

Gratitude vs Grumbling

Message 03 in the series "Half Full"

A. During their long journey to the Promised Land, the Israelites began to grumble and complain.

"Then the foreign rabble who were traveling with the Israelites began to crave the good things of Egypt. And the people of Israel also began to complain. 'Oh, for some meat!' they exclaimed. 'We remember the fish we used to eat for free in Egypt. And we had all the cucumbers, melons, leeks, onions, and garlic we wanted. But now our appetites are gone. All we ever see is this manna!' ...Moses heard all the families standing in the doorways of their tents whining, and the Lord became extremely angry. Moses was also very aggravated. And Moses said to the Lord, 'Why are you treating me, your servant, so harshly? Have mercy on me! What did I do to deserve the burden of all these people? Did I give birth to them? Did I bring them into the world? Why did you tell me to carry them in my arms like a mother carries a nursing baby? How can I carry them to the land you swore to give their ancestors? Where am I supposed to get meat for all these people? They keep whining to me, saying, "Give us meat to eat!" I can't carry all these people by myself! The load is far too heavy! If this is how you intend to treat me, just go ahead and kill me. Do me a favor and spare me this misery!'"

Numbers 11:4-6, 10-15 (NLT)

Note: People who constantly grumble and complain are exhausting. "Better to live in a desert than with a quarrelsome and nagging wife." Proverbs 21:19 (NIV)

Note: People who constantly grumble and complain are contagious. "Do not be misled. 'Bad company corrupts good character.'" 1 Corinthians 15:33 (NIV)

Life Application: If we want to be "half full" people we must not hang around "half empty" people.

"Oh, the joys of those who do not follow the advice of the wicked, or stand around with sinners, or join in with mockers. But they delight in the law of the Lord, meditating on it day and night." Psalm 1:1-2 (NLT)

B. Because they faced difficulties, the Israelites forgot the amazing things God had done for them.

"They forgot what he had done—the great wonders he had shown them... he divided the sea and led them through, making the water stand up like walls! In the daytime he led them by a cloud, and all night by a pillar of fire. He split open the rocks in the wilderness to give them water, as from a gushing spring. He made streams pour from the rock, making the waters flow down like a river! Yet they kept on sinning against him, rebelling against the Most High in the desert. They stubbornly tested God in their hearts, demanding the foods they craved. They even spoke against God himself, saying, 'God can't give us food in the wilderness. Yes, he can strike a rock so water gushes out, but he can't give his people bread and meat.' ...they did not believe God or trust him to care for them." Psalm 78:11-22 (NLT)

Life Application: If we want to be "half full" people we must remember the good things God has done for us.

"Let all that I am praise the Lord; may I never forget the good things he does for me. He forgives all my sins and heals all my diseases. He redeems me from death and crowns me with love and tender mercies. He fills my life with good things." Psalm 103:2-5a (NLT)

Life Application: If we want to be "half full" people we must trust that God is always with us and strong enough to take care of us through any circumstance.

"As evening came, Jesus said to his disciples, 'Let's cross to the other side of the lake.' So they took Jesus in the boat and started out, leaving the crowds behind (although other boats followed). But soon a fierce storm came up. High waves were breaking into the boat, and it began to fill with water. Jesus was sleeping at the back of the boat with his head on a cushion. The disciples woke him up, shouting, 'Teacher, don't you care that we're going to drown?' When Jesus woke up, he rebuked the wind and said to the waves, 'Silence! Be still!' Suddenly the wind stopped, and there was a great calm. Then he asked them, 'Why are you afraid? Do you still have no faith?' The disciples were absolutely terrified. 'Who is this man?' they asked each other. 'Even the wind and waves obey him!'" Mark 4:35-41 (NLT)

Note: Grumbling and complaining is only giving voice to our unbelief.

C. God heard the Israelites grumbling, and He disciplined them by giving them what they asked for.

“Tell the people: ‘Consecrate yourselves in preparation for tomorrow, when you will eat meat. The Lord heard you when you wailed, “If only we had meat to eat! We were better off in Egypt!” Now the Lord will give you meat, and you will eat it. You will not eat it for just one day, or two days, or five, ten or twenty days, but for a whole month—until it comes out of your nostrils and you loathe it—because you have rejected the Lord, who is among you, and have wailed before him, saying, “Why did we ever leave Egypt?”...while the meat was still between their teeth and before it could be consumed, the anger of the Lord burned against the people, and he struck them with a severe plague. Therefore the place was named Kibroth Hattaavah, because there they buried the people who had craved other food.”

Numbers 11:18-20, 33 (NIV)

Life Application: God has shown us a way out when we’re tempted to see our lives “half empty.” We can give thanks.

“These things happened as a warning to us, so that we would not crave evil things as they did, ...And don’t grumble as some of them did, and then were destroyed by the angel of death. These things happened to them as examples for us. They were written down to warn us who live at the end of the age. If you think you are standing strong, be careful not to fall. The temptations in your life are no different from what others experience. And God is faithful. He will not allow the temptation to be more than you can stand. When you are tempted, he will show you a way out so that you can endure.” 1 Corinthians 10:6,10-13 (NLT)

John Schmidt • 11-22-20 • john@centeringlives.com

Fifteen things I can thank God for regardless of my circumstances:

“...give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.” 1 Thessalonians 5:18 (NIV)

1. Thank You for sending Your Son Jesus to give me forgiveness, abundant life, and a place in Your family. (1 Peter 3:18, John 10:10, Ephesians 1:4-8)
2. Thank You for sending the Holy Spirit to teach, guide, and empower me. (John 14:15-26, Philippians 2:13)
3. Thank You for the fruit of the Spirit becoming evident in my life as I grow in my relationship with you: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. (Galatians 5:22-23)
4. Thank You for preparing a place for me in heaven. (John 14:2-3, Revelation 21:3-5)
5. Thank You for creating me with a high purpose in mind and giving me a sense of worth. (Psalm 139:13-18, Ephesians 2:10)
6. Thank You for loving me unconditionally and never leaving or forsaking me, no matter what I do. (Psalm 23, Romans 5:8, Hebrews 13:5)
7. Thank You for using difficulties in my life to mature me and grow my faith. (James 1:2-4, Romans 8:28)
8. Thank You for Your Word that teaches, corrects, and trains me in righteousness. (2 Timothy 3:16)
9. Thank You for lifting me up when I fall and giving me rest. (Psalm 145:15, Matthew 11:28-30)
10. Thank You for giving me peace when I fix my thoughts on you. (Isaiah 26:3, John 14:27, Philippians 4:6-7)
11. Thank You for ordering Your angels to protect me wherever I go. (Psalm 34:7, 91:11)
12. Thank You for giving me Your wisdom and understanding and for guiding me along the best pathway for my life. (Psalm 32:8-9, Proverbs 3:5-6)
13. Thank You for enabling me to think about things that are true, excellent, and worthy of praise. (1 Corinthians 2:16, Philippians 4:8-9, 2 Timothy 1:7)
14. Thank You for fighting for me and making me more than a conqueror. (Exodus 15:1-3, Proverbs 16:7, Romans 8:37-39)
15. Thank You for supplying all of my needs in accordance with Your riches in glory. (Philippians 4:19)