

Grumbling and Complaining - Part 2

by Keith Green

Keith Green's sermon emphasizes the dangers of grumbling and complaining against God, highlighting the importance of faith, humility, and gratitude in our lives.

Duration: 31:09

Scripture: Numbers 11:4

Topics: "Grumbling and Complaining", "Trust in God's Provision"

Description

Keith Green addresses the dangers of grumbling and complaining among Christians, emphasizing that such attitudes reflect a lack of faith and trust in God. He draws parallels between the Israelites' desire to return to Egypt and modern believers' frustrations when faced with trials after accepting Christ. Green highlights God's patience and provision, as seen in the story of Moses and the quail, while warning against greed and ingratitude. He also discusses the jealousy that can arise among close friends and family when one is blessed, urging believers to remain humble and faithful. Ultimately, he calls for a deeper trust in God's promises and a rejection of the spirit of complaint.

Transcript

That's here in the desert instead of your own backyard. That's part of what I'm working on. And there's a whole thing about Christians.

They pray the sinner's prayer, which you can find in 3 Corinthians. And they go, Lord... The Old Testament is in Hezekiah. Lord, come into my heart.

Be my savior. Christian, instant Christian. Yes, I'm a Christian.

Three or four weeks later, the sun comes out. God, I thought there were blessings in this. I thought this would be a happy, joyful experience.

Peace that passes understanding. It's passing understanding. It's passing all notice.

I don't even see it. Where's my peace? I wasn't this trialed in the world, tested in the world. I want to go back to the world.

I want to go smoke some dope. I want to go back and have some fun when it wasn't so hard. And I've heard so many people say this to me.

It wasn't like this before I prayed to receive Jesus. You want to go back? These people, you're going to hear it chapter after chapter after chapter. I want to go back to Egypt.

I want to go back to Egypt. Boy, if I were Moses, I don't know where he got his patience. Think about Jesus.

The night before he dies on the cross, before he's delivered up, the disciples are really worried and grieved. I wasn't this trialed in the world, tested in the world. I want to go back to the world.

I want to go smoke some dope. I want to go back and have some fun when it wasn't so hard. And I've heard so many people say this to me.

It wasn't like this before I prayed to receive Jesus. You want to go back? These people, you're going to hear it chapter after chapter after chapter. I want to go back to Egypt.

I want to go back to Egypt. Boy, if I were Moses, I don't know where he got his patience. Think about Jesus.

The night before he dies on the cross, before he's delivered up, the disciples are really worried and grieved. They're really concerned. I'm the greatest in the kingdom.

Oh yeah, I'm the greatest in the kingdom. Now, if I would have been Jesus, I would have gone out and looked for 12 new disciples. Instead, he takes a towel in a basin of water and washes their feet and explains to them lovingly, patiently, this is not the way.

The Gentiles, they lord it over one another. They give commands to one another. But it's not so with you.

The greatest among you should be the greatest head servant of the rest. You want to be great? Get down low. Me, I would have said Peter, James, John, out, out, goodbye.

I've had it three years. I'm going to die tomorrow. Forget it.

Praise God for his patience. I wouldn't have given them meat to eat. God answers the prayer.

Be careful for how you pray. Now look at Moses. Moses is a man of faith here.

Moses is the greatest man in this time. And here's the man of faith. But Moses said, The people among whom I am are 600,000 on foot, yet thou hast said I will give them meat in order that they may eat for a whole month.

Should flocks and herds be slaughtered for them to be sufficient for them? Or should all the fish of the sea be gathered together for them to be sufficient for them? And the Lord said to Moses, Is the Lord's power limited or is the Lord's hand short? Now you shall see whether my word will come true or not for you or not. Okay, I said before 600,000 men. Now it's 600,000 people.

All right. Moses, the man of faith. Where are you going to get meat, Lord? I mean, you know, we don't have any restaurants out here.

There's no chains at McDonald's. Nothing. What are we going to do? A lot of faith Moses had.

Verse 24. So Moses went out and told the people the words of the Lord. Okay, we're going to pass over this.

Down to verse 31. He picks the 70 men out and there's not enough time to go over that. Verse 31.

Now we're going to go into part 2 of his prayer and how God answers it. And how the people respond to the answer. Now there went forth a wind from the Lord and it brought quail from the sea and let them fall beside the camp.

About a day's journey on this side and a day's journey on the other side. All around the camp. Now remember, 600,000 people.

That's like Fort Worth, Texas or something. I mean, there's a lot of people there. It would take you a day to walk through the camp.

Now the quail, the quail fell. A full day's journey on all sides around the camp. About two cubits deep on the surface of the ground.

A cubit is 18 inches. It was three feet deep full of birds. For a day's walk on the outskirts of the camp.

Quail city. Not to mention the other, you know, the other things that quail bring. It must have been quite an answer to prayer.

Alright, three feet deep on the surface of the ground. And the people, now look at the people. They've had manna until they can't stand it anymore.

And the people spent all day and all night and all the next day gathering the quail. He who gathered the least amount gathered ten homers. And on the side in your footnotes, you will see that one homer equals ten bushels.

He who gathered the least amount of quail gathered a hundred... Oh, I'm sorry, it's eleven bushels. A homer's eleven bushels. A hundred and ten bushels.

Oh, you know what a bushel basket is? Full of quail. You know, quail are only about this big. A hundred and ten... The person who gathered the least amount gathered a hundred and ten bushels.

Now here they have quail. They don't have to go out and gather. You know, they're going to fly away.

Meat. God's people. Flesh personified.

Now, verse thirty-three. While the meat was still between their teeth, before it was even chewed, the anger of the Lord was kindled against the people, and the Lord struck the people with a severe plague. Why? You're going to see in the next verse.

Verse thirty-four. So the name of that place was called Kibroth-Hadavah, because there they buried the people who had been greedy. And the name of the place actually means the graves of greediness.

The name of the place where they camped is called the graves of greediness. God sent a plague because, look, you asked for your meat. Now do you have to stay up all day, all night, and all the next day gathering it? Don't you trust me? Didn't you see what I just brought? No trust, no faith.

It's just like this. You're praying for money. Say you're praying for a hundred dollars to meet your expenses at school, and the Lord sends in three hundred dollars.

And you're going, wow, I don't have to work next month, or the month after. Now God brought it for one reason. To meet your need and to give you the blessing of sharing it with somebody else, or for something else.

But, if God tells you to put it in the bank and wait, that's fine. But most of the time, He doesn't say things like that. Most of the time He says, take what you need, buy the little thing you've been looking forward to getting, and give the rest to a ministry, or the poor, or something else.

Get rid of it while it's in your hands. A lot of times the Lord says this to me. God brought more than they'd ever need.

When He brings you more than you need, do you stick it in your pocket and go, now I've been praying for money so long, I don't even have to pray for money the next three weeks. Hallelujah! I can play basketball instead of praying now. Glory! Now I can, you know, read that novel I've been waiting to read, you know.

Instead of spending all those hours on my knees, praying for these funds to come in. I've got it. Uh-oh.

There's a little principle that the Lord has showed me. And that is, God sometimes stops writing the checks, so that you remember who writes them. God sometimes stops the funds coming in, so that you remember where they come from.

Now here, He gives them quail, an overabundance, in answer to their fleshy prayer. And then, the insult to injury of the people. No praise, no thanksgiving, no trust, no faith.

Agreed. And it was too much for God to handle. It was too much.

It wasn't that God didn't have enough patience, it was that, I'm answering your prayer, even the prayer of your flesh, and now you're being greedy? That was it. Many, many people died of a plague. Okay.

And we're going to very quickly cover chapter 12. Okay? This is called, The Complaint of... I can't think of a word here. I didn't write it down.

It's the complaint of those who are close to you. Of relatives, or friends. You can write it down any way you want to.

It's the complaint of acquaintances, and relatives, and people who are related to you, because God is blessing you, instead of them. And they're part of the same family. They're as good as you are.

They came from the same mother and father. They have the same training. It's jealousy of almost sibling, but it's even beyond that.

It can go for close friends, close brothers in the Lord, close sisters, mothers, children. It's like my mother always wanted to be a singer, and she was a singer with a Dorsey, and then she got married and had to give up her career. And so she has always driven me on, before I was a Christian, into a career of singing, because of lack of fulfillment of desire in her part to make it, and she wanted me to make it, so that she would feel that at least somebody made it when she wanted to make it.

And two, almost a jealousy of, you know, I was making it in the music business, and she couldn't because she had to raise a family. And in the Lord, it's the same thing. God puts a blessing upon you.

And the person you came into the ministry with, the person you came to school with, sees you getting raised up into this position, and people are saying, what a great Christian you are, and your friend is going, well, I led him to the Lord. I brought him to this school. How come he gets to be pancake monitor? You know what I'm talking about? Let's go through this quickly.

We only have a few minutes left. Then Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses because of the Cushite woman who he had married. Okay, they're just looking for an excuse.

Cushite woman was a non-Jew, whom, apparently, Moses was a praying man. I'm sure God gave him the go-ahead. But they were judging him, and they didn't care less.

They were just looking for an opportunity to judge by their next statement. And they said, has the Lord indeed spoken only through Moses? Has He not spoken through us as well? Look at the next three words. Well, one, two, three, four, five words.

And the Lord heard it. How come we can all be such dumbos sometimes to think the Lord's not listening to our complaints? I don't even know why God had to bother putting that in there, but it's so pertinent and it's so profound, those five words. Of course the Lord heard it.

The Lord's ears are everywhere. Nobody in their right mind that was in any religion, from Hinduism to Moslemism to any Eastern philosophy, of course God hears everything. He has the all-seeing ears.

Excuse me. The all-hearing ears, the all-seeing eyes. The Lord heard it.

Now, they were just using an excuse. You know, a lot of times people will not like the way my hair is combed because they're jealous. You know how when you don't like somebody and all of a sudden the way they crunch their granola in the morning gets to you? The way they're digging into their pancakes.

And all of a sudden they just look like barbarians to you. And it's not because they're doing anything wrong. It's because you're jealous.

Or bitter. Now look at verse 3. Now the man Moses was very humble. More than any man who was on the face of the earth.

Guess who wrote that sentence? You've got to be humble to be able to write that. And still let God, the head editor of the Bible, let it get in. He's the editor-in-chief, right? Moses comes with his manuscripts.

And God does not X that out. Yeah, you are the most humble guy in the world. Only the truest, only true humility could say, only Paul could say, I am boasting and it's not profitable but it's necessary.

I am an apostle and I've done this, this, this and this. Only true humility could ever give an account of itself for some good reason. Paul had to give an account of himself because the people were putting him down and there was nobody else to give Paul the credence and the credentials.

And Moses here had to put in, I was blameless in this thing. I was humble, I was not boasting, I was not being proud. In fact, I was the humblest guy that you ever met.

Now, sometimes we can have false humility and we can become proud of being humble. I was going to write a song once. Oh, I'm so proud of being humble.

That would make a great country song. Here he is, the humblest man in all the world, saying he's the humblest man in all the world and God says, yes, you are the humblest man in all the world. What a blessing.

I wish God would, you know, well, I'm glad he doesn't. When I say, well, I'm pretty getting humble, God goes, no, you're not. God says to Moses, yeah, you are.

Verse 4, And suddenly the Lord said to Moses and Aaron and to Miriam, You three come out to the tent of meeting. Now, this is just like a dad. You three kids, come here, I want to talk to you.

Right? Kids are all fighting amongst themselves. Kids, come here, daddy wants to talk to you. So the three of them came out.

You can see them, they're kind of going, Yeah, dad. Right? Then the Lord came down in a pillar of cloud and stood at the doorway of the tent and he came and he called Aaron and Miriam when they had both come forward. He said, How would you like for God himself to come down and speak in an audible voice in a visible cloud to take care of your sibling rivalries? You wouldn't have anybody to appeal to after that, would you? Well, I'm going to the pastor.

I'm going to the church board. You know, God comes down himself and takes care of it. He said, Hear now my words.

Is there a prophet among you? I, the Lord, shall make myself known to him in a vision. I shall speak with that prophet in a dream. Not so with my servant Moses.

In other words, he's going, Hey, look, do you respect the prophets? I'll speak to them in visions, dreams. Not with Moses. He is faithful in all my household.

With him I speak mouth to mouth, face to face. Can you imagine that? I don't appear in a dream. I don't speak in a vision.

Him and I just take a walk in the woods and we have a rap. We talk together. Even openly, not in dark sayings or parables.

I don't, you know, give him these riddles to figure out. And he beholds the form of the Lord. Why then were you not afraid to speak against my servant, against Moses? So the anger of the Lord burned against them and he departed.

And when the cloud had withdrawn from over the tent, Behold, Miriam was leprous, as white as snow. And Aaron turned toward his sister Miriam. And behold, she was a leper.

That's quite a spanking, isn't it? Then Aaron said to Moses, Oh, my Lord. I don't care who you married now. I beg you.

Do not account this sin to us in which we have acted foolishly and in which we have sinned. Oh, do not let her be like one dead, whose flesh is half eaten away when he comes from his mother's womb. And Moses cried out to the Lord, saying, Oh, God, heal her, I pray.

But the Lord said to Moses, Now that is called a prayer for someone because of personal attachment. Heal her, Lord. She's my sister.

The Lord says, If her father had but spit in her face, Now let me explain that real quick. In Jewish law, If you had something against somebody, legally, Like if, there's a whole story in Deuteronomy. And you can find it in, you can look at it later.

You can find it, Deuteronomy 25.9. If a woman, husband died and he had no children, She would have to marry her brother, His brother. His brother would have to marry her so they could have children to raise up his name. You've all heard of that, right? But if he refused to marry her, she could go to the elders of the city.

And if the elders of the city couldn't talk sense to him, She would go and take his sandal away, And spit in his face. And it was Jewish reproach. That's why they all spat in the face of Jesus.

Behold, they cursed and mocked and spat at me. Says in Isaiah 53. Okay, so it says, If her father had but spit in her face, why would her father spit in her face? One, for fornication or adultery.

Two, because of disobedience. In fact, under Jewish law, if a child was disobedient, And was of the age of accountability, after 13, They could stone him to death outside the camp, If the parents brought him before the elders. So if her father had even just spit in her face, Would she not bear her shame for seven days? Let her at least be shut up for seven days outside the camp, And afterwards she may be received again.

So Mariam was shut up outside the camp for seven days. The people did not move on until Mariam was received again. Afterwards, however, the people moved out from Hazereth, And camped in the wilderness of Paran.

Okay, these are two areas. One, the first one we covered was the complaint of the flesh. The next one is the complaint of closeness.

The complaint or jealousy of closeness. Jealousy of closeness. Somebody, a close relative, a close friend, A close brother or sister that you're jealous of.

And that's a complaint. Bless Jesus. Is there any questions on this? So fully covered, no questions.

Yes, wait. Why was Mariam punished and not Aaron? Well, I don't know why, But I think Aaron was punished because he loved his sister, too. They were a close family.

And you saw that Aaron sought and went and made intercession for his sister. And two, because not only was it another person coming and judging Moses' authority, But it was his own sister and a woman. And she was showing no respect.

Doesn't God speak through me, too? So it was even more of her approach. That it was a woman who could not hold office at all coming and saying, I'm holy, too, Moses. I'm from the Moses family, too, you know.

Anyone else? Yes. Well, I don't know if we have time for that, But just, it was a Jewish custom given in the law For showing that you had righteously been offended. In other words, you were clean and pure.

And you were offended by someone who was not clean and pure. And so the way to show that is you spat in their face. It definitely is not the cleanest way of showing your displeasure with somebody.

I wouldn't suggest it. But it was given in Jewish law as a way for showing that you had been degraded And you had been put down by somebody. Anyone else? Okay.

In the next thing that we're going to cover, Which will be after a break, We're going to be covering the rebellion of people that are given a task. Okay? I guess, Lord Jesus, we just praise you For your Word, For your Spirit, And for the ability to believe all things. Because, God, you didn't tell us to believe without giving us the ability to believe.

And you don't command us to do anything without giving us the Spirit to make us able to do that command. We thank you, Lord, that if we don't do a command, it's not your fault. That the fault and the blame always rests with us, Lord, if we don't do something.

Because you've provided every opportunity for us to be obedient. Thank you, Jesus. Just open our minds and open your Word to our hearts.

In Jesus' name, Amen. There's a poem by the guy who wrote the book, Reese Howell's Intercessor. What's his name? Grubb.

It goes, To work and run the law commands, But gives me neither feet nor hands. But better news the gospel brings, It bids me fly and gives me wing. To work and run the law commands, And gives me neither feet nor hands.

But better news the gospel brings, It bids me fly and gives me wing. Glory to God. This subject, as I just said, Of murmuring, complaining and grumbling against the Lord, The reason it's so important is because when you murmur, complain and grumble, It's the ultimate proof that you don't have faith.

It's the exact opposite of faith. Complaining. Here's a good definition of unbelief.

Calling God a liar. Probably the most explicit, profound and disastrous definition for my life. Whenever I say God, I can't believe that.

When God told Moses, I will bring quail. And Moses said, but God, how? God said, is anything too hard for my power? Are you calling me a liar, Moses? Now, nobody in their right mind would turn to God and go, God, you're a liar. I mean, I even shivered just giving it as an example.

But we do it every time we complain. God! Or we don't believe we're calling him a liar. Okay.

Let's turn to chapter 13 of Numbers. The complaint of men who are given a task. Or you can also subtitle this, a bad report.

Summarizing up the last two areas. The complaint of the flesh, desires or appetite. One.

And two. The complaint of those who are close to you because you're being raised up. It's jealousy.

That complaint is called jealousy. Summing them up is that in our day and age, we have just as many appetites, if not more, things to have an appetite over. We have, you know, cosmic appetites now.

Modern disco appetites. You know, they didn't have to worry about the children of Israel discoing around the golden calf. They had their own demonic orgies out there.

And never have so many people been able to get so close as today. Through mass communication and mass transportation. And so the jealousy of today.

It's like the idols in those days were cats. The idols in these days are John Travolta and Paul Newman. And how men are jealous of these idols.

I've had Matthew Ward of the second chapter of Acts told me he got a letter from this guy. He's Christian. You know, I thought you were the best thing in Christian music until my girlfriend came and wanted to counsel with you at a second chapter of Acts concert.

Counsel, of course. You know, he goes, I don't even know what you're talking about. You know, some girl came up to him and says, Matthew, I love your singing.

You know, I'm really anointed. You know, whatever. So, boyfriend was jealous.

You know. Well, I'm a Christian too. Of course he is.

How many times do we try and find things to be jealous over? Okay. Chapter 14. I'm sorry.

Chapter 13. The Lord spoke to Moses saying, send out for yourself men so that they may spy out the land of Canaan, which I'm going to give to the sons of Israel. You shall send a man from each of their father's tribes, every one a leader among them.

This is called sending out the spies. And I'm telling you something. This is incredible.

These are not... He did not send flunkies. He sent the leaders of the tribes. These were well respected, lifted up, trained men of leadership.

Verse 3. So Moses sent them from the wilderness of Paran at the command of the Lord, all of them who were the heads of the sons of Israel. Pedigrees. And then they give their pedigree here.

All the way through verse 16. Verse 17. Moses sent them to spy out the land of Canaan.

He said, go up there to the Negev and then go up into the hill country. See what the land is like, whether the people who live in it are weak or strong, whether they are few or many. How is the land in which they live? Is it good or bad? How are the cities? Are they open or do they have walls around them, fortifications? How is the land? Is it fat or lean? Are there trees in it or not? Make an effort then to get some of the fruit of the land.

Now the time was the time of the first ripe grapes. So they went up and spied out the land. Verse 23.

And they came to the valley of Eshkol. And from there they cut down a branch with a single cluster of grapes and they carried it on a pole between two men. That was quite a cluster.

It shows you how big and fruitful the land was. With some of the pomegranates, the figs. And that place was called the Valley of Eshkol because of the cluster.

Eshkol means cluster in Hebrew. Which the sons of Israel cut down from there. When they returned from spying out the land at the end of 40 days, they proceeded to come to Moses and Aaron and to all the congregation of the sons of Israel in the wilderness of Paran and Kadesh.

And they brought back word to them and all the congregation and showed them the fruit of the land. Thus they told them and said, We went into the land where you sent us and it certainly does flow with milk and honey and this is its fruit. Nevertheless, the people who live in the land are strong.

The cities are fortified and very large. And moreover, we saw the descendants of Anak there. Amalek is living in the land.

And the Hittites, Jebusites, Amorites, so on and so forth. Verse 30. Now, it tells you that the people were excited by this next sentence.

And Caleb quieted the people. Before Moses. They were ranting and raving.

Oh, no! Enemies! Hardships! Tests! Trials! Obstacles! This is the land of milk and honey, not the roadblocks and trials. No, it's the land of milk and honey, roadblocks and trials. Welcome to the ministry.

I wanted to do an album called Welcome to the Ministry. The verse of the song, the title song was going to be, Well, you've just gotten filled with the spirit. And your wife and you were getting along.

And 40 people show up at the door and your refrigerator is empty. And they want to be fed. Welcome to the ministry.

You know? And all kinds of problems that come up. That's probably my favorite sentence. My favorite comeback line.

When somebody comes up to me and they go, I just counseled this person and they wouldn't take the counsel. And my mother just called me and told me she thought I'm part of George Jones cult. You know? Jim Jones cult.

And the car's got a flat tire outside. And we don't have enough hamburger for dinner tonight. And I go, Welcome to the ministry.

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