

October 11, 2009

## WHY GRUMBLE?

### *Exodus 16 and 1 Corinthians 10:1-13*

Maybe you don't like being lumped together with chronic complainers. Sure, you toss around an occasional grumble, and feel you've earned the right to air it to everyone within a city block. So what's wrong with that?

Roget of thesaurus fame has a few words to clearly define what's coming out of that hole in your face: annoy, beef, bellyache, complain, complaint, fret, fuss, grasp, grievance, groan, grouse, grumble, irritate, objection, protest, squawk, whine

There. It's official.

Do you ever grumble? What about? What things make you just start grumbling and complaining? I grumble – I didn't realize how much I grumble until I started working on this message. I grumble about drivers on the road around me (but they deserve it – they drive like idiots) – I grumble about things at work and things at the church – heck I even grumble when the blueberry cream coffee at 7/11 is either out or just not fresh enough for me. Grumbling can mess up my entire day if I start off that way. What about you?

Last week John said something like ... If we ignore history we tend to repeat it. Here's another thought:

*There are two things you can do with history:  
You can ignore it, or you can learn from it.*

The cynical view of life and history might say something like this:

*There is one thing we have learned from history, and it is that we have not learned anything from history.*

Everything that is written in this book is written with the purpose of teaching us today. The history of the Israelites in the Wilderness years took place so that we could learn and profit from it today. You might think: "is that really true?"

1 Corinthians 10:6 explains the purpose of the wilderness years: ***Now these things occurred as examples to keep us from setting our hearts on evil things as they did.***

Then in verse 11, after the tragic results of their wilderness failings are detailed, there is a second warning to us: ***These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us, on whom the fulfillment of the ages has come.***

We might look through the list of failings (idolatry (v.7), sexual immorality (v.8), testing the Lord (v.9), and grumbling (v.10) say today, "Oh, I think I'm pretty much through any threat of wilderness failings." Verse 12 is for us today.

***So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall!***  
*1 Corinthians 10:12*

Now turn with me in the Scriptures to Exodus 16 as we examine one of the things that happened as a warning to us. This is the record of God's provision of the Manna. The Manna became a test for the Israelites and the Manna – the provision – that God gives to each of us is a test for us today.

You have heard of an “acid test” or the “litmus test”. You take a piece of litmus paper and dip it into a substance. If the paper turns red it indicates an excess of acid. If the paper turns blue it indicates an excess of alkali. Today's “Manna test” reveals the condition of your heart to the Lord. The Lord dips provisions into our lives and these will tell us if we are grateful (we'll be tickled-pink) or if we are grumblers (we'll be blue).

### **HINTS FOR PASSING THE “MANNA-TEST” TODAY:**

The first thing we can learn from the Manna-test of the Israelites and the “provision-test” of today is that we are not to grumble about God's provision.

#### **1. Don't grumble.**

The evil things, the wilderness failings, that were listed in 1 Corinthians 10: 7-10 have one common denominator. The *evil things* mentioned found their root in discontent with and grumbling about God's provision. (Exodus 32:1 – Golden calf; Sexual immorality with Moabites was the result of discontent with God's provision of Israelite women; Numbers 21:5 – Bronze snake; Numbers 16:41 – Korah's rebellion).

You can understand why they might grumble. I mean day after day of Manna? You can cook it, roast it, boil it, broil it, fry it, BarBQue it, microwave it....What can you do with it after a while? There's always plain old bamanna, there is . . .

Bamanna Bread.

Bamanna Muffins

Bamanna Splits

Bamanna Cream Pie

Deep fried Bamanna

Bamanna Fosters

They grumbled before the manna; they grumbled after the manna – WHY? Grumbling is not tied to the manna, it is the outworking of what is in the heart.

*In country, town, or city, some people can be found  
Who spend their lives in grumbling at everything around;  
O yes, they always grumble, no matter what we say,  
For these are chronic grumblers, and they grumble night and day.*

*They grumble in the city, they grumble on the farm,  
They grumble at their neighbors, they think it is no harm;  
They grumble at their husbands, they grumble at their wives,  
They grumble at their children, but the grumbler never thrives.*

*They grumble when it's raining, they grumble when it's dry,  
And if the crops are failing, they grumble and they sigh..  
They grumble at the prices and grumble when they're high,  
They grumble all the year around, and they grumble till they die.*

*O they grumble on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday,  
They grumble on Thursday too,  
Grumble on Friday, Saturday, Sunday,  
They grumble the whole week thru.  
- cited in Chuck Swindoll, Moses, 239*

Are we grateful or are we grumblers???

### **Things we grumble about:**

Look at verses 2-3 of Exodus 16: ***In the desert the whole community grumbled against Moses and Aaron. The Israelites said to them: "If only we had died by the Lord's hand in Egypt! There . . ."***

They were complaining about their . . .

#### **a) Location (Exodus 16:3a).**

They were longing to be somewhere else. They were sure they would be happier somewhere else. They were happier in the good ol' days! They were suffering from the hazy, rosy, nostalgic, glow of memory when something was better or easier or more comfortable than today. As you compare then and now, I guarantee it, you will begin to grumble.

I do this and so do you. We need to stop and realize that God has allowed us to come to this moment in time and place and if we are living for Him and loving Him ***We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose (Romans 8:28).*** Stop and thank him right in the midst of this day for right where you are right now. Paul reminds us: ***"Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances for this is God's will for you who are in Christ Jesus."*** (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18).

You can commit right now to stop comparing today with the past and stop grumbling about where you are right now.

The second thing they grumbled about was

#### **b) Circumstances (Exodus 16:3b).**

***There we sat around pots of meat and ate all the food we wanted.*** They were grumbling about the things they had or didn't have. They were grumbling about their circumstances.

In the “Strange or Unusual Events” section in the Encyclopedia Britannica Yearbook (1982) comes the following account. Next time you think you are having a bad day you might think about this guy:

*Brian Hise had more than his share of bad luck in July. His apartment in Provo, Utah became flooded from a broken pipe in the upstairs apartment. The manager told him to go out and rent a water vacuum. That’s when he discovered that his car had a flat tire. He changed it and went inside again and called a friend for help. From the electric shock he got from the phone, he inadvertently ripped the instrument from the wall. Before he could leave the apartment a second time a neighbor had to kick the door down because water damage had jammed it tight. While all of this was going on, someone stole Hise’s car. But it was almost out of gas so he found the car a few blocks away, but had to push it to a gas station where he filled up the tank. That evening Hise attended a military ceremony at his university. He injured himself severely when he somehow sat on his bayonet which had been tossed in the front seat of the car. Doctors were able to stitch up the wound but no one was able to resuscitate four of Hise’s canaries who were crushed to death from [plaster that fell from the wet ceiling while Hise was in the hospital that evening]. [Upon returning to his apartment and finding his canaries] . . . Hise slipped on the wet carpet and badly injured his tailbone, he said he began to wonder if “God wanted me dead but kept missing.”*

How’s your attitude when things and circumstances are less than ideal. You can make the commitment right now: **“I will refuse to grumble about my present circumstances.”**

The third area we habitually grumble about is ...

**c) People (Exodus 16:3c).**

**“...you have brought us out into this desert to starve this entire assembly to death.”** Notice what they were doing; they were casting blame on somebody. Oh, this is the classic. Blame your wife; blame your husband; blame your boss; blame the neighbors; blame your Mother; blame your Father; blame your uncle; blame your family.

You can commit right now to stop grumbling about others. You’ll be a much nicer person to be around.

Your location, and circumstances, and the people in your life will either be used to . . . defeat you or develop you.

They will make you either BITTER or BETTER. You know there is only one letter difference between “bitter and better” and that one letter is the “I”. **“I” make the difference**; it’s my choice whether to be grateful or grumble.

Exodus 16 gives us some very definite truths about grumbling that help us to understand how devastating grumbling really is . . .

## Truths about grumbling:

- a)      **The Lord hears it (Exodus 16:7a, 8a, 9, 11).      Uh Oh!**

You could look up any one of those 4 verses and you will see the same message: *he has heard your grumbling*. There is no such thing as “self-talk”.

Remember the warning is for us today . . . God hears our grumbling; every last word and murmur and mumble and rumble. You are not muttering to yourself . . . He hears every bit of it.

What is worse than the fact that the Lord hears it is that . . .

- b)      **The Lord personalizes it (Exodus 16:7b, 8b).**

He hears all your grumbling as *against him*.

- c)      **The price is great (Numbers 14:29).**

In order to see the true price of grumbling we need to turn to Numbers 14:29 where we read:

*How long will this wicked community grumble against me? I have heard the complaints of these grumbling Israelites. So tell them, ‘As surely as I live, declares the Lord, I will do to you the very things I heard you say; talk about self-fulfilling prophecy. “In this desert your bodies will fall – every one of you twenty years old or more who was counted in the census and who has grumbled against me.*

An entire generation was lost and did not enter the Promised Land! **Because of Grumbling!**

## 2.      **Trust God’s Provision:**

Truths about provision:

- a)      **It is a gift (Exodus 16:4, 15).**

(4)      *I will rain down bread from heaven for you (gift)*

(15)     *Moses said ... It is bread the Lord has given you (gift)*

When we understand that something is a gift from someone it makes it very special. I’m a little absent minded. I have a way of putting things down and leaving them somewhere. Ask Corinne how many times I have lost things and she will be very quick to tell you. But when someone has given me a gift then that item becomes very special.

All that we have is from the Lord’s hand - it is a gift from him that he carefully chose for us.

**b) It is a tool to reveal him (Exodus 16:7, 12).**

Verse 12 says: *in the morning you will be filled with bread. Then you will know that I am the Lord your God.* Just as a gift card to Sears is in consideration of my desires . . . so also the Lord's provision for us reveals his love and thoughtfulness of us.

**c) It is the perfect amount (Exodus 16:14,18).**

*And when they measured it by the omer, he who gathered much did not have too much, and he who gathered little did not have too little. Each one gathered as much as he needed.*

The Lord provides exactly what his children need. He doesn't meet our greeds but he does meet our needs.

**d) It is a test of our obedience (Exodus 16:4).**

The Lord uses His provision for us to test us. Verse 4 says: ***In this way I will test them and see whether they will follow my instructions.*** The Lord gives us provisions as a test. . . .

Will we be grateful or will we grumble?

Will we tithe and give 10% back to Him or will we keep it all?

Will we share it with generosity or will we hoard it for ourselves?

There is no test in our lives like the test of God's provision.

What do you do and what is your attitude about what God has provided for you?

OR – Do you think it is really all yours?

**APPLICATION:**

Is there a “manna-test” going on in your life today? Is there a location, or situation, or circumstance or person about which you are grumbling? Remember 1 Corinthians 10:13b . . . ***when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.***

You can leave here grateful or you can leave here grumbling. If you will choose to ask for the grace of God's Holy Spirit to fill your life, he will make you grateful and graceful. He will help you stand up under this “manna-test” with a grateful, graceful heart.

Every one of us has so much. Your garbage can eats better than 33% of the world. We have such wonderful freedoms in America today.

The seal of “The Church of the Nazarene” denomination is widely recognized in Columbia. If you were to have that seal on a shirt, or a business card, or an identification tag on a brief case, then you might as well draw a target on your back because you will become a victim of those who hate the church.

General Superintendent, Dr. Jim Bond, tells of a **Columbian Pastor** who had walked a couple of teens home after a church service. He walked them safely to their homes and then turned around to walk the few blocks back to his own home. Just outside his residence a group of men were waiting for him. They stabbed him in the back. The knife punctured his lung. He turned around to stop the assailants and they slashed his hand and then plunged the knife into his heart. This young pastor, husband to a beautiful wife and two lovely little girls, bled to death on the street, in broad day light in front of his own home. Robbery was not the motive; he still had his wallet with a little money inside. This attack coincided with the murder of another Nazarene Pastor in the same town at the exact same time. It was done in broad daylight to make a point. If you are going to be a Nazarene (Christian) Pastor . . . it may cost you your life.

Compassionate Ministries came alongside that young widow. They promised to pay her what his small salary would have been for one year and to train her with a technical trade or skill so she could support her family. She could go back to school or whatever to get the training she needed. What job did she want? She wanted to take her husband's place as the pastor of that little church so she could continue the work God was doing.

We have so much. The Lord has provided all that we need.  
**Lord replace our grumbling with a heart of gratitude.**