

Jude 16

16These are grumblers, complainers, walking according to their own lusts; and they mouth great swelling words, flattering people to gain advantage.

We see here that the false teachers were grumblers and complainers. Grumblers and complainers. That doesn't really sound that bad does it? I mean, how do we see the sin of grumbling and complaining? Does it strike you as a really big deal? Well, God struck the Israelites dead for this sin. So I think we would do well to take a look at what it is and avoid it like the plague.

Grumbler 1) to murmur, mutter, grumble, say anything against in a low tone

1a) of the cooing of doves

1b) of those who confer secretly together

1c) of those who discontentedly complain

The Septuagint was a document that was a translation of the Old Testament Hebrew into Greek. In that book this same Greek word was used to describe Israel's murmuring against God. If you read Exodus and Numbers you will notice this is the 7th of at least 9 times that the Israelites complained.

Numbers 14:27,29 20Then the Lord said: "I have pardoned, according to your word; 21but truly, as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord—22because all these men who have seen My glory and the signs which I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, **and have put Me to the test now these ten times, and have not heeded My voice**, 23they certainly shall not see the land of which I swore to their fathers, nor shall any of those who rejected Me see it. 24But My servant Caleb, because he has a different spirit in him and **has followed Me fully**, I will bring into the land where he went, and his descendants shall inherit it. 25Now the Amalekites and the Canaanites dwell in the valley; tomorrow turn and move out into the wilderness by the Way of the Red Sea."

26And the Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying, 27“How long shall I bear with this evil congregation **who complain against Me?** I have heard the **complaints** which the children of Israel make against Me. 28Say to them, ‘As I live,’ says the Lord, ‘just as you have spoken in My hearing, so I will do to you: 29The carcasses of you who have **complained** against Me shall fall in this wilderness, all of you who were numbered, according to your entire number, from twenty years old and above.

The Israelites at one point said sarcastically that “Because there were no graves in Egypt have you taken us to die in the Wilderness.” So here God says, OK. You complain that I have taken you out to die in the wilderness. So be it. You WILL die in the wilderness.

30Except for Caleb the son of Jephunneh and Joshua the son of Nun, you shall by no means enter the land which I swore I would make you dwell in. 31But your little ones, whom you said would be victims, I will bring in, and they shall know the land which you have despised. 32But as for you, your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness. 33And your sons shall be shepherds in the wilderness forty years, and bear the brunt of your infidelity, until your carcasses are consumed in the wilderness. 34According to the number of the days in which you spied out the land, forty days, for each day you shall bear your guilt one year, namely forty years, and you shall know My rejection. 35I the Lord have spoken this. I will surely do so to all this evil congregation who are gathered together against Me. In this wilderness they shall be consumed, and there they shall die.”

Remember the stories about the Israelites going through the desert. They would bitterly complain against God. They would speak of Him as if God did not care about them, as if God had no intention of meeting their needs, as if God were a hard God who had no love for His Children. And they did

this every time they hit a situation in their journey that they didn't like.

At the same time we see men all through scripture who ask God for the things they need. Sometimes they appear to be complaining. Like Elijah's quote insinuating that God might as well kill him before Jezebel does. Yet God responds very positively. Scripture tells in Phil 4:19 But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

Well then, what is the difference between this deadly sin of complaining and that of asking God for what we need?

Ps 106 gives us some more insight. It is speaking of the incidents of the Israelites complaining and it tells us more.

Ps 106:24-25 24 Then **they despised the pleasant land;**
They **did not believe His word,**

25 **But complained in their tents,**
And **did not heed the voice of the Lord.**

26 Therefore He raised His hand in an oath against them,
To overthrow them in the wilderness,

27 To overthrow their descendants among the nations,
And to scatter them in the lands.

Those who God was angry with simply would not believe Him.

They would not believe that He would provide for them.

They would not believe He had something good in mind for them. They would not trust in His provisions. They found disfavor with the things that God had given them. And at the end of the day, they would not believe what God said.

They wouldn't believe His words and they wouldn't trust His character, so naturally they wouldn't heed His voice. They would not obey God's directions.

You see, without faith it is impossible to please God. And the grumblers root problem was that they had no faith in God.

Now let's apply that to us this morning. How do we view God?

Do you believe He is the kind of God who will provide for you?

Do you believe He is the kind of God who is already providing for you? What do you think of the provisions He has already

given you? Do you despise them or are you thankful for them? Think about it. How do you view your circumstances? As hard as they may be, do you trust underneath it all that God loves you and will give you exactly what you need when you need it? Or do you despise God for not supplying something closer to what you would prefer? How about our husbands and wives and parents and children? How about our church family? Do we thank God because He knew what we needed and would do us the most good, or do we despise what we have because God should have given us something we'd like better.

It all comes down to faith. Do you trust the character of God and do you believe what He says? Grumbling is evidence of the opposite. Grumbling is evidence that we despise God and think that He should have given us the position of God.

Those who have faith in God in scripture receive a different treatment from God, even when they appear to complain because there is a difference. With them, it is a conversation held in a faithful relationship with God. They trust God. And they are opening up their souls to God. They can be real, even with their faults. Even when they may voice their displeasure with their circumstances, they do it knowing they are inviting God's correction. And when God corrects them for wrong attitudes or wrong expectations, they will accept that rebuke and change. Faith actually allows us to be very honest, even with our own sinfulness, because at the end of the day we trust the character of God to take care of us. We know that confession of our sins is really nothing but blatant honesty about ourselves. And if we have faith, God will not punish us for that, but He will forgive us of our sins. He will shape us into what He wants us to be. We can ask God for what we want trusting that He will give us what is best for us. It is the polar opposite of the grumblers.

Now notice in the Psalms verse- they grumbled in their tents. They grumbled in the privacy of their homes, where the grumbling would have an audience and not be challenged.

They grumbled in such a way that it only fostered division and rebellion and dissatisfaction. Yet it did not allow others to bring correction and rebuke.

Here is another verse on grumbling that broadens the application.

James 5: 9 Do not **grumble against one another**, brethren, lest you be condemned. Behold, the Judge is standing at the door!

Not only should we not grumble against God, we should not grumble against one another. We should not discontentedly complain against our brothers and sisters. Look around you. You are surrounded by people who have flaws and weaknesses. Some are so obvious you'd wonder how the people who have them can't see them. And I'll tell you how. It is the same way that we can't see our own faults.

Our job as brothers and sisters is not to lie or pretend. We don't need to play some game that we are all perfect here. But what we need to do is minister the truth to each other in love. Sometimes that will light some fireworks. Well so what. If Christ thinks enough of our brothers and sisters that He shed His blood for them, aren't they worth a little of our discomfort? Discontentedly complaining about our brothers and sisters does no good. We might be somewhat correct in our evaluation of them, but it doesn't help them. It doesn't change anything. Our job is to minister to each other. And that is what we should be doing. Grumbling makes you part of the problem. Loving makes you part of the solution.

This week we would do well to ask God, please show me where I am grumbling. Please show me where I am dissatisfied with your provision. Please show me where I undermine others faith in You by the words I say. Please show me where, in reality, I don't believe what you say.

Also, show me where I am grumbling against my brothers and sisters. Please show me what I should not be doing and help me stop. And show me what I should be doing, and help me do it.

1 Cor 10:6 Now these things became our examples, to the intent that we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted. 7 And do not become idolaters as were some of them. As it is written, "The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play." 8 Nor let us commit sexual immorality, as some of them did, and in one day twenty-three thousand fell; 9 nor let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed by serpents; 10 **nor complain**, as some of them also complained, and were destroyed by the destroyer. 11 Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come.

Now- on to the complainers

Complainers- 1) complaining of one's lot, discontented

One who is perpetually discontent and dissatisfied

This word is made up of 2 words. One is for finding fault and the other is for one's part. So the complainer is basically dissatisfied with the lot in life that God has given him. Think back to Korah as a classic example of such a thing. He was discontent that he was not given Moses authority and position.

Now this Greek word for complainers is only used in Jude.

Grumbler and Complainer are very similar. We can apply the same test we used earlier. What do you think of your lot in life? Do you trust the God who placed you where you are. Can you trust Him even during the rough times. Never forget that He will reward his faithful ones. Remember Job. He wasn't perfect. He was real in his struggles to make sense of what was going on with him. But his bottom line was he didn't care if God was going to kill him, Job would trust God. God eventually corrected Job. He basically told Job that there were places where Job didn't know what he was talking about. But in the end, look what happened. He

got double back for everything that he owned, except for his children. And the only reason for that is that Job's children were going to be with him in eternity. So in essence, Job got back double of everything that he had.

That is typical of God deals with his faithful ones.

CJ Mahaney makes a point about complaining that I think is appropriate this morning. He is preaching it to pastors but I think it applies to all of us.

He says our primary way to weaken the sin of complaining is to cultivate gratitude for the many evidences of God's grace in your church. Paul could be grateful for the Philippian church because he perceived God's activity among them. The church, while impressive, was in need of adjustment. Pride and selfish ambition were threatening to undermine its unity. Two church members were in conflict with each other. Yet Paul was more aware of God's grace than of their deficiencies.

He goes on to say

You will find a direct correlation. Where you lack joy, complaining has replaced gratitude. When you are discouraged, you are more aware of your church's deficiencies than of evidences of God's grace. If that is you, gospel informed gratitude will alter your soul and change your pastoral ministry dramatically.

This really spoke to me and I hope it will minister to you equally. We are all responsible to cultivate gratitude by focusing our thinking toward God's goodness.

Now let's go a little farther in the text.

walking according to their own lusts

You see this is the reason for the false teacher's grumbling and complaining. Their faithless way of life is producing it. Here is what they live for- their own lusts, their own strong desires. They are victims to their feelings. They are victims of their passions. And they don't care if they are in accordance with God's laws or opposing God's law. They will hide their true intentions from others, but they will follow their passions just the same. It may take a while for a

person's true walk to come out, but it always will. And when their walk is based on looking out for themselves and their selfish desires, they will voice their displeasure, complaining and grumbling against both God and believers who would stand between them and what they want.

But there is more to watch out for with these snakes. Watch out for manipulation. Because they are good at it.

and they mouth great swelling words, flattering people to gain advantage.

Great Swelling comes from the Greek word that means

1) overswollen 2) metaphorically immoderate, extravagant

Let me give you a simple illustration of what a great swelling

word would be. If you were to come up to me and tell me I was a great guitar player, those would be great swelling words

and flattering and the first thing I would think would be, what

are you trying to get. Anyone who knows anything about

guitar playing knows that I am not overly skilled at that art.

Well the false teachers are very good at flattery. They say

things about you that you might wish are true in an effort to

get you on their hook. And if you are walking according to

your lusts, their flattery will find its mark. But if you are

walking according to the truth, you will quickly feel

uncomfortable. Humility is telling the truth about yourself.

True humility is true reality. And the most humble person is

the most real person. Humility is not thinking less of yourself

than what the truth warrants. Humility is thinking of yourself

exactly what the truth warrants. Humility cannot tolerate

flattery. It creates great discomfort.

The King James interprets this passage- "having men's persons in admiration because of advantage."

Young's literal says "giving admiration to persons for the sake of profit."

Watch out for teachers who only say positive things. Watch

out for teachers that never give admonitions to guard

ourselves against sin. And above all, watch out for teachers

that would lead you to believe that you are full of your own

goodness. If you believe their admiration of you, you will find

out eventually that they are using you for their own profit. If

talking to someone swells your heart with pride, watch out for that person. He or she is your enemy.

Listen to how Paul regarded the Philippians whom he deeply loved.

Philippians 1:3 I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, 4 always in every prayer of mine making request for you all with joy, 5 for your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now, 6 being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ; 7 just as it is right for me to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart, inasmuch as both in my chains and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel, you all are partakers with me of grace. 8 For God is my witness, how greatly I long for you all with the affection of Jesus Christ. You won't find any flattery here. There is true gratitude. But if you follow his line of reasoning, he is not grateful for how wonderful the Philippians are. He is grateful for how wonderful the God of the Philippians is and how great a work He has had in them.

First Paul **thinks** of the Philippians but **thanks** God.

Then he points out great things about them that are **true**. He enjoys their fellowship in the gospel. But look what Paul is **confident** about. He is confident that God who **started** this work in them will **complete** it.

So Paul can admire the traits of the Philippians, but his admiration is couched in the work of God **ON** the Philippians. There is little here for human pride to grab on to. But there is much here for the true believer to rejoice in.

Isn't that how true fellowship is? Many of you have ministered to me. And I thank God for it. And I may tell you how much what you did meant to me. And we both understand that it is all because of God. And together we can thank Him, **I** as the **recipient** of that grace and **you** as the **vehicle** of that grace. And it is God who gets the glory. That is how it should be. And that is just the opposite of what we see in Jude.

This morning I think we do well to make this our desire.

May we never be found as grumblers, complainers, flatterers and users, but as simple faithful followers serving the Lord in gladness.