

Chronic Grumblers

Exodus 16

INTRODUCTION: In 1929, Thoro Harris, a prolific African American song writer, after studying the passage before us today wrote the following.

In country, town or city some people can be found
Who spend their lives a grumbling at ev'rything around,
O yes, they always grumble, no matter what we say,
For these are **chronic grumblers**, 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 low prices and grumble when they're high,
They grumble all the year 'round and they grumble till they die.

Chronic Grublers. The way some people grumble you'd think it as a spiritual gift.

Every church has them. Fortunately for us, ours are all in the other service.

Every now and then I want to call on them to stand and lead us in a word of criticism.

Some of us have children that grumble. Some have parents or grandparents that grumble. Some are married to a grumbler.

Proverbs 25:24 (ESV)

²⁴ It is better to live in a corner of the housetop than in a house shared with a quarrelsome wife.... The grumbler.

Grumbling is one of the acceptable sins. It's not like murder or adultery. We tolerate the grumbler. Occasionally, we even give the practice a place in our own lives.

But according to the text before us, Grumbling, may be a symptom of a deep underlying spiritual problem that will cost us far more than we are willing to pay. Look at it with me...

CONTEXT: The episode took place one month after the departure from Egypt. God has already provided water at Marah, now they are a little further along. They have plenty of water, but not enough food.

There's something about hunger that can aggravate the attitude. Have you ever been HANGRY? Well, when you are hangry, eat a hamburger and the grumble is gone. But it went far deeper for the Hebrews as we will see.

TEXT: Exodus 16:1–32 (ESV)

¹ They set out from Elim, and all the congregation of the people of Israel came to the wilderness of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, (incidentally, that has nothing to do with our English word, "sin", it is short for Sinai) on the fifteenth day of the second month after they had departed from the land of Egypt. ² And the whole congregation of the people of Israel **grumbled** against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness.

Let's answer the question...

1. What is the Problem of Grumbling?

Before I answer that question, let's talk about - WHAT GRUMBLING IS NOT:

Grumbling is not - groaning, lamentation, disappointment, or even criticism or disagreement.

The Bible is full of examples of godly people who say, "I'm scared. I'm hurt. I'm upset. I wish this were different. Lord, would you do something? I don't like this."

There is an entire book of the Bible called, "Lamentations"

The circumstances can be the same for the Godly Lamentor or the UnGodly Grumbler, but the PERSPECTIVE is different. One brings God into the equation, the other does not.

The GRUMBLER is saying, "I know how to run the universe a bit better than you or anybody else does."

There are 6 aspects of Grumbling in the text:

a. **It's a Heart Issue that Affects the Tongue**

Jesus said it this way, "The mouth speaks from the overflow of the heart".

Biblically heart refers to the Mind, the Will and the Emotions. What you think about, what you dwell on, what you meditate on when your mind drifts will inevitably spill out of your mouth.

If the mouth gripes when the heart groans.

If your **children** are little grumblers, don't think for a minute you can legislate it away. There needs to be a heart change.

ILLUSTRATION: Dr. Adrian Rogers told the story of a father who told his little four year old son to sit down, but the son didn't sit down. So the father said a second time, "Son, I said sit down." The boy still didn't sit down. Finally, the father took him by the shoulders and forcefully placed him in the chair. He said, "Now, Son, sit there!" The little boy answered, ***"I may be sitting down on the outside, but—I'm standing up on the inside!"***

The heart of the issue is the issue of the heart.

LISTEN: Depression is real, chemical imbalances are legitimate, but sometimes the issue is the attitude. ***You can't fix with a pill what was broken with the spirit.***

ILLUSTRATION: One of my favorite stories is about the two mischievous grandkids who saw grandad asleep and rubbed limburger cheese all over his mustache. Granddad wakes up and says, "this room stinks" goes to the kitchen and says, "the kitchen stinks too...think I'll step outside and get some fresh air!" Opens the door steps outside and says, "The whole world stinks".

Maybe some of you have Limburger Cheese smeared all over your attitude.

b. **It's a Sin Practiced in Groups**

³ and the people of Israel said

There is something to the law of attraction. You attract what you put out. Talent attracts talent, faith attracts faith, and guess what grumblers attract?

It also has a leavening effect. It permeates an organization.

That's why it's never healthy to employ a grumbler, the next thing you know you'll have staff infection.

c. **It's an Attitude that Affects Perspective**

³ and the people of Israel said to them, "Would that we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the meat pots and ate bread to the full,

Do you see how distorted their recollection of the past has become? Egypt, those were the good old days. We sat by the meat pot and ate all the bread we wanted.

NO - it wasn't at all like that. This is what happens to every addict, it's the

language of addiction. You get free for a couple of weeks then you start thinking... it wasn't so bad was it? As a matter of fact it was fun!

No, it was destroying you, enslaving you, your life was falling apart. But when you start grumbling about NOW, you distort your memory of THEN.

d. It Becomes a Pattern of Life

You will see this patten of grumbling throughout the book of Egypt and as a matter of fact, none of this crew present will enter into the promise land except for Joshua and Caleb... two guys who refused to look a life through the lens of a grumbler.

You see, the people were out of slavery, but slavery wasn't out of them. You can get the slave out of Egypt but it takes a long time to get Egypt out of the slave.

e. Left Unchecked it Makes us Accusers

3b. for you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger."

Wow, what a statement. Moses, you are some kind of Jim Jones cult leader. You brought us out here, TO KILL US.

Folks, if you have an unbalanced view on things long enough you start to believe ludicrous and attribute motives to people that you have no evidence of being accurate.

Why is that a problem? Because scripture calls Satan, "The Accuser of the Brethren". When you become an accuser you are in league with the Devil himself.

f. Grumbling Leads to Unbelief

This is the heart of the matter. The grumbler has removed God from the Equation. He no longer cries out to God for relief, he only gripes.

Folks, the Bible says **Ephesians 3:20 (ESV)**

²⁰ Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us,

Psalms 84:11-12 (ESV)

¹¹ For the Lord God is a sun and shield; the Lord bestows favor and honor. No good thing does he withhold from those who walk uprightly. ¹² O Lord of hosts, blessed is the one who trusts in you!

If you want something and don't have it - it's either because it's not best for you,

or you need to watch and trust God a little longer.

When you believe, when you KNOW that God is all powerful and God is good. It doesn't make painful situations go away but it does change how you process them.

2. What is the Solution to Grumbling?

a. Look for God's Goodness

⁴ Then the Lord said to Moses, "Behold, I am about to rain bread from heaven for you, and the people shall go out and gather a day's portion every day, that I may test them, whether they will walk in my law or not."

God looks down on a nation of grumblers and says, "I am going to be good to them". Isn't that something. Even in the midst of our sin and rebellion we can find evidences of God's kindness toward us.

Romans 2:4 (ESV) tells us that

⁴ ...God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance.

When things are tough, look for evidence of God's kindness in your life. Do you have people who love you? Do you have access to God's word?

Philippians 4:8 (ESV) is one of the most helpful verses...

⁸ Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.

That will radically change your marriage if you will focus on the good.

ILLUSTRATION: When Julie and I are on the road, I see deer everywhere. She hardly ever sees them. Why? I've spent a lifetime training my eye to see deer. She hasn't. What if you trained your eyes to see the good?

Look for God's goodness...

b. Remember God is the Source

⁵ On the sixth day, when they prepare what they bring in, it will be twice as much as they gather daily." ⁶ So Moses and Aaron said to all the people of Israel, "At evening you shall know that it was the Lord who brought you out of the land of Egypt, ⁷ and in the morning you shall see the glory of the Lord, because he has heard your grumbling against the Lord. For what are we, that you grumble against us?"

⁹ Then Moses said to Aaron, "Say to the whole congregation of the people of Israel, 'Come near before the Lord, for he has heard your grumbling.' " ¹⁰ And as soon as

Aaron spoke to the whole congregation of the people of Israel, they looked toward the wilderness, and behold, the glory of the Lord appeared in the cloud. ¹¹ And the Lord said to Moses, ¹² “I have heard the grumbling of the people of Israel. Say to them, ‘At twilight you shall eat meat, and in the morning you shall be filled with bread. Then you shall know that I am the Lord your God.’ ” ¹³ In the evening quail came up and covered the camp, and in the morning dew lay around the camp. ¹⁴ And when the dew had gone up, there was on the face of the wilderness a fine, flake-like thing, fine as frost on the ground. ¹⁵ When the people of Israel saw it, they said to one another, “What is it?” For they did not know what it was. And Moses said to them, “It is the bread that the Lord has given you to eat.

³¹ Now the house of Israel called its name manna. It was like coriander seed, white, and the taste of it was like wafers made with honey. ³² Moses said, “This is what the Lord has commanded: ‘Let an omer of it be kept throughout your generations, so that they may see the bread with which I fed you in the wilderness, when I brought you out of the land of Egypt.’ ”

They were to go out each day and gather an OMER of Manna - an OMER is about the same as 2 liters. If you can imagine a 2 liter drink bottle, that's how much they were to gather. There was always enough.

On the day before the Sabbath, they were to gather 2 OMER and have enough for the next day. If they gathered too much it spoiled. If they didn't gather they didn't eat.

Later on, at the giving of the 10 Commandments Moses said something interesting about this. He explains why God did it this way - he said in

Deuteronomy 8:3 (ESV)

³ he humbled you and let you hunger and fed you with manna, which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that he might make you know that ***man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord.***

That was the point - TRUST GOD'S WORD. Eat what he tells you to, when he tells you to and trust that there will be enough tomorrow.

There in lies the vaccine for Chronic Grumbling.

Trust God. But it hurts, trust him... but I don't like it, trust him... but it's not going my way, trust him.

Read His word, decide in your heart that it is true, and behave accordingly.

And by the way this is a daily practice - you can't live on yesterday's manna. You can't live on last year's manna. You need it fresh daily.

CONCLUSION/INVITATION:**On one occasion John 6:22–35 (ESV)**

²² On the next day the crowd that remained on the other side of the sea saw that there had been only one boat there, and that Jesus had not entered the boat with his disciples, but that his disciples had gone away alone. ²³ Other boats from Tiberias came near the place where they had eaten the bread after the Lord had given thanks. ²⁴ So when the crowd saw that Jesus was not there, nor his disciples, they themselves got into the boats and went to Capernaum, seeking Jesus. ²⁵ When they found him on the other side of the sea, they said to him, “Rabbi, when did you come here?” ²⁶ Jesus answered them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, you are seeking me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves.” ²⁷ Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you. For on him God the Father has set his seal.” ²⁸ Then they said to him, “What must we do, to be doing the works of God?” ²⁹ Jesus answered them, “This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent.” ³⁰ So they said to him, “Then what sign do you do, that we may see and believe you? What work do you perform?” ³¹ Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, ‘He gave them bread from heaven to eat.’” ³² Jesus then said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but my Father gives you the true bread from heaven.” ³³ For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.” ³⁴ They said to him, “Sir, give us this bread always.” ³⁵ Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst.”

Jesus says I am what the Manna pointed to... relate to me, the way they related to the Manna.

Don't try to live today off of the relationship we had yesterday. I have new things to teach you.

ILLUSTRATION:

C.S. Lewis - For every need on this planet there is a corresponding environment designed to accommodate that need.

Fish need to swim - there is water
Birds need to fly - there is sky

But there are needs in your life that cannot be met by anything in this world. That's why you grumble...
Jeremiah said it this way - you are trying to get water out of broken cisterns.

C.S. Lewis went on to say - “If we find ourselves with a desire that nothing in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that we were made for another world.”

If you are going to be delivered from grumbling - you must feed on the other world every day.