

“Grumbling Will Get You Nowhere” – Pr Jim Sprengle – Pentecost 12 August 11, 2024

- I. **John 6:40-41** – ⁴⁰For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in Him should have eternal life, and I will raise Him up on the last day.” ⁴¹So the Jews grumbled about Him, because He said, “I am the bread that came down from heaven.”
- II. **Some people grumble a lot.**
 - a. Grumbling has been an age-old problem of the Israelites that goes all the way back to their days in the wilderness.
 - i. We remember the many times that the people of God grumbled, just like last week when they were upset that they didn’t have food like when they were slaves in Egypt... so God provided manna and quail.
 - ii. We remember the many times the people Israel were upset and grumbled at the leadership of Moses and Aaron, along with God Himself! (Numbers 14:27)
 - b. Grumbling is kind of like complaining... but more rebellious.
 - i. I read a quote from a book called, “Rebellion in the Wilderness,” that said grumbling is “to express resentment, dissatisfaction, anger, and complaint by grumbling in half-muted tones of hostile opposition to God’s leaders and the authority which He has invested in them.”¹
 1. You can hear it now, the whispers that undermine God and His chosen leaders... “Who died and put that guy in charge?” “He’s a terrible leader!” Or, “I wish someone better would come along and replace him... he’s so incompetent.”
 - ii. So, grumbling is more than complaining... it is aimed at the leadership of people in authority... and it is ultimately aimed at God.
 - c. God is the supreme authority, and what does Matthew 28:18 say?
 - i. Jesus tells us that “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me.”
 - ii. Jesus is God... He is supreme, preeminent, and the first in all things. (Colossians 1:18)
 - iii. There is no greater authority... and there is nothing greater than God... even when we don’t get it.
 - d. You see grumbling usually doesn’t come from a purely evil heart that hates God and wants to reject Him... no, it usually comes from those who don’t understand what God is doing, or why certain things are happening.
 - i. The Old Testament story of Elijah is directly following his awesome victory over 400 prophets of Baal... as God used Elijah to show them who has real power and authority in this world and in heaven.
 - ii. Yet, right after this amazing defeat, Elijah is threatened by Jezebel, who tells him that he’s a dead man whenever she can find him... so,

he runs over 100 miles away and tells God to take his life because he's as good as dead anyway.

- iii. Elijah cannot understand why these things were happening, so he runs from God and his responsibilities as a prophet.
- iv. Although it doesn't say he grumbled against the Lord, it does show that he had given up and wanted to die because he didn't understand why God would deliver him from the prophets of Baal, only to be in the hot seat with Jezebel.

III. **How many times have we grumbled against the Lord?**

- a. Remember, we're in church so don't try to lie to yourself or anyone else 😊
- b. In what ways have we blamed God for bad things happening? (Under our breath of course.)
 - i. When tornados or floods or fires completely destroy communities and kill hundreds of people...
 - ii. If an expectant mother loses her baby before he or she is born...
 - iii. The person who loves God and serves Him in ministry, like our dear friend, Pastor Miguel Luna, who was diagnosed with a brain tumor and died in a few months.
 - iv. Wars that slaughter hundreds of thousands of people...
 - v. When people are victimized by crime and senseless violence...
- c. All of these things and many more might have us grumbling under our breath...
 - i. What is God doing anyway?
 - ii. Why is He allowing these things to happen if He cares so much?
- d. We might also go after the leadership that God has prepared to guide us.
 - i. Especially pastors... who represent God in many ways... end up taking the brunt of anger and resentment toward God.
 - ii. It's also easy to grumble against the pastor when certain decisions are made... or not...
 - iii. What is Pastor doing anyway?
 - iv. Why is Pastor so incompetent? Maybe he should consider another calling...
- e. Again, grumbling has a sense of undermining and dissatisfaction.
 - i. The people misunderstand... or don't know the full picture... and they reject authority... and consequently, because God is the ultimate authority... they reject Him too.

IV. **We return to the Gospel lesson from last week in John 6.**

- a. Jesus fed the 5000, so after they chase Him down again to give them more miracles and bread... He is teaching them what real bread is.
 - i. Jesus is the real bread from heaven that will satisfy them fully.
- b. Even as God, Jesus will still honor His Father in heaven by doing what the Father wants... because Jesus is showing us what the perfect person is like... one who looks to God and trusts fully in Him.

- i. So, Jesus tells them that He is doing the Father's will, which is to gather up the lost, (Luke 19:10) and the Father's desire that everyone might believe in Jesus so they will live forever.
 - ii. The resurrection and the life only come through faith in Jesus, and it is the Father's will that we believe in Jesus to be saved.
 - c. Yet, when the people heard these words, they grumbled...
 - i. Under their breath and in whispers they asked how this Jesus, who was just a regular guy from Nazareth, could be from heaven.
 - ii. Who in the world does Jesus think He is?
 - iii. How can this ordinary person put Himself on the level of God?
 - iv. And the grumbling is unbelief.
 - d. Isn't that the problem?
 - i. Grumbling turns into a lack of confidence in our leader... in authority... and in turn, leads to unbelief and rejection of God.
 - ii. Far be it from any of us to grumble against the Lord God, because it will get us nowhere but eternal separation in the end.
 - e. These people could not see Jesus for who He truly was... and we also may find ourselves struggling to see God's part in our lives – especially when things are not going well.
 - i. Yet, Jesus gives us the best news of all – it's not about us and our works or understanding... it's about the Father giving us the gift of faith.
 - ii. As Jesus says, "No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him." (vs 44)

V. **Our great God gives us all we need – especially our faith.**

- a. If it were up to me to save myself, I would have died a horrible death long ago...but it's not up to me – as the Father drew me to His Son by the Word.
- b. I give all credit and glory and honor to God for the faith He gifted me, and I know without a doubt what Jesus says, "All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and whoever comes to Me I will never cast out." (vs 37)
 - i. Jesus is our God and Savior, and He still carries out the mission that the Father began from the days of Adam and Eve... to find the lost and bring them to faith.
- c. The bread that Jesus provides for us, the bread that fulfills, and the bread that brings life... is His flesh.
 - i. As the perfect Son of God, Jesus willingly went to the cross and be destroyed there as an offering.
 - ii. An offering that was enough... an offering that paid for our sin... but also won the victory over all the trials and struggles this world gives.
 - iii. By His flesh, He would redeem us from the disease, the accidents, the misunderstandings about what God is doing, the death, the crimes, the disasters... as today... in Christ, none of those things have real power over us.

- d. We are free from the power of sin, death, and the devil because the Bread of Life – our Savior Jesus – gave up everything on the cross.
- e. In Christ, the Bread of Life, we have been given everything—faith, redemption, and the assurance that no power in this world can separate us from the love and the victory won for us on the cross. Amen

¹ Coats, George W., *Rebellion in the Wilderness*, Abingdon, 1968, pp. 21-28. THAT, I, pp. 870-71.