope for God to provide,
with the certainty that he will do so.

He has always provided all that we need,
and he will always do so.

Yet God may not always provide according to our timetable.

Rather, as the psalmist says, he gives "in due season" (v 27),
that is to say, at the proper time, the right time, the time that's best for us.

There are some old sayings that make this clear...

There are some old sayings that describe how most of us approach God's timing.
Such as...

"Lord, grant me patience—but hurry!" and

"God answers prayer in three ways: yes, no, or wait a while."

Overused, perhaps, but true.

Most of creation, of course, is quite naïve to this;

most creatures have no understanding that it's their Creator
who's providing all these good things.

We can even be naïve to this...

Oh, how few *people* on earth realize that
their jobs, their incomes, their grocery store purchases,
their tailored suits and blue jeans,
their airline tickets to Walt Disney World,
and every breath they draw right here at home ...

ALL of these... EVERYTHING is a provision of the Father in heaven.

[*Father's ultimate provision*]

Of course, none of those blessings
could have come from a Father
who was separated from his children,
who was far off.

The psalm says to God,

[9] "*When you hide your face, they are dismayed*" (v 29a).

God hides his face from those who sin (Is 59:2).

That's you and me, That's every human soul.

Therefore, we would receive nothing!

No good thing from God *UNLESS*

UNLESS he had somehow dealt with sin.

Life now and into eternity is not something we ourselves create, we can't even earn it; it's provided by the Father.	Death, on the other hand, is something we in fact have created and is something we in fact have earned.
---	---

But it is not the will of the Father that any should perish,
and so he is our Provider.

He has provided the way of eternal life for all humanity.

[10] It is in Jesus that we see the ultimate provision of God.

All we need to know about the Father

we see in the Son,

who said, "*I am in the Father and the Father is in me*" (Jn 14:11).

We see Jesus reaching out to provide for people wherever he goes.

[11] He blesses five loaves and two fish

and feeds five thousand men plus women and children,

not only meeting their need for food

but also doing so overabundantly

with twelve baskets of scraps left over (Jn 6:1–13).

When his disciples had fished all night and caught nothing,

Jesus told them to let down their nets again,

[12] and when they did, the nets were so full of fish
that they began to break.

When they put the fish in their boats,

there were so many that the boats began to sink (Lk 5:1–7).

But all the miracles from Jesus during his earthly ministry

DID NOT bring eternal life.

[13] That took something else—
the ultimate provision of a sinless Lamb sacrificed in the place of sinful people.
God the Father provided this Lamb in the person of his beloved Son.

On that terrible Friday,
this Lamb was mocked, beaten, crowned with thorns,
and ultimately nailed to a cross and left to die.

[14] Hanging on that cross,
he was taunted by the very crowds for whom he was suffering—
even as he pleaded with his Father to forgive them,
for they did not know what they were doing. When he cried out “It is finished” and
gave up his Spirit in death, the great and final provision was made.

One man, Joseph of Arimathea, stepped forward,
thinking he could provide a final gift for Jesus—a tomb.
Yet that tomb could never hold the Lord of Life.
On the third day, Jesus rose from dead.

[15] When he rose from that sealed tomb,
he sealed the Father’s final provision of forgiveness, peace, salvation—
and therefore also all those earthly gifts—to all humanity, including you and me.

[*Conclusion*]

[16] The Israelites were brought out of Egypt by the mighty hand of God,
Though they were to wander in the wilderness for forty years
before entering the Promised Land,
God provided miraculous food, called “manna,”
which sustained them on the way.

[17] So it is that we have been called out of bondage to sin, death, and the devil
by our Baptism into Christ
and fed with the miraculous food of the blessed Sacrament
all through our earthly pilgrimage.
All this is provided by our Father and revealed in Jesus.

So we... Declare his glory among the nations,
his marvelous deeds among the people. AMEN! (Psalm 96:3)
