

September 11th

GRUMBLING SPREADS LIKE GANGRENE

"Moses heard the people weeping throughout their clans, everyone at the door of his tent. And the anger of the Lord blazed hotly, and Moses was displeased. Moses said to the Lord, 'Why have you dealt ill with your servant? And why have I not found favor in your sight, that you lay the burden of all this people on me? Did I conceive all this people? Did I give them birth, that you should say to me, 'Carry them in your bosom, as a nurse carries a nursing child,' to the land that you swore to give their fathers? Where am I to get meat to give to all this people? For they weep before me and say, 'Give us meat, that we may eat.' I am not able to carry all this people alone; the burden is too heavy for me. If you will treat me like this, kill me at once, if I find favor in your sight, that I may not see my wretchedness.'"

NUMBERS 11:10-15

Why, why, why? Why me? It's called playing the victim role. Do you know of some people that never seem to take responsibility for their actions, but always place blame on someone else? It's probably not very hard for us to picture someone in our minds. We also can start asking "why me?" or say, "I didn't sign up for this." The life that we sometimes expect doesn't quite turn out like we thought it would. Sometimes we blame God that things don't turn out a certain way. Well, here in Numbers 11, we can see the Israelites complaining yet again. It's been about 401 days since they left Egypt, but they still can't get the memories of Egypt out of their minds. Worse yet, here we see Moses pulled into the grumbling also. What does God teach us here?

The people are at it again...this time the bread from heaven isn't enough for them. They want to eat meat. In the past, Moses has stood above the complaining of the people. But not this time. Check out the Scripture again and count how many times Moses refers to himself. In the English translation, I count about thirteen times that Moses refers to himself within the span of five verses. Duguid points out in his commentary on Numbers that the actual references to himself number twenty in the original Hebrew. That's a lot of self-pity! It sounds an awful like another pouting prophet that you may be familiar with...Jonah. Moses loses all sense of God's call on his life. In the year since they left Egypt, the wilderness is even wearing down Moses' patience. His self-pity is quite ugly here. So ugly that he even asks God to kill him because the burden of the people is too much. You can see here that Moses isn't much different from us. If we're honest, we put people like Moses on a pedestal. After all, he did write the first five books of the Bible, and He spoke with God on Sinai Mountain. Who wouldn't be impressed? But here we see that Moses carries the same burdens and complaining tendencies that we carry. When life doesn't fit our expectations, we complain just like Moses.

As you read the rest of the chapter, you can see that God gives the people exactly what they want. Here in Numbers 11, God gives them meat not just for one day, but an entire month. The language that is used here is quite disgusting. They will eat so much meat that the meat will come out of their nostrils. I don't know about you, but having food come out of anyone's nose isn't pleasant to think about. And that's the point isn't it? God is judging the people for their grumbling...again.

Men, what can we learn from these few chapters? First, we can see that grumbling spreads like a wildfire. It's a disease of the heart that only sees what we don't have rather than what we do have. God fades from view and we only look at how difficult life has become. The Israelites are in the wilderness and have been walking in it. Sure, that's not pleasant to think about. But God is with them and has given them exactly what they need. They lose sight of that again, including Moses. Men, no one is above the temptation to grumble and complain. We're no different. Life can hit us in difficult ways because of sin's spread...but God. God offers hope because He sends a Savior. He leads even in our "desert". He's exactly what we need. Will we trust Him?

Spend some time thinking about ways that you grumble against God because of what is going on in your life. Ask Him for forgiveness and more grace to help you be thankful rather than thankless.

For Further Reading: Numbers 11:1-35

