

Why We Complain - Philippians 2:12-16 – December 30th, 2018

- I want to talk to you about complaining, and why it is we as Christians are prone to complain about everything, and everyone.
- I also want to talk about the deadly danger of complaining and why God takes it so seriously when His people are complaining.
- I'm hoping at the conclusion of our time together in Philippians, we'll now why we complain and how to stop our complaining.

- Before we do that we first need to address this misunderstood passage in verses twelve and thirteen concerning our salvation.
- Specifically, where Paul says that we need to work out our salvation with fear and trembling because of what God works in us.
- In other words, because God is doing a work in us, our response is to exercise our faith, and work out our, not others, salvation.

George Muller simplified it and explained it best this way, "The believer must finish, must carry to conclusion, must apply to its fullest consequences what is already given by God in principle. ...He must work out what God in His grace has worked in."

- I find it interesting that the Apostle Paul would then talk about complaining right after he talks about working out our salvation.
- The reason I find it interesting is because it's almost as if Paul is saying, this is what working out your own salvation looks like.
- Namely, instead of always grumbling and arguing, we will continually be working out our salvation with both fear and trembling.

- There's something else I want to point out here and it's in verses fifteen and sixteen, where Paul says we will shine like stars.
- This because, when we as Christians are not complainers we will stand out from everyone else as a child of God in this world.
- Not only will we stand out, we will also be letting our light shine as good witnesses for Christ in a world that's getting very dark.

- I would suggest that the biggest reason that God takes complaining so seriously is because God takes complaining personally.
- The reason being is that when we as Christians complain, what we are in effect saying is that God is being unfair and unjust.
- To me, this goes back to and plays right into the hands of the lie of the Devil in the garden when he deceived Adam and Eve.

- Another reason God takes grumbling and complaining so seriously is because of what doing so ends up doing to God's people.
- Complaining can be likened to cancer in the sense that it spreads throughout the entire body and left unchecked ends in death.
- It's for this reason that scripture is replete with the swift and severe judgment of God on the Israelites when they complained.

- Time doesn't permit me to list all of the times that the Israelites had murmured and complained about everything and everyone.
- However, there is one account that I think we would do well to revisit by virtue of how Jesus refers to it in the gospel of John.
- Actually it's in the context of the most well known verse in all the Bible, John 3:16 about God so loving the world He sent Jesus.

John 3:13–16 - 13 No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, that is, the Son of Man who is in heaven. 14 And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, 15 that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. 16 For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

Numbers 21:4-9 - 4 Then they journeyed from Mount Hor by the Way of the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom; and the soul of the people became very discouraged on the way. 5 And the people spoke against God and against Moses: "Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and our soul loathes this worthless bread." 6 So the LORD sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and many of the people of Israel died. 7 Therefore the people came to Moses, and said, "We have sinned, for we have spoken against the LORD and against you; pray to the LORD that He take away the serpents from us." So Moses prayed for the people. 8 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Make a fiery serpent, and set it on a pole; and it shall be that everyone who is bitten, when he looks at it, shall live." 9 So Moses made a bronze serpent, and put it on a pole; and so it was, if a serpent had bitten anyone, when he looked at the bronze serpent, he lived.

- All of this begs the question of why we complain and perhaps more importantly how to stop complaining if we're given over to it.
- Answer; we absolutely must get our eyes off of ourselves, and our false perception, of our own self-importance and entitlement.
- I'll take it a step further and suggest that it's this very self-importance that keeps us from death to self and picking up the cross.

- Here's the bottom line in closing, it's not about me, nor is it about what someone did to me, it is about what Jesus did for me.