

PP Heart Talk

Part 6-Philippians 2:12-16

2/15-16/2020

One of the Ackley family favorite movies, is Megamind, an animated superhero movie which begins with the anti-hero from the sky to what seems his certain death

The movie uses a story-telling technique called in Latin, *in medias res*, meaning in the middle. Before Megamind can strike the ground, we are then taken back to the beginning of the story to see how it led up to that moment.

Today, we are starting in the middle of our passage, then we'll go back to the beginning. We'll see a difficult command, the urgent reason its given, then how we can live it out.

PP 1-Do not complain! (2:14)

***'Do all things without grumbling or disputing'* 2:14**

If this is not an overwhelming command for us, then I'm not sure what command would be.

It may be the most common sinful act of our mouths and the most difficult to stop.

Think about where you tend to complain...maybe your job, or school, or neighbors, or family.

If you think clearly enough, you might see complaining in most parts of your life.

There is no sector of our lives off limits to grumbling and disputing.

Sociologists have concluded the average person spends 10 hours a month complaining at work.

Neurologists tells us that habitual complainers actually are rewiring the neuronal pathways in their brains, ingraining complaint patterns.

In my own unofficial research, I've discovered that the average Christian complains...a lot!

The Apostle Paul tells us, very soberly, do everything without grumbling or disputing.

PP *'grumbling'* is a bad attitude that results in constant complaining.

Something is never good enough.

PP *"Stay away from negative people, they have a problem for every solution."* Albert Einstein

I have a Scott's walk-behind spreader and I use it to spread grass seed and weed-killing pellets.

It has settings that can cast the pellets or seeds wide or just under or near the spreader.

A mutterer, a grumbler seems thinks they are dropping their seeds privately, but their seeds of Death go wide affecting groups and communities.

Hebrews warns of the spreading power of a bitter person: **PP** *"Watch out that no poisonous root of bitterness grows up to trouble you, corrupting many."* Hebrews 12:15 (NLT)

Notice how the grumbler and murmerer affected the ministry of Jesus.

PP *"And there was much muttering about [Jesus] among the people. While some said, "He is a good man," others said, "No, He is leading the people astray." Yet for fear of the Jews no one spoke openly of Him."* John 7:12-13

They were muttering quietly, not openly, yet it was spreading among the people.

The grumbler can affect an entire community until there is a mob uprising and Paul warns Christians cannot allow that to happen, for it inevitably leads to *'disputing'*.

PP *'Disputing'* indicates evil thoughts springing out of our mouths in disputes and arguments that leads to unrest and discord

We see murmuring and disputing take place in our schools, teacher's rooms, places of work, with in-laws and unfortunately church

Someone at a church doesn't like something the church does...usually the worship, but it could be anything

That person gets upset, grouses and mutters in discontentment, amazingly finding others that feel similarly, spreading until there's a group of people upset with the church who either tries to get rid of leadership or they leave to go to another church

Suddenly that church doesn't look any different from the implosion of that once dominant professional sports team, or once-thriving company, or once close-knit family

Which leads us to seriousness of Paul's urgency in this command to not grumble or dispute

PP 2-Grumbling and disputing douses your light (2:15-16a)

'that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, holding fast to the word of life' (seeds of life)

The Apostle Paul has Old Testament Israel on his mind as he wrote this and there are two phrases

that reveals this: *'grumble or disputing'* and *'crooked and twisted generation'*

Moses, the leader who led Israel out of slavery in Egypt to the promise land, was a song writer Paul quote a lyric from one of his songs: **PP** *"They are a crooked and twisted generation."*

Deuteronomy 32:5

Moses wasn't talking of the Philistines, or Amalekites, or Hittites, but the Israelites

And I want to give you a brief biblical journey to see it

Let's take our bibles and open to the second book of the bible, to **Exodus 14:10**

It was only days after the people of God left Egypt and they believe they are trapped between the impassable Red Sea and the furious, pursuing Egyptian army, and they cry out to Moses

14:11, *"Is it because there are no graves in Egypt that you have taken us away to die in the wilderness? What have you done to us in bringing us out of Egypt?"*

They go on for a bit more, demonstrating what grumbling and disputing looks like, but hey, they are new at this freedom thing so God patiently and miraculously delivers them

Moses writes a song about God's power, his sister Miriam leads a women's choir to sing a chorus

Just a few verses later the whole 2 million group comes to a lake of bitter water, and **15:24**, *"the people grumbled against Moses"*

God healed the water but then just days later, **16:2**, thinking they were going to starve, *"the whole congregation of the people of Israel grumbled against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness"*

But God also began to diagnose the hearts of the people in **16:8**, *"the Lord has heard your grumbling against Him--what are we? Your grumbling is not against us but against*

the Lord.”

At its core, all sin is against God, and all grumbling in the final analysis is the defiant proclamation that we are not content with what God is doing in our lives
 Grumbling and disputing reveals that we do not truly want or believe that God is neither sovereign over all things NOR is He perfect, good and loving toward us
 Israel goes on, time after time, grumbling, complaining, and disputing against Moses and Aaron, but really, against God..they were a ***‘crooked and twisted generation’***
 Grumbling and disputing destroys the witness of God’s community, now called the church!
 If we’re to ***‘shine as lights in the world’***, then we must be 3 things:

PP ‘blameless’-means to be without defect

Paul tells us that we are to be blameless and forsaking complaining is essential to be that

PP “Then the high officials and the satraps sought to find a ground for complaint against Daniel with regard to the kingdom, but they could find no ground for complaint or any fault, because he was faithful, and no error or fault was found in him.” Daniel 6:4

PP ‘innocent’ was a word used for pure wine unmixed with water, or metal that had no alloys
 We are to be Christians who walk the walk and talk the talk, our hearts pure speaking life

PP ‘children of God without blemish’

This is a summary of the other two, but **PP ‘blemish’** (Gr. amōmos) is an interesting Greek word
 In Geek, the letter “a” in front negates something, so we really want to know what *momos* meant
 Momos was a Greek god who did nothing himself but criticized and found fault with everybody and everything else...the god of griping complaint, the ultimate myth of grumbling

He was finally exiled from the mythological Mount Olympus

If you want to shine as a light for Jesus, then do not have a heart of critical fault finding

When someone offends you, answer with love, not grumbling

PP “Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins.”

1 Peter 4:8

We who belong to God, who serve Jesus, the King of kings can not be grumblers and disputers

We stand out in this world when we trust God and not complain about our situations

That kind of faithful life is the platform for the gospel as we ***‘hold fast to the Word of life’***

We can witness, and preach and teach as much as we’d like, but if we are grumblers, mutterers, complainers, arguers...our message of life in Christ alone will have no power

But you remember how we began by using the story telling technique, *in medias res*?

We have this lofty, seemingly impossible command to stop complaining and arguing

I mean, obviously Paul didn’t understand the difficulties of modern America in having all that we do, or he’d have understood why that slow car, or overcooked steak bothers us so

So how can our heart talk move from complaining and arguing to giving life to those around us?

PP 3-God powers our light, we switch it on (2:12-13)

The bible doesn’t simply tell us to stop grumbling but then do nothing to help make it possible
God always gives us the power to do what He commands, this is the grace of our King

To see this, we go back to the beginning of our passage: ***‘Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.’ 2:12-13***

Paul is talking about working ***‘out your salvation’***, not *work for your salvation*
 You are signed, sealed and delivered in Christ, but salvation must lead to a life-long process of sanctification, becoming what we are...holy children of God
 It’s one thing to purchase a race car, and another to learn how to drive it with dominance
 Paul tells us to exert great effort to grow in our holiness with ***‘fear and trembling’***

Years ago when I was really into weight-lifting, I was going for my record bench press
 I picked that bar off the stands-75 lbs had never felt so heavy-lowered it to my chest and exploded that bar upward visualizing it smashing through the ceiling
 Except my explosive energy expired halfway up and nobody was around me to help
 My arms were shaking, but I knew that to give up meant all that weight stuck on my chest!
 Straining, eyes popping, vowing to never do this again by myself, I got that weight up
 Paul speaks of this in the next chapter: **PP *“one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.” Philippians 3:12-14***

There is a responsibility that we have if we are to grow more and more like Jesus
 But Paul is not telling individual Christians to work out their personal salvation
 It is to work out their salvation in relation to one another in the church
 Notice that **2:12** begins with ***‘Therefore’***, linking back to **2:1**, ***‘So’***, which connects us to the point Paul started in **1:27**, ***“I may hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel.”***
 Grumbling leads to disputing, which threatens the community of God’s church
 Paul gives the example of Jesus to exhort us to lay aside our personal rights, humbly serve one another, do not grumble or argue with one another, and we will be lights in this world
 God cares very much for this, so He supplies us with the willpower and desire to put all our efforts into our sanctification: ***‘for it is God Who works in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure’***

We are not left on our own efforts, though we must responsibly pursue holiness with all we are
PP Charles Wesley would pray, *‘Take away the love of sinning.’*

The Spirit of God is working deep in our hearts, and as we seriously consider grumbling and disputing as the sins they are, the evidence of our distrust of God that they are, and we plead with God to change our hearts so our mouths guard unity and protect our witness

We mustn’t grumble for it will create disunity in our families, or schools, workplaces and church
 Rather be blameless, innocent, without blemish, and shine as lights in a divided world
 Straining and pressing forward, with God’s power changing our hearts to speak life

Amen?

Pray