

# The Benefits of Complaining (to God)

by John Edmiston

## Walking In the Spirit – Series 40 (A Ministry of Eternity Christian Fellowship)

**1 Samuel 1:10 MKJV** *And she was in bitterness of soul, and prayed to Jehovah, and wept sorely.*

**Psalms 55:1-3 MKJV** *Give ear to my prayer, O God; and hide not Yourself from my cry. (2) Attend to me, and hear me; I wander and I moan in my complaint, (3) from the voice of the enemy, from the oppression of the wicked, for they shake trouble over me, and in wrath they hate me.*

**Psalms 77:1-3 MKJV** *I cried to God with my voice, to God is my voice; and He gave ear to me. (2) In the day of my trouble I sought Jehovah; my hand was poured in the night, and ceased not; my soul refused to be comforted. (3) I remembered God, and was troubled; I complained, and my spirit fainted. Selah.*

Must Christians always be happy? Must they never complain aloud? Is having a Stoic attitude and a stiff upper lip a great sign of emotional and spiritual maturity? Sometimes not. Sometimes these things can be delusional and can indicate that we are either self-deceived or in denial; or even worse that we do not believe that God will act so we are suffering in silence. While we are to be content with our wages and free from the love of money, we are not to be content with the state of this world. The Bible never tells us to be content with wickedness, injustice, and sin, or with demons or disease.

Great men and women of God such as Hannah, Job, David and Jeremiah brought their complaints before the Lord. They complained because they had faith. They believed that they could ask for changes in their life situations from a God who was good and all-powerful and who had the solutions to all of their problems.

Some of the greatest writing in the Bible (Job, Psalms, the prophets) is seemingly 'negative' and complaining (see Psalm 88 for a powerful example). There are 'laments' and even imprecations. Even in Heaven the souls under the altar complain to the Lord:

**Revelation 6:9-11 ISV** *When the lamb opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slaughtered because of the word of God and the testimony they had given. (10) They cried out in a loud voice, "Holy and true Sovereign, how long will it be before you judge and take revenge on those living on the earth who shed our blood?"*

These section of the Bible arise out of the perception of the vast discrepancy between the goodness of God and the state of this present evil age:

**1 John 5:19 ISV** *We know that we are from God and that the whole world lies under the control of the evil one.*

**Galatians 1:4 ISV** *He gave himself for our sins in order to rescue us from this present evil age according to the will of our God and Father.*

This spiritual sense of disparity and discord gives rise to prayers, prophecy, apocalyptic literature, and to the strong desire for God's Kingdom to come, and for His will to be done, on earth as it is in Heaven.

This perception that things are terribly, terribly wrong is even essential to prevailing prayer. If you are content with the way things are then you cannot intercede. If you are content with wickedness in high places you will never pray for it to be removed. There is a proper and holy discontent where people groan and cry out to God and He hears them:

**Luke 18:1-8 ISV** *Jesus told his disciples a parable about their need to pray all the time and never give up. (2) He said, "In a city there was a judge who didn't fear God or respect people. (3) In that city there was also a widow who kept coming to him and saying, 'Grant me justice against my adversary.' (4) For a while the judge refused. But later he said to himself, 'I don't fear God or respect people. (5) Yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will grant her justice. Otherwise, she will keep coming and wear me out.'" (6) Then the Lord added, "Listen to what the unrighteous judge says. (7) Won't God grant his chosen people justice when they cry out to him day and night? Is he slow to help them? (8) I tell you, he will give them justice quickly. But when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?"*

The importunate widow complained so long and so loud and so often that the unjust judge gave in and granted her request. Her complaining was successful. Since God is better than that judge He will speedily avenge His elect! You can go to God's throne for justice and for grace and help in time of need:

**Hebrews 4:16 ISV** *So let us keep on coming with boldness to the throne of grace, so that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.*

We should bring our requests to God, and we should 'keep on' doing so, and boldly! This does not mean we should grumble. Grumbling against God or murmuring against His servants is very dangerous spiritually and is grounded in unbelief. Grumblers and murmurers never look to Heaven nor do they go to the throne of grace. They look solely at the situation and go to one another to amplify their miseries.

Neither are we to be anxious:

**Philippians 4:6-7 MKJV** *Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God. (7) And the peace of God which passes all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.*

Complaining to the Lord is thus distinct from grumbling, murmuring or fretful unbelief. In Psalm 73 David goes through a few stages from a 'brute beast' enraged at the state of things, to an adoring worshiper understanding the justice of the Lord. The turning point was when David went into the Temple and beheld God and laid his complaint before Him there:

**Psalms 73:12-24 ESV** *Behold, these are the wicked; always at ease, they increase in riches. (13) All in vain have I kept my heart clean and washed my hands in innocence. (14) For all the day long I have been stricken and rebuked every morning. (15) If I had said, "I will speak thus," I would have betrayed the generation of your children. (16) But when I thought how to understand this, it seemed to me a wearisome task, (17) until I went into the sanctuary of God; then I discerned their end. (18) Truly you set them in slippery places; you make them fall to ruin. (19) How they are destroyed in a moment, swept away utterly by terrors! (20) Like a dream when one awakes, O Lord, when you rouse yourself, you despise them as phantoms. (21) When my soul was embittered, when I was pricked in heart, (22) I was brutish and ignorant; I was like a beast toward you. (23) Nevertheless, I am continually with you; you hold my right hand. (24) You guide me with your counsel, and afterward you will receive me to glory.*

Our complaint should be grounded in the biblical facts about God's love and faithfulness. If you truly believe that God loves you and is working all things together for your good and has given you many precious promises then, at some point, you will ask for better than you currently have. You will ask God to improve your lot! You will believe that God can deliver you out of your mess and do good things concerning you. Like the man who was 'full of leprosy' you will cry out "Lord, if you will, you can make me clean".

**Luke 5:12-13 MKJV** *And it happened, as He was in a certain city, behold, a man full of leprosy! And seeing Jesus, he fell on his face and begged Him, saying, Lord, if You will, You can cleanse me. (13) And stretching out the hand, He touched him, saying, I will! Be clean! And immediately the leprosy departed from him.*

Do not just sit there and take it. Do not accept the bad things in your life as they are! Nor march around with a stiff upper lip in total denial of the facts. Take your terrible situation (and what could be worse than being full of leprosy) to our good God and pour out your heart before Him. God is faithful and kind and he will hear you and He will answer you from Heaven:

**1 John 5:14-15 MKJV** *And this is the confidence that we have toward Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. (15) And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of Him.*

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