

**Serm.Series.: “Moses: God’s Poster Child of Meekness and Devotion”**

**Lord of Life Lutheran, Westfield, IN-8/29/10**

**Title: “Grumbling against a Godly Leader”**

**Text: Numbers 10-14 (selected verses)**

**Intro.: *Illus.:* Not a discouraging word**

**Theme:** When Satan sows dissension among the ranks, we must guard our hearts, heads, and tongues that we are not stamped into showing disrespect for those through whom God leads us, but rather, we ought to submit to God sovereign grace at work among us.

***Identifying what causes us to grumble***

Recognize what grumbling is and why it is so serious

1. It is a statement against God and his care which we don’t have the courage to say out-loud
  - a. *Now the people murmured about their hardship in the hearing of the Lord. Numbers 11: 1*
2. It is missing the ***forest for the trees*** as we experience God’s providence in spite of a surrounding broken world
  - a. **Illus.: On Faith and Contentment and On Discontentment**
3. It causes us to shoot at His leaders in our midst – His very answer to lead us out of trouble
  - a. Israel always took out their angst against God on Moses, causing him to despair and not be at his best
  - b. **Numbers 11: 10-15**
  - c. *Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you. Hebrews 13:17*

Things that generate our sinful slide into grumbling

1. Discontent over the “*harsh circumstances*” of our journey in a sin-broken world
  - a. Israel broke into all-to-common litany, “God doesn’t know what he is doing; life in Egypt was better (11:1-3)
  - b. Not confusing God’s good provision with the brokenness which our sin has brought upon our circumstances
  - c. *Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows. James 1:17*
2. Hanging around bad company
  - a. **Illus.: Environmental influence**
  - b. Israel let “*the rabble*” stir them into a riot of fool-headed thinking. **Numbers 11: 4-6, 11: 4-35**
  - c. *Do not be misled: “Bad company corrupts good character.” 1 Cor. 15:33*
  - d. Stop and really listen to yourself sometime in your pity party — are you really making sense, spiritually?
3. Envy of what God has given others **Numbers 12: 1-16**
  - a. Joshua challenges prophets raised up by God because of who gets the credit. **Numbers 11: 26-29**
  - b. Miriam (listed first because source of discontent)/Aaron question Moses’ choice/leadership **Numbers 12: 1-2**
  - c. *“Master,” said John, “we saw a man driving out demons in your name and we tried to stop him, because he is not one of us.” “Do not stop him,” Jesus said, “for whoever is not against you is for you.” Luke 9:49-50*
  - d. Challenge seeds of cynicism and complaint which the Deceiver loves to sow in our hearts against each other
4. Fear of the unknown
  - a. Israel wanted the promise land but not the risk of trust in God to accomplish it, and so forfeited his blessing **Numbers 14: 26-34**
  - b. What fear generated grumbling is keeping you from experiencing God’s blessing in your life?

***God’s mercy and grace in the midst of our stubborn and ungrateful response***

He deals with us in undeserved forgiveness because he is faithful to his promise

1. When God could have wiped out the nation of Israel for their ingrate response, he forgives in view of his promise
  - a. **Numbers 14: 17-20**
  - b. **Jeremiah 31: 31-34**
2. God’s view of us always is through his promise consummated in Jesus’ sacrifice for us

For those doing the heavy lifting of leading God’s people to follow God’s lead, he gives renewed hope/strength

1. By raising up helpers around them **Numbers 14: 6-9**
2. By miraculously displaying his power to affirm their efforts – so watch and pray for it **Numbers 12: 4-13**

God will redeem the hearts and attitude to be a holy people for him and his kingdom

1. *"He will . . . turn the hearts of the fathers back to the children, and the disobedient to the attitude of the righteous, so as to make ready a people prepared for the Lord."* **Luke 1:17**
2. **Illus.: Forgive Me When I Whine**

### Not a discouraging word

Out West, a cowboy was driving down a dirt road, his dog riding in back of the pickup truck, his faithful horse in the trailer behind. He failed to negotiate a curve and had a terrible accident. Sometime later, a highway patrol officer came on the scene. An animal lover, he saw the horse first. Realizing the serious nature of its injuries, he drew his service revolver and put the animal out of his misery. He walked around the accident and found the dog, also hurt critically. He couldn't bear to hear it whine in pain, so he ended the dog's suffering as well. Finally he located the cowboy --who suffered multiple fractures--off in the weeds. "Hey, are you okay?" the cop asked. The cowboy took one look at the smoking revolver in the trooper's hand and quickly replied, "Never felt better!"

### On Faith and Contentment

To one who has faith, no explanation is necessary. To one without faith, no explanation is possible. **Thomas Aquinas**

### On Discontentment

"The person with the discontented heart has the attitude that everything he does for God is too much, and everything God does for him is too little." **Don Kistler, Tabletalk (9-18-01), p.15**

### Environmental Influence

A mother took her young son shopping. After a day in the stores, a clerk handed the little boy a lollipop. "What do you say?" the mother said to the boy, to which he replied, "Charge it!" **Courier-Journal Sunday Magazine.**

### Forgive Me When I Whine

Today upon a bus, I saw a lovely maid with golden hair; I envied her -- she seemed so gay, and how, I wished I were so fair; When suddenly she rose to leave, I saw her hobble down the aisle; she had one foot and wore a crutch, but as she passed, a smile. Oh God, forgive me when I whine, I have two feet -- the world is mine.

And when I stopped to buy some sweets, the lad who served me had such charm; he seemed to radiate good cheer, his manner was so kind and warm; I said, "It's nice to deal with you, such courtesy I seldom find"; he turned and said, "Oh, thank you sir." And then I saw that he was blind. Oh, God, forgive me when I whine, I have two eyes, the world is mine.

Then, when walking down the street, I saw a child with eyes of blue; he stood and watched the others play, it seemed he knew not what to do; I stopped a moment, then I said, "Why don't you join the others, dear?" He looked ahead without a word, and then I knew he could not hear. Oh God, forgive me when I whine, I have two ears, the world is mine.

With feet to take me where I'd go; with eyes to see the sunsets glow, with ears to hear what I would know. I am blessed indeed. The world is mine; oh, God, forgive me when I whine.

### **Numbers 11: 10-15**

<sup>10</sup>Moses heard the people of every family wailing, each at the entrance to his tent. The LORD became exceedingly angry, and Moses was troubled. <sup>11</sup>He asked the LORD, "Why have you brought this trouble on your servant? What have I done to displease you that you put the burden of all these people on me? <sup>12</sup>Did I conceive all these people? Did I give them birth? Why do you tell me to carry them in my arms, as a nurse carries an infant, to the land you promised on oath to their forefathers? <sup>13</sup>Where can I get meat for all these people? They keep wailing to me, 'Give us meat to eat!' <sup>14</sup>I cannot carry all these people by myself; the burden is too heavy for me. <sup>15</sup>If this is how you are going to treat me, put me to death right now--if I have found favor in your eyes--and do not let me face my own ruin."

### **Numbers 11: 4-6**

<sup>4</sup>The rabble with them began to crave other food, and again the Israelites started wailing and said, "If only we had meat to eat! <sup>5</sup>We remember the fish we ate in Egypt at no cost--also the cucumbers, melons, leeks, onions and garlic. <sup>6</sup>But now we have lost our appetite; we never see anything but this manna!"

### **Numbers 11: 26-29**

<sup>26</sup>However, two men, whose names were Eldad and Medad, had remained in the camp. They were listed among the elders, but did not go out to the Tent. Yet the Spirit also rested on them, and they prophesied in the camp. <sup>27</sup>A young man ran and told Moses, "Eldad and Medad are prophesying in the camp." <sup>28</sup>Joshua son of Nun, who had been Moses' aide since youth, spoke up and said, "Moses, my lord, stop them!" <sup>29</sup>But Moses replied, "Are you jealous for my sake? I wish that all the LORD's people were prophets and that the LORD would put his Spirit on them!"

### **Numbers 12: 1-2**

<sup>1</sup>Miriam and Aaron began to talk against Moses because of his Cushite wife, for he had married a Cushite. <sup>2</sup>"Has the LORD spoken only through Moses?" they asked. "Hasn't he also spoken through us?" And the LORD heard this.

### **Numbers 14: 26-34**

<sup>26</sup>The LORD said to Moses and Aaron: <sup>27</sup>"How long will this wicked community grumble against me? I have heard the complaints of these grumbling Israelites. <sup>28</sup>So tell them, 'As surely as I live, declares the LORD, I will do to you the very things I heard you say: <sup>29</sup>In this desert your bodies will fall--every one of you twenty years old or more who was counted in the census and who has grumbled against me. <sup>30</sup>Not one of you will enter the land I swore with uplifted hand to make your home, except Caleb son of Jephunneh and Joshua son of Nun. <sup>31</sup>As for your children that you said would be taken as plunder, I will bring them in to enjoy the land you have rejected. <sup>32</sup>But you--your bodies will fall in this desert. <sup>33</sup>Your children will be shepherds here for forty years, suffering for your unfaithfulness, until the last of your bodies lies in the desert. <sup>34</sup>For forty years--one year for each of the forty days you explored the land--you will suffer for your sins and know what it is like to have me against you.'

### **Numbers 14: 17-20**

<sup>17</sup>"Now may the Lord's strength be displayed, just as you have declared: <sup>18</sup>"The LORD is slow to anger, abounding in love and forgiving sin and rebellion. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation.' <sup>19</sup>In accordance with your great love, forgive the sin of these people, just as you have pardoned them from the time they left Egypt until now." <sup>20</sup>The LORD replied, "I have forgiven them, as you asked.

### **Jeremiah 31: 31-34**

<sup>31</sup>"The time is coming," declares the LORD, "when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. <sup>32</sup>It will not be like the covenant I made with their forefathers when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they broke my covenant, though I was a husband to them," declares the LORD. <sup>33</sup>"This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time," declares the LORD. "I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. <sup>34</sup>No longer will a man teach his neighbor, or a man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest," declares the LORD. "For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more."

### **Numbers 14: 6-9**

<sup>6</sup>Joshua son of Nun and Caleb son of Jephunneh, who were among those who had explored the land, tore their clothes <sup>7</sup>and said to the entire Israelite assembly, "The land we passed through and explored is exceedingly good. <sup>8</sup>If the LORD is pleased with us, he will lead us into that land, a land flowing with milk and honey, and will give it to us. <sup>9</sup>Only do not rebel against the LORD. And do not be afraid of the people of the land, because we will swallow them up. Their protection is gone, but the LORD is with us. Do not be afraid of them."

### **Numbers 12: 4-13**

<sup>4</sup>At once the LORD said to Moses, Aaron and Miriam, "Come out to the Tent of Meeting, all three of you." So the three of them came out. <sup>5</sup>Then the LORD came down in a pillar of cloud; he stood at the entrance to the Tent and summoned Aaron and Miriam. When both of them stepped forward, <sup>6</sup>he said, "Listen to my words: "When a prophet of the LORD is among you, I reveal myself to him in visions, I speak to him in dreams. <sup>7</sup>But this is not true of my servant Moses; he is faithful in all my house. <sup>8</sup>With him I speak face to face, clearly and not in riddles; he sees the form of the LORD. Why then were you not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?" <sup>9</sup>The anger of the LORD burned against them, and he left them. <sup>10</sup>When the cloud lifted from above the Tent, there stood Miriam--leprous, like snow. Aaron turned toward her and saw that she had leprosy; <sup>11</sup>and he said to Moses, "Please, my lord, do not hold against us the sin we have so foolishly committed. <sup>12</sup>Do not let her be like a stillborn infant coming from its mother's womb with its flesh half eaten away." <sup>13</sup>So Moses cried out to the LORD, "O God, please heal her!"