

“The Gift of Grumbling!”

I. **INTRO:**

- A. **Illustration:** A **monk** joined a monastery and took a vow of silence. After the first 10 yrs his superior called him in and asked, “*Do you have anything to say?*” The monk replied, “Food bad.” - After another 10 years the monk again had opportunity to voice his thoughts. He said, “Bed hard.” - Another 10 years went by and again he was called in before his superior. When asked if he had anything to say, he responded, “I quit.”
“It doesn’t surprise me a bit. You’ve done nothing but complain ever since you got here.”
1. This is a chapter of **complaining!** [Keep in mind...only 3 days into journey!]
 - a) **Moses** realized that *many of the people* didn’t share **his delight** in what the Lord was doing for them!
 2. Spurgeon said, “The **gift of grumbling** is largely dispensed among those who have **no other talents.**”
- B. **Outline:** Complaints against **Bread!** - Complaints against **Burdens!** - Complaints against **Blessings!**

II. **THE GIFT OF GRUMBLING!**

- A. **COMPLAINTS AGAINST BREAD!** (1-9)
- B. **COMPLAINING!** (1-3)
- C. Complaining or grumbling was evidence of the **unbelief** that would keep them out of the promise land.
1. Let’s learn how to be **Grateful** for *God’s Goodness*, & **Governable** to *God’s Guidance*.
- D. Moses prayed, fire stopped!
1. This incident made such an **impact** on them they named the place “**Burning**”.
 2. **But...amazingly, it didn’t** make enough of an **impact** to **stop the complaining!**
- E. **MEAT CRAVING!** (4-9)
- F. **Mixed multitude** (rabble) - Non-Israelites who left Egypt with Israel in the Exodus.
1. **Complaining is a communicable disease!** - the Israelites joined in.
- G. George MacDonald, “The slaves of **sin** rarely grumble at that slavery; it is slavery to **God** they grumble at.”

- H. (5) **Ate freely in Egypt - Freely?** It only cost them the lives of their **baby boys**, who were thrown into the Nile by Pharaoh's servants; - the lives of their **husbands & brothers**, who collapsed under the whips of the taskmaster's!
1. Can you imagine preferring **slavery & oppression** to *bread from heaven*?
- I. **What were they complaining about?** The **Menu**; they were tired of **Manna**!
1. **Blandness** compared to the **spicy food of Egypt**.
 2. **Never mind that** manna was **God's miraculous, daily provision** for them. **Never mind that** it **kept them alive** in the desert, where there were no fish or animals, & few edible plants growing. **Never mind that** it was **delivered to their camp fresh daily** every morning.
- J. It just seems natural...when *our religious life is low*, we tire of **angel's food & our hearts turn back** to the world from which we came! [Egypt's table consisted of **6 dishes**; **Canaan 7**; Dt.8:8]
- K. **COMPLAINTS AGAINST BURDENS!** (10-25)
- L. **MOSES OVERWHELMED & SINKING FAST!** (10-15)
- M. Moses was displeased at the *self-pity bawling* he heard out of every tent!
- N. Moses did what we **must** do when people **disappoint** us: **he took it to God in prayer & told God just how he felt**.
- O. (11) **Why have You afflicted Your servant?** - Be honest, we've all asked this!
1. Our heavenly Father sends us **frequent troubles** to **try** our faith.
 2. **If our faith** is worth **anything**, it will **stand the test**.
 - a) **Gold paint** is afraid of the fire, **but gold** is not!
 - b) **Costume jewelry** dreads the diamond wheel, **but** a **true jewel** fears no test.
 3. **We'd never know** the music of the **harp** if the **strings** were left **untouched**; **Nor enjoy** the juice of the **grape**, if it were not **trodden in the winepress**; **Nor discover** the sweet perfume of **cinnamon** if it were not **pressed & beaten** **Nor feel** the warmth of the **fire** if the **coals** were not **utterly consumed**. [Spurg]
 4. **Though He slay me, yet I will trust Him!** Job 13:15
- P. **JEHOVAH JIREH?** (16-25)
- Q. The Lord tended to **His weary servant** **before** addressing the **ingratitude of the people**.
- R. How important for **all** leaders to have the Spirit be **upon** them to rightly lead His people!

- S. (21-23) At first Moses couldn't fathom how God could supply meat to everyone in the middle of the desert. **A table in the wilderness of this magnitude?**
1. Ps.78:17,18 **they tested God in their heart By asking for the food of their fancy. Yes, they spoke against God: They said, Can God prepare a table in the wilderness?**
 2. **But does the Creator expect the creature to fulfill His promise for Him?**
 - a) **No**, He who makes the promise ever fulfills it by His own unaided omnipotence(Sp)
 3. God responds, **"Is the Lord's power limited?"**
- T. **COMPLAINTS AGAINST BLESSINGS!** (26-35)
- U. **THE UNORDAINED!** (26-30)
- V. Remember at this time in Israel's history, Moses was the **only prophet** among the people.
1. When the **70 elders** prophesied, Moses lost part of his **unique status**.
 2. The change was a **great relief** to Moses, but **not** to his aide, Joshua.
 - a) **In his eyes**, those 2 elders prophesying in the camp represented a **challenge** to Moses **leadership**.
 3. **But Moses looked on God's activity in the lives of others with Joy** rather than **Jealousy** & was grateful for the mercy God had shown them.
- W. **James & John** made a similar mistake, & Jesus had to rebuke them, **Now John answered and said, "Master, we saw someone casting out demons in Your name, and we forbade him because he does not follow with us."** But Jesus said to him, **"Do not forbid him, for he who is not against us is on our side."** Lk.9:49,50
- X. These are the **unordained**, the **laity** that God uses, the **simple disciples!**
- Y. **KNEE-DEEP IN BIRDS!** (31-35)
- Z. God's mercy, however, was tempered w/judgment when it came to the complainers.
1. **You want meat...I'll give you meat!**
 2. Wind-borne quail blew in from the sea. **A 36 hour quail bash!**
- AA. **While the meat was still in their teeth** - i.e. Before it was chewed.
1. A plague hit the people who rejected Yahweh.
- BB. Here a **principle** emerges which is of **perpetual application & importance!**
1. There are times when God grants an **unwarranted request**, **in order that men may learn through experience the folly of their desires**.
 - a) We as parents have done the same to teach our children an important lesson.
 - b) We may get what we wanted, but it doesn't satisfy.

2. The Psalmist speaks to this in **Ps.106:15** (read)
 - a) Is.10:16 **Therefore the Lord, the Lord of hosts, Will send leanness among his fat ones** (not a diet verse!) [*He will send a **wasting disease** amongst His **warriors!*** NASB]

CC. **Kibroth Hattaavah** [קְבִירוֹת הַתְּאֵוָה] - graves of craving; *graves of lust!*

1. **How many a man/woman have been buried here?**
2. 1 Cor.10:6 **Now these things became our examples, to the intent that we should **not lust** after **evil things** as they also lusted.**
3. **For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish** Gal5:17

DD. God met the need; encouraged His servants; & punished the rebels.

EE. Every age is full of complaints:

1. **Hey, we have a lot to complain about today:** bail-outs & bank loans; big-government. - **But what time period didn't?** (Wars, diseases/plagues)
2. Like Solomon said, **Do not say, “Why were the former days better than these?” For you do not inquire wisely concerning this.** Eccl.7:10
 - a) It has been said, **“The good old days** are the combination of **a bad memory & a good imagination!**”
3. The **winter** is not w/o **cold**, nor the **summer** w/o **heat**.
4. When we're **young** we feel the **confinement of school**; **teen years** we feel the **restraint of father's house**; **we long to be on our own, to make our own way.**
 - a) But show me the man/woman who hasn't said, “Oh, to be young again!” “Oh, if it was like when I was growing up!”
 - b) **Don't live in the past, decide to live for today!**
5. Phil.2:14,15 **Do all things without **complaining**(grumbling) and **disputing**(arguing), that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God **without fault in the midst** of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as **lights** in the world.**
 - a) (Message) **Do everything readily and cheerfully - no bickering, no second-guessing allowed! Go out into the world **uncorrupted**, a *breath of fresh air in this squalid and polluted society*. Provide people with a glimpse of **good living** and of the **living God**. Carry the light-giving Message into the night.**