

Weekly Newsletter

15th September 2026



Reflection: What do you really want?

By Lorna Ferguson

“Then they believed his words; they sang his praise. But they soon forgot his works; they did not wait for his counsel. But they had a wanton craving in the wilderness, and put God to the test in the desert; he gave them what they asked, but sent a wasting disease among them.” (Psalm 106:12-15)

What do cucumbers, melons, leeks, onions and garlic have in common? One answer is that these are all things I have received over the summer from friends and church members whose gardens produce more than they can eat. I could add tomatoes, grapes and okra to the list. Serving in a rural area certainly has its advantages.

However, I wonder if your mind went instead to a verse in the Bible. Cucumbers, melons, leeks, onions and garlic were all things the Israelites said they missed from Egypt, along with fish (Numbers 11:5).

Had Egypt been a good place to live? We know that it wasn't. The Israelites had been slaves there, and their oppression had worsened when Moses asked Pharaoh to let them go. They cried out for deliverance. And God rescued them miraculously: sparing their firstborn, providing silver, gold and clothing as they left, leading them by cloud and fire, and parting the Red Sea so that they crossed on dry ground.

On the other side, they celebrated God's deliverance with singing and dancing. Surely such an amazing experience would keep them trusting God for months, if not years. Yet just three days later, they were complaining because the water was bitter (Exodus 15:22-24). Three days! God provided water, but soon they were complaining again, this time about a lack of food (Exodus 16:2-3). In response, God provided them daily with manna.

By the time we reach Numbers 11, the Israelites have spent nearly a year at Mount Sinai. They have received God's law, constructed the tabernacle and recently celebrated the Passover, a year after leaving Egypt. Now, at last, they are setting out towards the promised land.

How long before the grumblings start? Again, just three days into their journey, they are complaining about their misfortunes (Numbers 10:33; 11:1). Then comes another complaint (verse 4): this time about the monotony of the food God has been providing for them each day. They want meat!

This desire for meat, however, is only a symptom of a deeper issue: they are dissatisfied with God's provision and with God himself. But rather than bringing their request to the one who has rescued and sustained them, they grumble and weep. And as they do so, their memories begin to change. Suddenly, Egypt was wonderful. They had feasted on fish, cucumbers, melons, leeks, onions and garlic. Now all they have is boring manna every day.





God has given them what they had longed for when they were slaves in Egypt: deliverance. But now they don't like what that deliverance looks like. Their dissatisfaction with the present distorts their memory of the past.

Again, God gives the people what they ask for. He promises them meat, not just for a day or two, but for a whole month! In fact, they will eat it until it comes out at their nostrils and becomes loathsome to them. God not only answers their expressed desire; he also identifies the deeper issue. In rejecting God's provision, they have rejected God himself (11:20), and so getting what they ask for becomes part of God's judgment on them.

Paul tells us that the events of Israel's wilderness journey "took place as examples for us, that we might not desire evil as they did" (1 Corinthians 10:6). A few verses later his warning is even more direct: we must not grumble, as some of them did (10:10)

We too can easily think, "If only I had this one thing, then I would be happy". Perhaps a pay rise, a different job, better health, or a relationship restored. Of course, God invites us to bring our requests to him, but we deceive ourselves if we think that receiving that one thing will make us content. Before long, another desire will take its place.

Numbers 11 invites us to ask some uncomfortable questions. Have I become so focused on what I don't have that I've stopped noticing what God has already given me? Have I begun to believe that getting one particular thing will bring me the contentment I should be finding in God himself?

Augustine prayed in his *Confessions*: "You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our hearts are restless until they rest in you" (1.1.1). Our restless hearts will always find another cucumber, melon, or leek to long for. What we most need is not more of God's gifts, but God himself.

Thank You from Bhinehas

To the church family,

I have been so blessing to be part of this fellowship who have warmly welcomed me and loved me over the past nine months. I came as a stranger in a strange land. And you took me in and nourished me by your friendship and by the teaching of God's word. Although I'm leaving you now, I'll be back and I'll miss you all. Thank you for all that you have come to mean to me in the Lord Jesus Christ. I will be praying that the Lord would bless you richly in the days ahead. See you all one day in the future. Holyrood will always be close to my heart.

Love Bhinehas



Hannah's Annual Leave

Hannah (our Children and Families Worker) is on holiday this week from Wednesday to Saturday (inclusive). Feel free to email Hannah@holyroodchurch.org and she'll get back to you next week or speak to Joe or Liz if it's urgent.

Psalm Singing Evening – Friday 25th September

We are invited to a Psalm Singing evening by The City Psalms. **Joe will be doing a reflection as part of the evening** and we are looking forward to gathering with people from a wide variety of churches across Edinburgh to worship God together!

Date: **Friday 25th September**

Time: **19:30 (with refreshments from 19:00)**

Location: **Buccleuch Free Church**



Church family lunch – Sunday 27th September

Everyone is invited to stay behind after the service on **Sunday 27th September** for a simple soup and sandwich lunch. This will be an opportunity to welcome students and new faces joining us on Sundays. If you have any allergies, please let Liz@holyroodchurch.org know. Thank you!

Thanksgiving Service for 20 Years of Cornhill Scotland – Sunday 27th September 2026

From Charles Alford and the Cornhill Scotland team – Many of you will know that we are celebrating 20 years of Cornhill Scotland which began in September 2006 with our first class of 12 students. Under God, we look back on 20 years of great encouragement through all who have been trained, through CTC and now 15 years of the Pastors Training Course (PTC). We have so much to be thankful for!

As part of our celebration, we will be holding a Thanksgiving Service to which you, as those who have an interest in our work and who have supported and prayed for us, are all warmly invited. We are so thankful for you and the many people have been involved with Cornhill over the years.

The thanksgiving service will take place on **Sunday 27th September, at 5pm**, at the Tron Kelvingrove, 73 Claremont Street, G3 7JB. We would be so glad if you could come and join in this time of thanksgiving.





Ladies' Christmas Lunch – please sign up!

Is it too early to mention Christmas?! We wanted to get in early and book somewhere for the women in the church family to go for Christmas lunch together. We've booked the Herringbone (in Abbeyhill) for **Thursday 3rd December at 12.30pm**. There is a fixed menu (£20 for two courses). Please let Anncris (anncris@gmail.com) know if you can come, thank you!

Edinburgh Theological Seminary – Annual Conference

This year's ETS Conference on **Saturday 26th September 2026** focuses on the *Free Offer of the Gospel* – join us as we explore the rich theological history and discuss the immediate contemporary relevance of this profound and priceless topic. At St Columba's Free Church and for more details, go [here](#).

Scottish Women's Bible Convention – Saturday 3rd October

We are looking forward to the Scottish Women's Bible Convention on **Saturday 3rd October** at Charlotte Chapel. The aim is to provide a day of faithful Bible teaching by women for women with the Lord Jesus as our focus.

Our speaker this year is Carrie Marlow and she will be teaching on the theme of *Jesus is Better* from the book of Hebrews. On the day, there will be a choice of three seminars:

- What Jesus is doing for you right now - His Prayers for Us
- Perseverance in Pain: How does Jesus' suffering help our suffering?
- Developing our own Walk With Jesus



Please sign up for tickets [here](#) and speak to Liz if you have any questions. Also, Liz is looking for people to help with stewarding on the day, let her know if you're able to help. Thank you!

Church Calendar

This week for your info and prayers:

- Wednesday: Prayer Meeting from 7-8pm
- Thursday: Women's Bible Studies from 10.30am – 11.30am
- Sunday:
 - Morning Service at 10.30am – Joe Barnard preaching (and livestreamed)
 - Evening Service at 6pm – Joe Barnard preaching.
- Monday: Baby and Toddlers from 10 – 11.30am

