

The Sin of Murmuring

by A.W. Tozer

The sin of murmuring is a serious offense that shuts out the light of God from us, clouds over our skies, sours our hearts, and hinders God's presence in our midst.

Duration: 50:01

Scripture: Exodus 14:22

Topics: "Murmuring"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of learning from the lessons of the Old Testament. He highlights the example of the Israelites in the wilderness, who all experienced the same blessings and provisions from God. However, despite this, some of them still fell into sin and faced God's discipline. The preacher reminds the audience that as Christians, we should not feel entitled or think that the world owes us anything. Instead, we should recognize our debt to the world and strive to fulfill our responsibilities and obligations.

Transcript

I want to talk about the sin of murmuring, and in the sense of 1 Corinthians, these words, Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant. How that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and did all eat the same spiritual meat, and did all drink the same spiritual drink, for the drink of that spiritual lot that followed them, and that lot was Christ. But with many of them God was not well pleased, for they were overthrown in the wilderness.

Now, these things were our example to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted. Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them, as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and all that supplied. Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and selling one day three and twenty thousand.

Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed at the second. Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer. Now, all these things happened unto them for an example, and they were written for our admonition upon whom the ends of the world are come.

Therefore let him that thinketh he standeth, be lest he fall. For there hath no temptation taken you, but that there is a common demand that God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted about that you are

able, but will with the temptation also make away the stake that you may be able to bear. Now, in order that he might correct grave fault among the Corinthian Christians, Paul points to the example of Israel in the wilderness.

He said, quoting Paul, but quoting him in another version, that these things happened as a lesson for us and were written for our learning. The lesson is that there was in the Old Testament history a company of persons, and they all passed out of Egypt together, and they all marched under the clouds and fire together, and they were all baptized unto Moses, that is. When they passed through the sea, they committed themselves to Moses' leadership completely, and they all ate the same spiritual meat, which of course was manna.

And they all drank of the water from the rock. All, all, all, all the way down, it's all. They all drank, and they all ate, and they all marched, and they all passed.

Yet some of them died under God's displeasure, and their sins were, according to Paul, five. Lusting after forbidden evils, idolatry, fornication, tempting God, and murmuring. Now, the first four of other missions dealt with the first three particularly pretty thoroughly, and I want to talk about the last and fifth, not in order, not because I want to dodge the others, because you can't preach all the Bible at one sitting.

So I'm going to talk about murmuring, and I want to define the word murmur. A murmuring is a muttered complaint, a muttered complaint, it's grumbling. And here is something that the careless Christian may be very startled to learn, that murmuring in the scriptures by the Holy Spirit is classified along with fornication.

Murmuring and fornication are classed together as being equally sinful and equally punishable, and a muttered complaint is classed along with idolatry. We raise our vows in horror at anyone who would kneel to an idol, but we turn and mutter our complaints and grieve the Holy Ghost as much as if we've been kneeling to an idol. And then the Holy Spirit makes grumbling to go along with tempting God, whatever that might be.

They tempted God a number of times when they wanted to go back, and they accused God of not being on their side because they said we'd have fared better back in Egypt, and Paul called that tempting God. And we wouldn't do that out loud, but grumbling, muttering our complaints is the same as tempting God. Now, could this be the reason, brethren, for some Christians who started out well and who had such rich experiences are now spiritually frustrated? They cease to grow, and their prayer isn't as sweet as it used to be, and there is a sense of God's displeasure, and they don't know what it is.

And when they hear a bone-scraping sermon about sin, they go to the altar and they search their hearts and their lives to discover if there's any sin there, and they can't find any, as they think. But it's there, nevertheless, but they can't find it. They look for covetousness, and they say, Well, I'm a generous giver, and the Spirit doesn't convict them of covetousness.

They're not convicted of idolatry, and they're not convicted of dishonesty or lying. These are the sins people usually say are real sins, and they haven't been called to go to India and refused to go. They can't locate anything there, and they know they haven't been guilty of uncleanness or fleshly vice of any sort, and yet they've cooled off and they cease to grow.

They pray, but they don't grow. They pray, but there's a sense of God's displeasure on them. I wonder if it could be that they have completely overlooked that they have cultivated a habit of mind which is

displeasing to the Holy Ghost, a dispositional flaw which displeases God, a weakness of character that's just as sinful and just as punishable as covetousness, and that's just as sinful and just as punishable as lying.

We Christians are slickies, you know, and smoothies, and we name certain sins and write those sins like hobby horses. Then, if we find we're not guilty of them, well, we say we're not guilty of any. But why is it that heavens are far away and earth is so very near? Why is it that prayer is such a burden, and the things of God are dry? Why is it that we get bored with God, and bored with church, and with each other? Well, it could be.

I don't say it is, I'm just wanting to probe around a little. It could be that we're guilty of this sin of muttering our complaints, of grumbling, of murmuring, and that it is this that shuts out the light of God from us, and clouds over our skies, sours our hearts, and hinders God's presence in our midst. Now, my friends, I want to talk a little about why the sin of grumbling or murmuring is so bad.

Why is it so bad? Why is it such an evil? Well, at the root of murmuring or grumbling is the unexpressed assumption that we fallen men and women are worthy, and of course that's self-righteousness. As soon as you think you're worthy of God's attention, you're self-righteous, and self-righteousness was the sin of the Pharisees. At the root of this is the unexpressed assumption that we are important and ought to have some privileges, and of course that's pride, that we are privileged persons and that's arrogance, that God owes us something, and of course God owes us nothing at all.

People, when something goes bad with them, they say, oh God what did I ever do? Why did you do this to me? Well, that's grumbling and muttering our complaints against God, and we're completely upside down. We're forgetting that everything God does is done in grace. You know there isn't anything God does for us that isn't done in grace.

We don't deserve anything. If you plant a crop and it grows, don't think you've deserved it. That's been the goodness of God to thee, and if you're in reasonably good health, that's the grace of God.

Everything springs out of the grace of God and the mercy of God. We don't deserve anything at all. We fallen creatures don't deserve anything but death, and so when we imagine that God owes us something, we're completely upside down.

And murmuring is saying tacitly, if not overtly, that God owes us something and hasn't paid up. Well, God owes us nothing at all, and everything he gives us is in grace. Everything he gave back under the law was in grace.

The idea that people in the Old Testament are converted or saved by keeping the law, and people in the New Testament are saved by grace, is all upside down. God never saved anybody by keeping the law, never since the world began. And God never gave anybody anything he deserved.

All this Goldfield Bible doctrine about our rewards. I'm shrinking further and further away from it the older I get and the better I know God and the Bible, because I don't deserve any reward. I'll tell you this, maybe I've mentioned it before, but I have seriously given up the hope that I'll ever have any reward.

The idea of a big luminous hoop to put down over my ear, that won't bother me. That's figurative language, brethren, and I don't want you to take it literally. I mean, when the Bible talks about the clowns ruling over this city and that city, I couldn't rule over a peanut stand and make it go.

Why would God turn the city over to me to be mayor of it in the Millennium? Besides that, did you ever stop to think all the people that are redeemed, a multitude that no man can number, there wouldn't be cities enough to go around, particularly if some people were mayor over five of them. God doesn't owe you anything, and if you will live five minutes, God didn't owe you that five minutes. Whatever you have, it's the grace of God, it's the mercy of God that's given to you.

And then the idea that this murmuring has underneath it the unexpressed assumption that the world owes us something, and the world doesn't owe you anything. What does the world owe you? When you came into the world, you'd already used up everything the world owed you. They, in fact, knew you were coming somehow, and when you got here, the world already had given you more than you deserved.

They had the last and food for you, and nobody owed you that, but they had it all ready for you. And for the first 15 to 18 years of your life, you don't pay one dime to the world. The world gives you everything.

When you go to school, somebody else built the school, you didn't. You walk on the sidewalk, you didn't lay the sidewalk, and you go to a park and sit down and have your lunch, somebody else keeps the park up, you don't. So everything you do, the world is giving it to you.

Now, why should you suddenly imagine the world owes you anything? You're a debt to the world up to your ears already, and when you get converted you go so deep in debt that you're like a minnow five miles down in the ocean. Paul said, I'm a debtor, I'm a debtor. Paul didn't say the world owes me something, he said I owe the world something, and he lived and died, but he didn't die until after he paid up.

No man has any right to die until he's paid up his debt to the world and put the world in debt to him. So that we're upside down, you see. I don't know why Christians manage at all to obey the laws of gravitation the way we walk upside down so much of the time.

We imagine that we're worthy and we aren't, and we imagine God owes us something and it's the other way around. We imagine the world owes us something and it's the other way around, according to Paul. We're upside down, and that's why we're murmuring.

Now, in order that we might have some little reasoning, you know, brethren, God did make your head. I used to say that people thought their heads were to hold up their hats, but they don't even wear hats. Even old boys with nothing on top of their head but skin, they don't wear hats.

So your head, God put it there. He put a brain in your head and meant you to use it. And some of us don't think so low.

We go so much on feeling and forget that the Bible was written to the human heart and to the human head, and everything your heart gets has to go through your head first, get to your heart. But when truth comes to your heart, it has to come through your head. Even Paul and Lois and Eunice and all the rest have to be taught things.

So I want to reason with you a little. Even God says, come now, let us reason together. So let's think about this and see if we can't cure you the habit of murmuring.

And that is, I can't cure you. I can give you the remedy, but you'll have to, under God's grace, cure yourself. But now I want to ask you, well, you've been grumbling a little about this or that, and you've been muttering your complaints, but of course you've kept it to yourself because you didn't want anybody to

know it.

But if you'd had your dessert, where would you be now? Now, that's addressed to everybody, everybody. If you'd had your dessert, if you'd received your dessert, where would you be now? Now, I don't want to say this, nor do I seem to be very humble, but I very well know that if justice alone had dealt with me, I'd have been in hell right now with Judas and Hitler and Bluebeard and all the rest. I'd have been down there with the rest of them.

Now, I say that seriously and honestly, and it is my sober judgment upon myself. I believe that I deserve to be in hell. Therefore, if I'm out of hell, instead of grumbling about anything, I ought to thank God till I die, that I'm not where I belong.

That is, I belong down there. That's that. And if you'd known me a few years back in these hills of Pennsylvania, I told some of the fellas we were out with the other day some of the things I did, and I didn't tell them the worst ones.

And the ones I told them about would have put me seven degrees down in hell, and the ones I didn't tell about would have doubled that. So what have I got to complain about or grumble about or murmur about? You know, when, if you wake up in the morning and you feel a little eroge in your head, you're inclined to grumble about it. But if you get badly injured or get some terrible disease and they take you to the hospital and you lie there on your back for six weeks, then when you get out of that hospital, it's just wonderful.

It's absolutely wonderful. And that home that you grumbled about while you were there is sweet to you. Ask any soldier that's been away anywhere.

Ask any soldier. One of my oldest sons, and I told you I had five sons in service, and my oldest son Raul, he's very much like me. He looks like me and has a pattern of mind like mine.

God help him, and be merciful to him. But he does, and he was very sharp. He went over to Italy and to North Africa and got shot and so on, and he wrote back and he said, You know, America is the most wonderful place in the world.

He said, The poorest thing in America is better than anything over here. Why? America is the most wonderful thing. I heard this told by a missionary years ago when China was still open.

A missionary who had been in China and he'd had a little girl born over there, maybe now she was six or eight years old, and he was on his way home. And he talked about America, America, always America. And she had, of course, grown up thinking America was just the vestibule of heaven.

You're hearing this missionary, your missionary father talk. He said they got on a boat somewhere out in the Pacific Isle way out there and started for the west coast, and it was a long, slow trip. And whenever they'd make a deportive call or see an island, she'd say, Daddy, is this America? Is this America? And he would say, No, honey, this isn't America yet.

Then he said one evening at sunset, when the lights were shining on the pillars of the golden gates, the shores of America came in sight and the people lined the rails, and the little girl stood beside him and said, Oh, Daddy, is this America? And he said, I don't know what happened to me, but I said, Yes, honey, this is America. And he said, I broke down and cried like a baby. Said, The most wonderful place in the world is America.

And so what have you got to complain about? You'd be in hell now if God hadn't kept you in America and been good to you. Well, all right, now, if God had treated you the way you've treated others, I want to ask where you'd be. Now, you're grumbling and complaining about little things, but if you got treated by God the way you've treated other people, if you'd been as severe with them as God has been as severe with you as you've been with other people, and it's as hard for you to please God as it is for other people to please you, where would you be now? Well, let me ask you, think that over, brother, before you start muttering your complaints the next time.

And then if there were no forgiveness with God, what did you have to look forward to? And I want to ask you. And yet you murmur, mum, hum, and grumble. And if the coffee isn't warm and hot, you know, and I've only had one hot cup since I've been here, but I have murmured, you know, I like it boiling hot.

And if there was no forgiveness with God, where did you be? A hole in the ground, that's all. Put a rock on you, and that'll be the end. But there's forgiveness with thee that thou mayest be feared.

And that God forgives human sin is one of the most speakably beautiful things that can be known in the world. That a good, holy God, whose heaven is holy, will yet take a sinner up to his kin in iniquity and forgive him and pull him up out of there and cleanse him and bless him and fill him and take him off to heaven. Now, you ask me what you have to grumble about, and yet you've been murmuring, some of you.

Now, I ask you, if Christ hadn't died for your sins and risen again, where could you hide your past? What could you do with yesterday? Yesterday would follow you around like a horse, ready to leap on you and devour you and curse you through eternity. But because Jesus died and rose again, our yesterdays pass away into God's forgetfulness. And we start with today.

Oh, he makes all things new. God is the maker of new things. So if God let you carry yesterday on your back, you'd die of hunger.

But the grace of God takes yesterday and rolls it down the mountain, deep into the fountain, and it's forgotten forever. Now, if Christ hadn't died for you, I say, how could you escape hell? And he did die for you. And brother, I'm telling you, he did die for you.

I don't know whether that man is still here. I guess he's gone home. But up at Delta Lake, I ran over time, but please pay no attention to it.

I got to watch you, and I know how much over time, and you don't need to know. But this man is a guard in a prison. And I said to Delta Lake, if we as Christians really knew what it was to be pardoned, just that alone would make us wildly happy.

Well, he took me to my room after work, just off the highway a little way. And on the way out, he said, you know, Brother Trozer, this man is a guard down at Utica Prison. He'd been there 20 years.

He said, Brother Trozer, you talked about pardoning a man, and I used the illustration of pardoning a man in prison. He said, you know that twice in my 20 years I've had the joy of taking a pardon to a man. He said, listen, I'll tell you this story.

And as we drove along, he told me this story. He said, some time ago, he said, I had under my chair in the prison a fellow by the name of Joe. He said, when Joe was 16 years old, he got out with a bad gang, and four of them, and they got into a fight and they killed a man.

He said they were all sentenced to the electric chair, and three of them died in the electric chair. But he said they pardoned Joe because he was extreme youth, not pardoned him. They chanced the sentence down to life in prison, a natural life, they call it.

And Joe had been serving 20 years of his term. He was now 36, still a young man. He went in there when he was 16.

Twenty years of his life he had spent in that prison. And they'd gotten together and decided he'd been a good prisoner, and he was only a boy when it happened, and the Governor pardoned him, signed the pardon, rolled it up, put a ribbon on it, and the warden called my friend in and said, Brother, take this to Joe down in cell so-and-so this Christmas Eve. He took the little note and went down and said, I never did it before, and I didn't know how to go about it.

So he said, Joe, better sit down on the bunk, I've something to tell you. He said, oh, it isn't my mother, is it? Nothing wrong with my mother, is it? Oh, no, it's all right, the mother's all right. He said, but better sit down.

The fellow sat down. He said, Joe, tomorrow morning at 7 o'clock these doors will swing out and they'll never swing shut on you again. You'll be a free man.

He said to him, now listen, God, don't kid me like this. This is Christmas Eve, this is no time to tease me. He said, you know better.

No, he said, it's a fact, here it is. The young man broke out in sweat, running down his face, and his face went snow-white, blanched white. He sat down in on the bunk and he said, you mean this is my pardon? This is my pardon? He said, yes, and for 30 minutes he was afraid to open it.

For 30 minutes he wouldn't open it, for he was afraid that somebody was fooling him. He couldn't believe it. At the end of 30 minutes he got control of himself and read it, and it was an official pardon signed by the Governor and sealed with the State of New York.

He said, the young fellow then began to laugh and cry and laugh and cry and laugh and cry, and he'd get up and pace back and forth and said, oh, I'm going home, I'm going home, I'm going home, I'm going home. He said, better sit down now, Joe, better lie down and get some rest. He said, I can rest.

And all night long, pace is held. Brother, we knew, we knew what hell was and how terrible it was to have the interdiction of God almighty against us forever, and then could know suddenly the beauty of being pardoned. It seems to me, I don't blame the man who said that.

Is it any wonder a man can say, oh, I'm going home, I'm going home? And yet you grumble, you murmur about things, and God says it's just as bad as fornication, and don't you see why now in the light of all this? Well, do you think Christ owed it to you to die for you? No, but he owed you absolutely nothing at all. But being in the form of God, he thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but he voided his glorious position there, and took upon him the form of a man. And that glorious form, and that light insufferable, and that heart-beaming blaze of majesty wherewith he was wanted heaven's high council table to sit in final unity.

He laid aside in here with us to be, forsook the course of everlasting day, and chose with us a darksome house of mortal clay. And here below in this house of mortal clay he lived his thirty-three happy holy years,

happy as but a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, caught between the joy of doing the will of God and the woe of sin that he knew he must carry to Calvary. And he died.

Now you think he owed that to you? What did you ever do? Every time you think of that, you ought to thank God for the least thing that you've got, and stop grumbling. Or like you've had a tough going, do you think you deserve any better going? Then now, compared with millions, I want to ask you what you've got to complain about. You know that there are whole nations under fed.

The missionaries from India tell us that there are people there, not ones and tens and hundreds and thousands, but millions of them there that are born hungry and die hungry, and never know what it is to lean back and say, I've had enough. Hungry all their lives. And you know that any small nation in Europe could live off of the garbage that Americans throw out.

No doubt about it. It's not funny, that's just reality. And yet you complain if your crop isn't quite as big as it was last year.

You complain about taxes. I confess I don't like taxes, because I see what taxes can do to a country. We can tax ourselves out of existence.

They did it back in history, and we can do it now. And if our income tax continues to increase to this proportion, it can upset us, our fiscal policy, so completely that America can go down under her own weight. So I'm worried about taxes, but I pay mine, and I have more or less after I've paid them than I did when I lived up here in the hills, before I paid them.

So I'm not complaining, I thank God. So rather, if things aren't quite as poor, suppose you do pay more. Imagine a ten cents for something you used to pay a penny for, twenty cents for something you used to pay a nickel for.

Where's a five-cent bowl of soup? You used to be able to get a five-cent bowl of soup down there. But I have the forty cents, so what's the difference, is you being crippled? Here I am, and Nathan makes fun of me, says I twist myself up like a pretzel when I preach. I haven't got the brain.

I meet some people, I feel like a fool. They're so smart compared with me. But I'm sane, and I have met people that weren't sane, and they're just as good as I am.

So ought not we to thank God that we're sane? And here you are, you walk reverently and respectfully around as some fellow's read a book or written one, and you're afraid to talk to him. He hasn't got any more brains than you have, and aren't you glad you have what you've got? We have a darling girl, what is her name, Lucetta. They named her after the father and their mother, Lucetta.

Bright as a tack, redhead. Oh, I guess she's thirteen now. But when she was about five, maybe seven, she had polio.

And that polio twisted that poor body of hers, and they've operated and operated and operated, but they still can't get her straightened out. But she's a happy little Christian, about thirteen. A few weeks ago they were going to take her away, for I don't know what number operation it would be.

And I said, are you going back for another operation? She said, yes, for another operation. She said, you know, if they keep cutting me up, they're going to have to hold me together with cellophane one of these

days, or with Scotch tape, she said, laughing about it. And they say in the hospital she's a beam of sunshine.

Well now, I haven't been crippled, nobody's ever stuck a knife in me, never, never. They said I had appendicitis and wanted to take it out, and I refused to let them, and stuck to my appendix, and it quit hurting. So some, oh, some time ago I saw the old doctor that said, what about it? Years ago you told me that I'd have to have my appendix out.

I said, what happened? He said, oh, your appendix dried up a good way years ago. Our old day. Well, nobody's ever, and I've never been knocked out of a swimming pool, and I'm sorry that I let him.

Oh, thank God, thank God. That sermon yesterday, give thanks to God. And then, think about your being permitted to serve God over here in the comfort of civilization, when these missionaries are called over there where there's no comfort at all.

My good friend Maxie, that I talked so much about, his little wife wrote back, and she said, you know the water over here, you have to strain it a number of times, filter it through a number of pieces of cloth, and it's still brown when you get it done. Then she said you boil it, and it still smells, or tastes like the dung smell. Well, now, I haven't had a drink like that since I've been on the ground, have you? Nothing like that.

The water here is clear. But just think how good God's been to you, and yet you're grumbling around about things. Some of you are sour over your failures.

Now, who's to blame for your failures? Nobody can cause you to fail except yourself, and if you're mad at anybody, you ought to be mad at yourself. And then, you don't like the way things are done. Whenever I hear a man talking about this not being fair, and that's not being fair, I know I'm not talking to a sanctified man.

Nobody's full of resentment if the Holy Ghost is living in his heart. You find out that the people that are doing anything are usually too busy to grumble about the way things are being done. Sometimes a person will get down on their knees and they'll pray a prayer, but I hope God answers.

A woman one time in our church, she got on her knees and she said, Oh, God casts a devil out of his church. And then she, after that, she moves away. You hear people say there's no love in this church, there's no spirituality in this church, there's no charity here, and for 20 years or 15, they'll go around grumbling that there's no charity.

He's been there quite a while. He doesn't like me. Never.

He doesn't like me at all, because I told him not. He couldn't forgive me for that. He's got a face like granite, and he sits right there and stares straight ahead through all service, and he still keeps coming.

I don't know why. If I hated anybody that bad, I wouldn't subject myself to the ordeal of having to look at him twice a week. But he does anyhow, and he looks and hates me thoroughly.

But he's getting sour and old, and it's only the very kindness of the people, that spirituality of the people he says aren't spiritual, that we didn't give him, we didn't put him on the skid years ago. Well, you say somebody's hindering you in your Christian life. It's your wife, or it's your husband, or it's somebody else.

Well, you grumble and murmur because somebody's hindering you in your Christian life. Well, now, do you know this? Nobody can hold back a Christian except the Christian gives him permission to do it. Now, listen to me, sister.

Your husband can't hold you back in your Christian life unless you weakly surrender and start having resentful feelings about him. Keep your eyes on Jesus Christ and everybody that's against you is top to bottom, and every obstacle in your way will be a step upward toward God. We make it out as if we had to have nice Christian homes in order to be good Christians.

Some of the best Christians I've ever met were the ones who suffered in the furnaces of their own homes, or they worked in factories where everybody around them was mean and nasty. Some fellows get into the service and backslide. Other fellows get into the military service and come back filled with the Holy Ghost.

We got a great big red-headed sweet by the name of Connie Erickson in our church. I saw I, when he stands up alongside of me, I look as if he's been cut off to me. And he went into the service rather a carnal Christian.

He was in there for a long time and came back out ablaze with the love of God, and he's been that way ever since he came back, and he's one of our finest young men. We had another boy by the name of Jones, Tommy Jones. He went into the service during the Second World War, and he was a very ordinary Christian.

He'd smile if he heard me say this. He'd admit it's true, he's a very ordinary Christian. But while he was in the service, he got blessed and called to the mission field.

When he came back, he went straight to school, and he's now in the Philippine Isles. My brethren, you don't have to let things hold you back. And so if you're grumbling about things holding you back, you're just all mixed up.

Nothing can hold a Christian back until he says to the devil, All right, devil, I surrender. As soon as he surrenders, then of course the devil will block his path. But there aren't enough devils to go around to keep the Christians back.

No, your mother-in-law can't help you, other than that she can't hinder you. And she's in your way because you've let her get in your way. But you say, But I told you, you don't know my mother-in-law.

And I don't particularly want to, but I'll say this to you, sir. If you're letting her stand in your way and then grumbling about it, you ought to go to the nearest altar and ask. And you know I've got something to tell you.

If you get right with God yourself and get cleansed and soothed yourself, the old lady may be better looking than she is now. She may look mighty nice to you the next time you see her. I just thought I'd throw that in.

But anyhow, the muttered complaint, that's the sin. That's the sin. Fornication, sin, yes, but so is grumbling.

Idolatry, sin, yes, but so is the muttered complaint. It sours you and constricts you and shrivels you and dims the light in your heart and brings God's judgment at last if you don't look out. Because God isn't going

to take any lemons to heaven, not going to take any sour people to heaven.

Without holiness, no man will see the Lord. So you'd better take this seriously, my friend. I'm not going to give an altar call, but you'd better take it seriously.

And if you've been a complaining, muttering Christian, you'd better do something about it right now. I want to talk about the sin of murmuring, and in the tense of 1 Corinthians, these words, "Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and did all eat the same spiritual meat, and did all drink the same spiritual drink, for the drink of that spiritual lot that followed them, that lot was Christ. But with many of them God was not well pleased, for they were overthrown in the wilderness.' Now, these things were our example to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted.

Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them, as it is written, the people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to pray. Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand. Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of service.

Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer. Now, all these things happened unto them for an example, and they were written for our admonition upon whom the ends of the world are come. Therefore, let him that thinketh he standeth, a heedless because there hath no temptation taken you, but that there is a common demand that God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted, about that you are able.

But willful is the temptation also, make aware of the state that you may be able to bear it. Now, in order that he might correct grave fault among the Corinthian Christians, Paul points to the example of Israel in the wilderness. And he said, quoting Paul, but quoting him in another version, these things happened as a lesson for us, and were written for our learning.

Now, the lesson is that there was in the Old Testament history a company of persons, and they all passed out of Egypt together, and they all marched under the cloud and fire together, and they were all baptized unto Moses, that is, when they fastened the sea, they committed themselves to Moses' leadership completely. And they all ate the same spiritual meat, which of course was manna, and they all drank of the water from the rock. All, all, all, all the way down, it's all.

They all drank, and they all ate, and they all marched, and they all passed. Yet, some of them died under God's displeasure, and their sins were, according to Paul here, five. Lusting after forbidden evils, idolatry, fornication, tempting God, and murmuring.

Now, the first four our brother Mason has dealt with, the first three particularly, pretty thoroughly. And I want to talk about the last and fifth, not in order, not because I want to doubt the others, but because you can't preach all the Bible at one sitting. So, I'm going to talk about murmuring, and I want to define the word murmur.

A murmuring is a muttered complaint, a muttered complaint. It's grumbling. And here is something that the careless Christian may be very startled to learn, that murmuring in the scriptures by the Holy Spirit is classified along with fornication.

Murmuring and fornication are classed together as being equally sinful and equally punishable, and a muttered complaint is classed along with idolatry. We raise our vows in horror at anyone who would kneel to an idol, but we turn and mutter our complaints and grieve the Holy Ghost as much as if we'd been kneeling to an idol. And then the Holy Spirit makes grumbling to go along with tempting God, whatever that might be.

They tempted God a number of times when they wanted to go back, and they accused God of not being on their side because they said we'd have fared better back in Egypt, and Paul called that tempting God. And we wouldn't do that out loud, but grumbling, muttering our complaints is the same as tempting God. Now, could this be the reason, brethren, why some Christians who started out well, and who had such rich experiences, are now spiritually frustrated? They've ceased to grow, and their prayer isn't as sweet as it used to be, and there is a sense of God-displeasure, and they don't know what it is.

And when they hear a bone-scraping sermon about sin, they go to the altar and they search their hearts and their lives to discover if there's any sin there, and they can't find any, they think. But it's there, nevertheless, but they can't find it. They look for covetousness, and they say, well, I'm a generous giver, and the Spirit doesn't convict them of covetousness, they're not convicted of idolatry, and they're not convicted of dishonesty or lying.

These are the sins people usually say are real sins, and they haven't been called to go to India and refused to go. They can't locate anything there, and they know they haven't been guilty of uncleanness or fleshly vice of any sort, and yet they've cooled off and they've ceased to grow. They pray, but they don't grow.

They pray, but there's a sense of God-displeasure on them. I wonder if it could be that they have completely overlooked that they have cultivated a habit of mind which is displeasing to the Holy Ghost, a dispositional flaw which displeases God, a weakness of character that's just as sinful and just as punishable as covetousness, and that's just as sinful and just as punishable as lying. We Christians are flickies, you know, and smoothies, and we name certain sins and write those sins like how they were.

Then if we find we're not guilty of them, then we say we're not guilty of any. But why is it that heavens are far away and earth is so very near? Why is it that prayer is such a burden and the things of God are dry? Why is it that we get bored with God and bored with church and with each other? Well, it could be, I don't say it is, I'm just wanting to probe around a little, it could be that we're guilty of this sin of muttering our complaints, of grumbling, of murmuring, and that it is this which shuts out the light of God from us and clouds over our skies, sours our hearts, and hinders God's presence in our midst. Now, my friends, I want to talk a little about why the sin of grumbling or murmuring is so bad.

Why is it so bad? Why is it such an evil? Well, at the root of murmuring or grumbling is the unexpressed assumption that we fallen men and women are worthy at that self-righteousness. As soon as you think you're worthy of God's attention, you're self-righteous, and self-righteousness was the sin of the Pharisees. At the root of this is the unexpressed assumption that we are in

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