

Complaining

by Rafael Manzaneras

The sermon addresses the sin of complaining and encourages believers to embrace thankfulness and faith instead.

Duration: 43:17

Scripture: Luke 15:1

Topics: "Complaining"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker reflects on the Israelites' complaints after being delivered from slavery in Egypt. The speaker imagines God's thoughts during their complaints, emphasizing God's promise of good plans for Israel's future. The speaker references the parting of the Red Sea and compares it to the Israelites walking through an aquarium. The sermon also discusses the Israelites' lack of faith and gratitude, as they complain about their circumstances in the wilderness and express a desire to return to Egypt.

Transcript

It's a real pleasure today to have come do the lecture is Rafael Manzaneras from Spain. And come on up, Raph. So my name is Rafael Manzaneras, prepare to die.

So Raph's just going to share. And afterwards, we'll do it right after lectures today, and maybe we'll also do it Sunday night. Is anyone that's interested in going to Spain for next semester, then just immediately following, we'll just meet over here by going out that direction, for those of you that are interested in going to Spain.

So all right, it's good to have you. Thanks. Good morning.

Things in my work are going really good. I kept saying to the students, I don't know how you're going to beat this semester. And every semester, it just seems like it's just so good.

So the ones from last semester that are here, sorry guys, these guys beat you. No, I'm kidding. I'm kind of realizing that each semester is just different, different group of people, different personalities.

And it's just a blessing to me to be able to have some of you guys come over, and then other people that are coming from different parts of Europe. And I'm loving it. I'm loving what I'm doing, sharing at the Bible school as well with the church.

And it's just such a privilege, and we're just having a blast. So anyway, all that to say that it's great. So I wanted to share with you today, coming over here, I think I always agonize on what to share with you, because as we go through the scriptures in Mallorca, I always try to see, OK, what has the Lord been speaking to me that I could share with you guys that would not just be, so to speak, another Bible study? Because you guys get a lot of Bible studies throughout the week, you know? And so I think the Lord's put something on my heart.

So let's pray, and let's turn to Acts, I mean to Luke chapter 14, and that we're going to use that as a springboard. And let's pray. Father, I thank you so much that we get to know you, we get to walk with you, and we get to serve you.

And Father, it's such a privilege to look back on our lives and just see the wonderful things that you've done. You've been so faithful, you are so faithful, and Lord, strengthen us to know that you're going to be faithful forever. And Father, I pray that you would take this time that we spent together here and would just speak to us.

In the name of Jesus, we pray this, amen. So Luke chapter 14, no, it's Luke chapter 15. It happens, it begins in chapter 14.

It was one of the rulers of the Pharisees invited Jesus to eat on the Sabbath, and they watched him closely. That's chapter 14. And it's amazing.

I bet you no one regretted inviting Jesus more than this guy. I mean, we're talking about, we have chapter 14, chapter 15, chapter 16, chapter 17. It's all this meal.

And the Lord is just like he takes a machine gun, and he just starts going, boop, boop, boop, boop, boop, boop, boop, boop. And he just begins to shoot around. You know, he says, I mean, imagine, you invite someone to dinner, and the guy that's invited to dinner says, you know, when you invite people, can you invite those who won't invite you back? That way, you will have a reward in heaven.

And you can just, have you ever been in a conversation, and all of a sudden, it just kind of, everything is very light, and everyone's joking around, and all of a sudden, someone says something, and it's like you can cut the air? You're like, oh, no. Well, this is more or less what's going on here. And then you can kind of get the hint of the other guys kind of saying, yeah, when you invite, you better invite those that can't invite you back.

And he says, and when you're invited, don't choose the best seats. And you can imagine how those guys are just going to, boop. And everyone was had, even to the point where one of them just kind of jumps out and says, blessed are those, you know, the real super spiritual guy, blessed are those who will eat in the kingdom.

And the Lord Jesus, with his authority and his wisdom, just begins to pierce right through the intentions of the heart, and just begins to really rebuke. Imagine that, Jesus rebuking. But the Bible is clear that better is open rebuke than hidden love.

So Jesus wasn't the type to just kind of keep it quiet, but he did confront it with issues. Now, chapter 15, it says, then all the tax collectors and the sinners drew near to him to hear him. And the Pharisees and the scribes complained, saying, this man receives sinners and eats with them.

So he spoke this parable to them, saying, what man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he loses one of them, does not leave the 99 in the wilderness and go after the one which is lost until he find it? So first of all, we see the Pharisees in this passage. And you kind of, remember when Jesus said, beware to the disciples, beware of the 11 of the Pharisees. Well, this is one of the things that we need to beware with, as disciples of Jesus Christ.

Whenever we find ourselves following the Lord and he never warns us in vain. He never says anything in vain. Well, one of the things we need to watch out for is the 11 of the Pharisees.

And one of them in this context is what? Complaining. And the reason I'm sharing this with you guys is because I have found myself at times complaining and complaining and complaining. And thought I was being real spiritual in it until I realized that it was sin.

Just like any other sin. Complaining. It means to bewail or lament.

To give expression of sorrow or to sorrow. So, bewail or lament. And to give expression to sorrow.

You know, just kind of, I'm so sad. Now, those I can understand. This is the other definition that kind of got me a little bit.

To express dissatisfaction. I thought, whoa. That hits a little bit closer to home.

To express dissatisfaction. Now, who were the biggest complainers in the scriptures? What's that? The Israelites. That's right.

And I was just astounded by these guys. In Exodus, we have Moses to say, come on, come on guys. We're out of here.

Now, if you rewind a little bit, what have they been doing before that? Like Dave Shirley would say, they were making bricks and babies. But they weren't just making bricks and babies. They were in incredible slavery.

It says that they were crying out. I mean, that God heard their cry. I mean, they were building.

They were just being mistreated. They were in such misery that all they could do was just cry out to God. Oh God, can you please deliver us? Oh God, where's the God of Joseph? Where's the God of Jacob? Where's the God of Isaac? Where's the God of Abraham? Can you please deliver us? Are we really your people? And this went on for one year, right? Two? Ten? Wasn't it 430 years I think it is? 430 years of slavery.

Of misery being under a different nation and doing their purposes and their will for 430 years. But it says that their prayer reached the ears of God. It seems like, you know, they actually got there.

They got to the throne of grace. And as they were pouring out their hearts, it says, God said to Moses, you know, their prayer has come up to me. I've heard it.

And I'm going to raise you up to deliver them. And Moses shows up to them and says, hey guys, we're going to go. Who are you? Who's made you a ruler over us? So Moses gets scared and he flees to the wilderness.

And 40 years later, he comes back and he says, okay, now it's the time. Now, at first they had a bit difficult. Pharaoh really didn't want to let him go.

But then finally they made it out. And they made it out of Egypt to worship God. They're finally free.

Can you imagine the first morning, you don't have to go make bricks? You're like, yes. No bricks. You don't have to hide your baby out of fear that it's going to be put to death.

You know, the first night of freedom just must have been, you know, after they put the blood and just take off. And, you know, it's just a wonderful, wonderful. And, you know, you could have just seen them, you know, just kind of a bit fearful, but singing songs of praise.

I have decided to follow Jesus. You know, and they're just happy as can be. And all of a sudden they get to the Red Sea.

And it says that the army came behind them and the sea was in front of them. And it says, because there was no graves in Egypt, have you taken us away to die in the wilderness? Why have you so dealt with us to bring us out of Egypt? Isn't this not the word that we told you in Egypt saying, let us alone that we may serve the Egyptians? For it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians that we should die in the wilderness. Complaint number one.

Wouldn't have been better if we would have just stayed there. Now, I like to put myself in God's shoes. What would God have been thinking about this at the complaint? Can you imagine the thoughts, the verse, I know the plans that I have for you, O Israel.

They're good. But they're not evil to give you a future and a hope. You can just imagine God's heart kind of going.

Come on, guys. I just delivered you. Don't you think I'm going to finish what I started? So you guys know what happened.

That's a John Corson line. You know the story. He, Moses stretches out his thing and the sea just parts and they go right through.

Boom. And, you know, I like the Prince of Egypt movie. You've seen the Prince of Egypt.

Oh, man. The parting of the sea scene there is the best one. When you see a big fish right there.

Swimming by the walls, you know, and you just kind of think of the Israelites going. Oh, wow. It's kind of like walking through an aquarium.

You know, you're like, look at that one. Look at that. And they just walking through dry land.

Incredible deliverance. And as a matter of fact, if you keep reading the chapter after the deliverance, they wrote a whole chapter of, Oh, our God is a God of war. He's a great deliverer.

He is so strong. He is mighty. He's amazing.

And you would have thought that they would have never complained in their lives again. You would have thought that they would have said to themselves, Hey, man, we were scared that time. He delivered us.

He is able to. He delivered us in the past. He's able to deliver us in the present and He will deliver us in the future.

But no. Three days later. Three days.

There's no water. Where's the water, Moses? Exodus 15 verse 24. I thought I wrote it down, so we might as well turn there together.

Oh, verse 24. It says, And the people complained against Moses, saying, What shall we drink? You can just see the tension again. Okay, Moses.

What are we going to drink now? Chapter 16. Just a little bit later. Oh, that we had died by the hand of the Lord in Egypt, when we sat by the pots of meat and ate bread.

For you have brought us into the wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger. Numbers 11.4. Well, actually, even Numbers 11.4. Yeah, it says, First of all, they were complaining in Exodus 16 that didn't have meat. I mean that they didn't have anything to eat.

Then afterwards, what did the complaint turn into? It wasn't just the necessities. We're sick of this manna. We want meat.

And then afterwards, at Numbers 14, the what you may call it, the spies came back with the bad report. And the Israelites began to complain and say, turn to Numbers 14. It says, So all the congregation lifted up their voices and cried.

And the people wept that night. And all the children of Israel complained against Moses and Aaron. And the whole congregation said to them, If only we had died in the land of Egypt.

If only we had died in this wilderness. Why has the Lord brought us to this land to fall by the sword that our wives and our children should become victims? Why is it not better for us to return to Egypt? And Joshua gets up in the middle of this. And he says, Come on, guys.

There's great fruit over there. And the enemy, they're going to be our bread. And you know what they did? They wouldn't be encouraged.

They picked up stones to stone them. Now, what do you think the attitude of the Israelites should have been from the very beginning? Okay, I tell you what. God was... And we're going to get to this in a moment.

God was teaching them a lesson. God was teaching them a big lesson. And we're going to take a turn in a moment.

But what do you think the Israeli attitude should have been? Okay, we might have a bit of danger. But we're free. We might be a bit thirsty.

But we're free. We might be a bit hungry. But we're free.

We might not have an abundance. But we're free. They should have been like Braveheart.

You know, you might take away our lives. But you cannot take away our freedom. You know, I mean, these guys should have been like, Man, we just are free.

Those 400 years of misery are over. Now we're completely free. And what do you think the lesson was that God was trying to teach them in the wilderness? Do you remember? It's in Deuteronomy chapter 8. You can turn to it.

You can... It says how He tested you, the Israelites, and to cause you to know that man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord. Now we see Jesus in the wilderness. You see Him in the Mount of Temptation.

Not three days, not ten days without bread, but 40 days without bread. And having the power in Himself to turn it into bread, didn't, but submitted Himself to the Father. And you just think, that's what the Israelites should have been like.

And God was trying to teach them how to walk by faith and not by sight. Now all that to say that as pharisaical and as bad and as sinful as complaining is, what's the antidote to complaining? There's two. We're only going to touch one.

One is thankfulness, and the other one is faith. Unbelief will cause us to complain. And it's easy to think, it's easy to think that everything's okay when everything's okay.

But it's another thing to believe that everything's okay and live by every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord when everything is not okay. There's three kinds of, well, I said I was going to say something first and I forgot what it was. Anyway, there's three kinds of faith in the Bible.

Oh, that's what I was going to say. No, I want to back up to this. Sorry.

Complaining is, turn to 1 Corinthians chapter 10. It says, Moreover, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware that all our fathers were under the cloud, all passed through the sea, all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, all ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual rock that followed them, and the rock was Christ.

But with most of them, God was not well pleased, for their bodies were scattered in the wilderness. Now these things became our examples to the intent that we should not lust after evil things. So, okay.

First example that he shows is that we should not lust after evil things. So, sinful behavior. Lust after evil things.

As they also lusted. And do not become idolaters. Now we can see that.

That's quite bad. As there were some of them. As it is written, that people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play.

No, let us commit sexual immorality. Okay, we can see that's bad. As some of them did.

And in one day, 23,000 fell. No, let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted and were destroyed by the serpents. Nor complain, as some of them also complained and were destroyed by the destroyer.

Isn't that crazy? That complaining would be in that list? Anyway, and being in Mallorca, I must be honest that I found myself complaining about everything. And I was really challenged by the words of Moses to the people of Israel. He says, Your complaint is not against me, but against God.

And the Lord spoke to my heart this thing. When the Son of Man comes on the earth, will He find faith on the earth? I put that on my phone. Every time I turn on my phone, is when He comes, will He find faith on the earth? And then finally, I want to get to the last thing I wanted to say.

There's three kinds of faith in the Bible. And I really like the first two, but I wasn't so aware of the third type. Two are gifts.

One is one that we need to exercise ourselves. One is saving faith. Right? You ever wonder, you weren't a Christian, people could talk to you till you're blue in the face about the Lord, and you just could not believe it.

You're just like, that's rubbish. I just can't. I can't get my head around Jesus being God.

I just can't do it. I just can't do it. And then all of a sudden, you pray, and next thing you know, you have, you believe.

Why is it that I believe everything now? I don't have those doubts that I used to have. And it says, it says what? We're saved by grace, through faith, and that what? Not of yourselves. It is the gift of God.

Right? So that's not our faith. But then there's the second kind of faith, and this is the one I like. It's also a gift.

It's the kind of faith where, it's the gift of faith. Remember when Peter was walking, Peter and John were going to the hour of prayer, and they saw the paralyzed guy, and they looked at him, and they say, hey, silver and gold have I not, but what I do have, I give you, in the name of Jesus Christ, arise and walk. And then when they're given testimony of what happened, they say, hey, why do you look at us? Because, as if, because of our own godliness, this man was made well.

This man was made well, through faith, and the faith that comes through him. And that's what we see in 1 Corinthians chapter 12, where it says, to some is given, gifts of faith. That's how we get into situations, that sometimes we wonder, how did I get into this? You know, you ever kind of get into a situation, and it's a big step that you got to take, and it's a mountain, and you just kind of go, how am I ever going to do that? How am I going to go to this place, or how am I going to do that? And the next thing you know, you find yourself, you're doing it.

And you think to yourself, this is amazing. And then you look back, and you begin to panic. Kind of like Peter walking on water.

That's me going to Mallorca, you know, you just think to yourself, oh yeah, great. Loretta and I were like, yeah, yeah, if you could sum up the whole conference in one word, what would it be? Go. Okay, Loretta, yeah, that's right, that's my partner, you know, let's go.

Okay, we're going, we get to Mallorca, we're there one month, two months, three months, what are we doing here? How did we ever get here? You seem like you have no faith whatsoever. Whatever happened to that which I had? It was a gift of faith. But there's the third kind of faith that is no gift.

And I believe we need to exercise it ourselves. And it's the faith that I'm most interested in, actually, which is a trusting faith. A faith that believes God because of who He is.

And because He's been so faithful in the past, that like someone has said, I forgot who said it, His past faithfulness demands my present trust. He's worthy to be trusted. The Israelites should have known God's character by now, good enough to go through those things that they were going through.

I mean, it's easy for me to criticize them, but obviously we have our moments, don't we? Now, sometimes people will say, man, you have such great faith. Has anyone ever said that to you? That gets on my nerves. I was on a train from Austria to Germany, and someone came up and, you know, we have some people in the train with us, a lady and her daughter, and she said to me, you know, as I'm sharing the gospel with her, I said to her, you know, and the Lord is this, and the Lord is that, and this, and you know, you can know Him.

And she's like, oh man, you've got great faith. You've got tremendous faith, Rafael. And I'm thinking to myself, you know, I know me.

I said, you know, I don't have great faith. I said, it's not great faith in a little God. It's very little faith in a big God.

You know, Jesus said, if you have faith like a mustard seed, it's kind of interesting, huh? He didn't say a big faith, but what matters is that it's a living faith. If you have faith like a mustard seed. And I said to this lady, when she said to me, you have such great faith, I said, you know, you're on holiday with your daughter, right? And she said, yeah.

I said, when you asked her to go on holiday with you, did you tell her, okay, we're going to do this, we're going to do that, we're going to do this. And then she said, are we going to eat? Are we going to drink? What are we going to wear? Are we going to have this? Are we going to have that? And she said, no. I said, man, your daughter's got such great faith.

She kind of looked at me all perplexed. She said, what do you mean? I said, well, you know, you've raised your daughter. You've nursed her.

You've clothed her. You've been there when she was sick. You were there when she was needed an education.

You've been there with her all those years. She knows you by now. She knows you're not going to trick her.

She said, you're right. I said, the same thing is with God. As we know him, is not more faith that we need.

As our knowledge of him expounds, it enlarges. All of a sudden, we realize, man, he's worthy to be trusted. And this is the faith that I'm interested in.

There was a woman in our church that was diagnosed with cancer. And she said, you know, we called her up and Loretta said, oh, are you doing OK? How are you doing? She said this to her. She said, I haven't walked with the Lord for 50 years to doubt him now.

We've been through too much together. Isn't that amazing? In contrast with the lady that I met in the intensive care unit who had lost her son. And she said to me, I'm angry with God.

And he's going to have to answer to me for this. I've walked with the Lord for 50 years. We've been through too much together to doubt him now.

And I'm angry with him. See the contrast? Contrast is someone that knows God and someone that doesn't know God. When I was in Mallorca, I had become the pastor.

And within two months of becoming the pastor, two people died. And one of them died suddenly. Well, both of them suddenly.

One in a car accident, one of a blood clot. But one of the elders in the church, it was his wife that died. And he called me crying.

And he said, Rafael, let's pray together. When I arrived at the scene. You know what he said? God, thank you for all those years with my wife.

You know what the song was for the funeral? Give thanks with a grateful heart. Just kind of go, wow. Complaining or faith.

Trust. Not the gift. That which you know within yourself when you think through things of who God is.

And you can look back and you might be a bit hungrier than you used to be. But you're free. You might be a bit thirstier than you were.

But you're free. It might be a bit more dangerous. There's a roaring lion looking to devour you.

But you're free. And I was really challenged to trust the Lord. To not lean on my own understanding.

Okay, what does the future hold? I don't know. Who cares? He's got the future. Is the Bible college going to fall apart? Is the church going to fall apart? My marriage going to fall apart? Is everything going to fall apart? Who cares? Though he slay me, yet I will praise him.

Blessed be the name of the Lord. He gives and he takes away. Blessed be his name.

And that we will be people that would trust the Lord. Now that trust only comes through knowing God. And you can know all about a person and not know the person.

You know, I've met many of you guys. I don't know you. Now there's other people that came to this school.

Well, I know them a bit better, but I don't know them as well as I could know them. But the more time you spend with someone and the more you spend in relationship with that person, the more you'll know them. And you know what? Your knowledge of God is not going to come through two years of Bible school.

Your knowledge of God is going to come through a life set steadfastly like a sailboat for the long haul. Where are you going in your life? Is your life one of growing in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ? I was listening. I was in the car and I was listening to, you know, I took Loretta's car and she listens to Cheryl all the time.

She's got Cheryl in there. And so I got in the car and there's Cheryl. You know? So I was like, OK, I'll listen to Cheryl.

And Cheryl starts going, You know? Well, no. She says, I actually got ahead of myself. She said, You know what I want to do? She says, I want to grow old.

But I want to grow old nicely. I want to be one of these old women that sees a little boy trying to cross the street and say, OK, you little, you little boy, come here. Help me across the street.

You know? OK. And she walks me and she says, and he's walking me across the street. You know, there's a God in heaven who loves you.

And if you just give your heart to him. My voice is cracking. If you just give your heart to him, he will take you to be with him forever.

And she asked, How do you want to grow old? She says, I want to grow old knowing God. I want to grow a sweet old lady, she said. You know what? I want to grow old a sweet old man.

I want to grow old as a man that knows who God is. You know, there's an incredible verse in Acts, I mean, in Psalm 103. To me, it's amazing as we're talking about the children of Israel and everything.

It says, you know, the children of Israel, they all knew God's acts. His deeds. But Moses knew his ways.

Isn't that amazing? I can know, I can see miracles, but not know God. I can experience miracles and not know God. And I'm like, no.

I want to grow old knowing him. And it's through time and effort in his word and in relationship with him. And lastly, it takes time.

I mean, I know I said time and effort, but it takes time. And you know what? We're living in a world that we want everything quicker. How quick are your computers? Not quick enough, huh? I got 512 RAM Pentium 4. I want a Pentium M. One gig.

If I could afford two gig RAM, it would be great. I just want to cruise. I don't want ADSL.

I want quicker than that. I've been four years in my yurk and it just seems like, you know, nothing's going on at times. You know, it just seems like nothing's going on.

And I illustrated it to, to, to on a, you know, field 20. You can send those emails to field 20, to the missionary things. And I wrote an email and I said, you know, all with my great faith, you know, you know, it's like my lemon tree in the back.

The lemons are green right now, but you know what? I know that in time they will turn yellow. They will ripen. And so it's like in ministry.

That's how it's going to happen. In time, they will grow ripe and they will grow yellow. And then I will eat the fruit of it.

You know, just all enjoying my own lemons. The lemons never ripened. And all of a sudden, I was filled with doubts.

See, see, God is trying to speak to me. It's going to be like that in my ministry. See, I'll never ripen and you just throw me away.

And I thought, okay, out with the tree. Out with the tree. Just throw it away.

I pulled every lemon off that tree. I was so upset and thought it's over. And then I remembered the... It's amazing how wise the Lord is.

Because I remember what the Lord said about, okay, well, it didn't ripen. Let's give it one more year. Put some fertilizer in it and see what happens.

Well, it never dawned on me that I would have to water a lemon tree. So I water, put some fertilizer on it. This year, we've got lemons.

They're yellow as can be. I had, you know, I had a sore throat. I got my lemon juice with honey.

I thought, wow, this is great. I get my own lemons from my own lemon tree. But I realized it takes time.

And we want to be super Christians or have a super ministry right away. We want everything to go quickly. And the temptation to go back to the beginning, the temptation is to grow like the Pharisees complaining, complaining, complaining.

Why isn't this going on? Why isn't that going on? Why is this? And I'm afraid of this and I'm afraid of that. And I believe the Lord would ask us, will He come? When He comes, will He find faith on the earth? Can you imagine the Lord comes back and is like, why are you panicking? Why are you panicking? And I was really challenged by that. I hope you are.

And you would just make a commitment in your own heart that although the fig tree does not blossom or the barns, the stalls are empty with no animals in it, yet I will rejoice in the Lord. And if you're going through nothing, that's great. But you know what? The time is coming when you will go through something.

And like Dave Shirley always says, a faith that can't be tested is a faith that can't be trusted. But when we go through those trials, when we go through those times where everything's slow and we just choose to trust the Lord, that is what glorifies God. Three times, four times, one in the Old Testament, three times in the New Testament, that just shall live by faith.

Not faith to move mountains, but faith to endure. So let's pray that we will become, and I'm praying this for me, that we will become a generation that does great exploits because we know our God and we trust Him. We don't panic at everything.

But we just trust the Lord because He's been faithful for all these years. He's been faithful. Let's pray.

Father, I thank You so much that You are so worthy to be trusted, Lord. I thank You for Your goodness. And Father, I pray that You would purge out of our hearts or even show us the tendency to complain and Lord, may we give ourselves to trusting You, Lord.

To just enjoying the ride with You, Lord. And thank You that You've delivered us. It might be dangerous at times.

It might be a bit of a wilderness. But Lord, help us to go through the wilderness in a way that glorifies You. In Jesus' name, Amen.

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