

Numbers 11

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[0 : 00] Good evening, everyone. Good to be with you again, back to a sort of normal-sized congregation. Well, I just thought I'd start the service by reading a few verses from a psalm.

So we're going to look at Psalm 33, starting in verse 1. Sing joyfully to the Lord, you righteous. It is fitting for the upright to praise him.

And then moving to verse 5. It's good to remember that we worship a big God, don't we?

We worship the God who created the universe just by the word of his mouth. And that's the God that we come before and worship now. But he's also the God who loves us, and he wants to speak to us now.

So we're going to start by singing Behold Our God, which is going to come up on the screen. So I'll just open up in prayer.

[1 : 39] Father God, we thank you for that amazing privilege that we have to come before you and to worship you.

The creator of the universe. The one who spoke the stars into being. The one who shows his glory through all of creation, through the ocean, through the mountains.

Through everything we see in creation. And you hold all things together. You're the one who, the seraphim around the throne, they cover their faces.

And they continually cry out, holy, holy, holy. And yet you're the one that we can come before as father. As children coming before a father, before the throne.

And we pray now that you'd take our gaze from the things of the earth, from the things of life, and you'd fix our eyes on you again.

[2 : 40] We pray that as we hear your word, that you'd give us hearts of reverence that are open to hear what you have to say to us. That you'd speak to us now.

And we pray that you'd change us. We pray that you'd show us something of who you are, we pray. In Jesus' name, amen. So, we're going to be looking at Numbers 11 today.

Which is page 147 in your Bibles. So, Numbers 11, starting in verse 1, we'll read the whole chapter. Now the people complained about their hardships in the hearing of the Lord. And when he heard them, his anger was aroused. Then fire from the Lord burned among them and consumed some of the outskirts of the camp.

When the people cried out to Moses, he prayed to the Lord, and the fire died down. So that place was called Taborah, because fire from the Lord had burned among them. The rabble with them began to crave other food.

[3 : 57] And again the Israelites started wailing and said, If only we had meat to eat. We remember the fish we ate in Egypt at no cost. Also the cucumbers, melons, leeks, onions and garlic.

But now we have lost our appetite. We never see anything but this manna. The manna was like coriander seed and looked like resin. The people went around gathering it.

And then ground it in a hand mill or crushed it in mortar. They cooked it in a pot or made it into loaves. And it tasted like something with olive oil. When the Jews settled on the camp at night, the manna also came down.

Moses heard the people of every family wailing at the entrance of their tents. The Lord became exceedingly angry and Moses was troubled. He asked the Lord, Why have you brought this trouble on your servants?

What have I done to displease you that you put the burden of all these people on me? Did I conceive all these people? Did I give them birth? Why do you tell me to carry them in my arms as a nurse carries an infant to the land you promised on oath to their ancestors?

[5 : 07] Where can I get meat for all these people? They keep wailing to me. Give us meat to eat. I cannot carry all these people by myself. The burden is too heavy for me.

If this is how you are going to treat me, please go ahead and kill me right now. If I have found favor in your eyes, and do not let my face my own ruin.

The Lord said to Moses, Bring me 70 of Israel's elders who are known to you as leaders and officials among the people. Make them come to the tent of meeting that they may stand there with you.

I will come down and speak with you there. And I will take some of the power of the Spirit that is on you and put it on them. They will share the burden of the people with you so that you will not have to carry it alone.

Tell the people, Consecrate yourselves in preparation for tomorrow, when you will eat meat. The Lord heard you when you wailed. If only we had meat to eat.

[6 : 06] We were better off in Egypt. Now the Lord will give you meat, and you will eat it. You will not eat it for just one day, or two days, or five, ten, or twenty days, but for a whole month, until it comes out of your nostrils and you loathe it.

Because you have rejected the Lord who is among you, and have wailed before him, saying, Why did we ever leave Egypt? But Moses said, Here I am among six hundred thousand men on foot, and you say, I will give them meat to eat for a whole month.

Would they have enough if flocks and herds were slaughtered for them? Would they have enough if all the fish of the sea were caught for them? The Lord answered Moses, Is the Lord's arm too short?

Now you will see whether or not what I say will come true for you. So Moses went out and told the people what the Lord had said. He brought together seventy of their elders and made them stand around the tent.

Then the Lord came down in the cloud and spoke with him, and he took some of the power of the Spirit that was on him and put it on the seventy elders. When the Spirit rested on them, they prophesied, but did not do so again.

[7 : 19] However, two men, whose names were Aldad and Medad, had remained in the camp. They were listed among the elders, but did not go out to the tents. Yet the Spirit also rested on them, and they prophesied in the camp.

A young man ran and told Moses, Aldad and Medad are prophesying in the camp. Joshua, son of Nun, who had been Moses' assistant since youth, spoke up and said, Moses, my Lord, stop them. But Moses replied, Are you jealous for my sake? I wish that all the Lord's people were prophets, and that the Lord would put his Spirit on them. Then Moses and the elders of Israel returned to the camp.

Now a wind went out from the Lord and drove quail in from the sea. It scattered them up to two cubits deep all around the camp, as far as a day's walk in any direction.

All that day and night and all the next day the people went out and gathered quail. No one gathered less than ten homers. Then they spread them out all around the camp. But while the meat was still between their teeth, and before it could be consumed, the anger of the Lord burned against the people, and he struck them with a severe plague.

[8 : 31] Therefore the place was named Kibroth-Hatava, because there they buried the people who had craved their food. From Kibroth-Hatava the people travelled to Hazoroth and stayed there.

Thank you.

To those of you who worked so hard and gave so much of your time to September Bible School, it's been an excellent weekend. Really, really encouraging and really helpful as well.

And again, can I remind you to keep praying for them, but so thankful that so many folk in the church, in so many different ways, were giving of their time and their efforts. And we bless the Lord for that.

Now then, I don't tend to frequent the amusement arcade in Whitby. I don't know whether you do or not. But in most seaside towns, there is a sort of amusement arcade.

[9 : 51] And I was in Bridlington just early this week, and they've got one there as well. And of course, amusements have changed quite a lot. Some of them are still the same. They're sort of the penny waterfall type of thing, where you put your tuppence in, and kids love that.

I remember doing that when I was a youngster many years ago. But over the years, the machines have changed, and sometimes you can visit, like museums, and they've got older machines. I don't know whether Whitby ever had a laughing policeman. Do you remember a laughing policeman? Or not? It did have one, did it? It used to have a laughing policeman. For those of you who are younger, a laughing policeman was a very strange thing.

It was a sort of a glass case on a stand, which was a foot-tall sort of model of a policeman, a chubby, fat policeman with red, rosy cheeks.

And if you put a penny in the coin slot, this miniature policeman would get to belly laugh, and he'd put his hands on his tummy, and his mouth would open like a puppet, and he'd laugh and laugh and laugh.

[10:52] And I thought for a long time, why would anybody be amused by a policeman laughing? But then I thought about it. Laughter is infectious, isn't it? If you're, you can't help, when somebody's laughing next to you, you find a smile coming on your face.

Before you know it, you want to laugh. It's lovely with children, isn't it, when two adults are talking, and they begin laughing together, and the child doesn't understand what's going on, but they just start to laugh as well.

Infectious laughter. There's something else which is infectious, which is not so commendable, and not so beneficial, and that is complaining.

Complaining is infectious. When one person starts to moan or complain, very soon others join in, and really that's something of what we find here in Numbers 11.

We see how complaining can spread, even amongst God's people, and we see the sort of damage that it can cause to God's people.

[11:58] Chapter 11 is really a turning point now in this book of Numbers. So far, it's been all about God's people, and the first year of their lives out of Egypt.

God has given various teachings about those who serve, about cleanliness and purity in the camp, and about the tabernacle. And in chapter 9, the tabernacle was completed and finished after a year of manufacture.

The Passover was celebrated exactly one year after the original Passover, when God brought the people out in the night from Egyptian slavery, and now they're on the move, on the move to that promised land.

And we looked at that last week, how the Lord himself would, by cloud or by fire, move the people, lead the people through the wilderness.

They were getting closer to the goal. But, when we get to chapter 11, and if you just look at the end of chapter 10, it ended, and we looked at that just last week, in a wonderfully positive way, didn't it, with Moses, in verse 35, rise up Lord, may your enemies be scattered and your foes flee before you.

[13:12] Whenever it, that's whenever they came to camp, as it were, he said, return Lord to the countless thousands of Israel. Everything's going so well. Everything's going according to God's plan.

Everything's working out just as God promised. And then we get to chapter 11, and verse 1, now the people complained. What a downer, isn't it? What an upsetting sort of a scene, from things being so well, things with God and his people going on so well, and then they complain.

And it's the beginning of lots of complaints. I'm sorry to say that over the next few weeks, we're going to be sick to death of complaints amongst God's people, and the things that they do.

There's a real spiritual nosedive. What do they complain about? Well, verse 1 of chapter 11 says they complained about their hardships in the hearing of the Lord.

Now, indeed, it must have been difficult living in the wilderness. They were people who'd been used to living in one place, in Egypt. They definitely had homes, we know, because they were told to put the blood over the door lintels.

[14:23] They had houses. They weren't a camping community or traveling community, in that sense, not here anyway. And it must have been difficult, you know, that when we've seen adventurers going through the wilderness and deserts and things of North Africa, how the heat is tremendous, and the sand is hard going and there are sand storms and all sorts of things like that.

And with all that, they had to keep taking their tents down, packing up all their possessions, moving for a day or two and then setting up camp again. But really, compared to being an oppressed slave

in Egypt, it can't really have been that bad.

Compared to what they went through, and if you go all the way back to Exodus chapter 1 and 2, you realize what they went through. Their children were having to be thrown out to be drowned in the River Nile when they were boys.

They were beaten terribly. They were oppressed terribly, so much so that they cried out to God. Here they are, complaining.

Now, it doesn't say that they were complaining to God, but they were complained, we're told, in the hearing of the Lord. And when he heard them, his anger was aroused. Now, the NIV fails to get this across.

[15 : 39] The AV is a little bit better. If you've got the AV, it says what they said, displeased the Lord, but even that's too weak. Really, the phrase is, it was evil in the ears of the Lord.

Their complaining was evil in God's hearing. Now, we'll come back to that, why that was so evil to the Lord when we look at their later complaints. But here we see that God responds immediately to them.

Then fire from the Lord burned among them and consumed some of the outskirts of the camp. Now, we're not told that anybody died. I'm not sure whether they did or not. I don't think so. But there was fire, and it was clearly supernatural fire.

Clearly, it was God expressing his anger against his people for complaining. They knew it was God because they called out to Moses to pray to the Lord, and the fire died down.

So, in one sense, the incident is over very quickly. We only have it in these three verses. They call the place Teberah, which means burning. They give it a name. Something happened here. There's a lesson to be learned here.

[16 : 41] We angered God. We complained against him, and he sent fire. They marked the spot. They weren't going to forget what happened there. And we mustn't forget either, dear friends, that complaining is not an innocent pastime.

It may seem to be a very British thing to do, or English more than anybody else. I don't know. But it's not an innocent pastime to be a complaining person, particularly as a believer, but it is evil to the Lord.

So, you think, well, there we are. They've learned their lesson. The fire's come down. They've complained. The Lord has taught them this lesson that they mustn't complain. It's wrong to do it. So, we get on with the journey, don't we? No, we don't. Verse 4, the rabble with them began to crave other food. And again, the Israelites started wailing.

Almost as soon as the smokers settled on the fire, as it were, a significant group, they're described as rabble, start moaning again.

[17 : 45] And though we weren't given particular specifics about their first complaint, we're told about the specifics of their second complaint. It's all about food.

Food. If only we had meat to eat, they say in verse 4. We remember the fish we ate in Egypt at no cost, the cucumbers, melons, leeks, onions, garlic. They're complaining about the food and they go on to say, verse 6, now we've lost our appetite.

We never see anything but this manna. And of course, you remember what manna is and if you didn't remember, then there's a little description given for us there. Every day, every morning, when the Jew had settled, God gave them bread to eat this manna that settled upon the ground and they could collect it and they could do all sorts of things, we're told, with it.

They could crush it. They could cook it in a pot. They could make it into bread and so on. But as the saying goes, you can always have too much of a good thing.

They'd been eating it for some time and they were complaining about it and moaning about it.

Again, we're going to consider this moaning in a moment but I just want us to notice again how infectious moaning is.

[19 : 00] They began complaining about their hardships in chapter 11, verse 1 and then soon they start complaining about something else, about the food that they're eating and then their complaining spreads and it has an effect upon Moses, doesn't it?

Verse 10, Moses heard the people of every family, every family wailing at the entrance of their tents. The Lord became exceedingly angry and Moses was troubled.

Moses, the servant of the Lord, Moses, the one through whom God had brought the people out into freedom. Moses, the one who was this man of God who trusted God and stepped out in faith at the

parting of the Red Sea and all these sort of things.

Now he is troubled and he is upset by the complaining of God's people. It's had a very negative effect upon him and in one sense he begins to complain, doesn't he?

He asks the Lord, why have you brought this trouble on your servants? His complaints sound a little bit like ours perhaps, do they?

[20 : 05] Why have I got trouble, God? Why have you brought this trouble into my life? We may even say, what have I done to displease you, Lord? Why have you put this burden on me?

Why is my life suffering? What have I done to deserve it? But when we begin to look closer at this complaint, we actually realize that here is a man who is deeply distressed and I would go so far as to say deeply depressed.

He was a man struggling with severe depression because of the complaints, the moaning, the attitude of the people that he was seeking to serve.

Look at how he goes on to say, verse 15, verse 14, I cannot carry all these people by myself. The burden is too heavy for me. If this is how you're going to treat me, please go ahead and kill me right now.

He is a man who has come to the very end of his tether. He is a man who is so overwhelmed and burdened by the complaining of God's people that he is, he doesn't feel life is worth living anymore.

[21 : 20] That's depression. And he wasn't the only one. Depression is not some modern phenomena invented by psychiatrists. Throughout the Bible we meet with believers who were deeply distressed at difficult times in their lives and really struggled.

David was like that. Elijah, of course, particularly, we know, when Bathsheba was chasing him and wanting to put him to death, he says in 1 Kings 19, I've had enough, Lord, he said, take my life.

Dear friends, if you struggle with depression, if there are times in your life where you have felt, Lord, I just can't go on and I'd rather that you just took me home out of this life now than you're not alone. And I would say this as well, you're not sinning. See, there's no rebuke against Moses here. God does not speak to him or we're not told that God's anger wasn't against him as it did against the people.

Here is a God who is sympathetic, if I'm put it that way, who is emphatic, a God who understands, a God who cares, a God who loves, a God who sees what's going on in the heart.

[22 : 38] He knows the difference between a heart that is simply complaining and moaning and we'll see, well, that's such a bad thing and a heart that is breaking and troubled. And in one sense, Moses does the right thing though there's a complaining attitude in it and it's really coming from this broken heart, there's also a sense of crying onto God for help, isn't there?

I can't do this, Lord. It's too much for me, Lord. I'm struggling, Lord. Those are not the prayers that God will ignore. They're not the prayers that God despises.

And again, I want to say to you, dear friends, for those of us who've suffered with depression and been in a very dark place so that there are times where we thought we just couldn't go on.

You are not alone. You're not alone. God's people have endured this over and over again. And there's many other more modern people and Christians, great Christians who struggled with depression.

Moses is struggling with depression. He's calling to the Lord for help. But here's the lesson as well. Surely this is the lesson. Why was Moses so depressed?

[23 : 54] Why was he so ground down? It was because of the people. Because of their complaints. Because of their moaning. Because of their constant wailing and criticism.

Dear friends, we must do all that we can to avoid being the cause of another person's depression. We must do all that we can to avoid heaping complaints upon others or criticizing them or maliciously speaking about them.

There's no justification for that behavior. No matter how much we may be struggling ourselves or unhappy ourselves, it is not right for us to, as it were, burden and put upon someone else and blame someone else because this is what was happening, isn't it?

Later on, as we see, poor old Moses says to the Lord, they keep saying to me, give us meat to eat. Rather, dear friends, let's build one another up.

Let's encourage one another. Let's strengthen one another. Let's help one another. Let's be Barnabases to one another. Let's work hard lifting up the downcast rather than just dumping on them.

[25 : 13] and we see how the Lord wonderfully, graciously answers Moses' cries, his depression, his struggling. As I said, there's no rebuke from the Lord. The Lord doesn't tell him off.

Rather, he says, I'm going to give you 70 helpers. I'm going to give you others to come alongside you and support you so that you aren't on your own, so that you don't have to carry the burden by yourself.

Now, isn't that important? Why has the Lord placed you in this local church? Why is it vitally important as a Christian you are part of a local church?

Because we can't do it alone. Whatever the Lord has called us to do or to be in the Christian life, we can't do it alone and he knows that. And he wants us to support one another, to strengthen one another, to help one another.

And so he begins to tell them, tell Moses what he's going to do. And so God says to him, verse 18, tell the people to consecrate yourselves, verse 18, in preparation for tomorrow when you'll eat meat.

[26 : 23] So the people have craved this meat and they've said they've moan and complained at God for this meat and so God says, okay, you're going to get this meat. meat. But you're not just going to get one nice roast dinner.

You're not going to get a couple of days of nice roast dinner and meat, nor a week, nor two weeks. You're going to get a month of it and there's an irony and a humor there, isn't there, in one sense, verse 20, for a whole month until it comes out your nostrils and you loathe it.

You're going to be sick to death of meat. You're going to be pleading for me to take it away. It's just a wonderful humor, I think, in the way that God deals with moaning people.

And if we're honest as well, sometimes that happens. Doesn't that happen to you? And you complain, oh God, why can't I have this or that or the other? And God has given you what you wanted and then you realize actually this isn't what I wanted after all.

You said, Lord, I really need somebody who's going to be a real friend who's going to phone me and see how I am. So the Lord gives you somebody who phones you every single day and at one o'clock in the morning and they phone you all the time and you're sick to death of them and say, Lord, I didn't ask for this sort of friend.

[27 : 41] I didn't want somebody to keep doing this. That's the problem. We think that we know what we need. God knows better.

And then poor old Moses, there he is. He's still struggling, isn't he? He's still depressed. Depression is something you just sort of throw off, is it? The Lord's promised him help and encouragement. That's great.

It doesn't mean that suddenly he's singing how I didly do, what a wonderful life it is for me. He's still struggling. Depression takes time. It takes support. It takes love.

It takes healing. It's not something that just can, you know, to say to somebody who's depressed, I'll step out of it and sort yourself out. What's wrong with you? That is not the way. And if you've never suffered with depression, then you haven't got the foggiest clue what that's like.

It's to come along, to encourage, to support. You may not understand why they are so depressed. You may not understand what they're going through, but dear friends, don't you love them? Can't you care for them?

[28 : 40] Can't you support them? Can't you thank God that he has kept you from being in that dark place yourself? So Moses, he says, here I am among 6,000 men.

That's just, that's just the men. They're mine, the women, and the children, and all the others. How can you say, I'll give them meat to eat? One of the things that happens when somebody is depressed is that their faith is badly not.

And Moses, the man who could trust God to part the Red Sea, and Moses who could trust God to lead and guide the people and provide for them, here his faith is not. You can't do it, Lord.

It seems too difficult, Lord. Lord. Being in a dark place, in a pit, is a place where it's hard to see with the eyes of faith, which is why we need one another to build one another up, to encourage one another in our faith, look to the Lord, trust the Lord.

And it's that wonderful answer, isn't it? It's one of those answers that I imagine years and years ago young girls would put into tapestry and put on a frame in the wall. You know, one of those verses you'd put above your headboard or one of those verses you'd put upon your desk, is the Lord's arm too short?

[30 : 01] It's rhetorical, isn't it? Of course the Lord's arm's not too short. Of course there's nothing that he can do. Mary had a similar thing with Gabriel. Nothing is impossible with the Lord. Now you'll see whether or not what I say will come true for you.

What God has said he can do, what God has promised he will fulfill. And it may seem to you to be absolutely impossible that God can be with you in the midst of where you are or that God can guide or that God will provide or that God will help or that God will supply your needs.

But he promises that he will and therefore he will. Faith, we walk by faith, not by sight. And so, we come back to the whole matter of the 70 helpers.

Verse 24, these 70 men come to the tent of meeting. The Lord comes down. He sends his spirit upon them. The same spirit that rested upon Moses is given to them that they might have wisdom, that they might be able to lead and care for the people and so on.

And then there's a funny little aside, isn't there? There in verse 26, two men didn't go. They were part of the 70 who were told that they should go. The leaders in the camp, leaders in the nation, we're not told why they didn't go.

[31 : 19] But where they were in the tent, God still came to them and still sent his spirit upon them. And they also prophesied, declaring the praises of God.

That's what prophecy was. And a young man hears them prophesying and he runs off and he goes and tells Joshua, Moses' assistant, his helper, his right-hand man, what's happening.

And so Joshua goes to Moses and says to Moses, stop them. They're doing this thing. They're declaring God's praises. They seem to be taking your place when it was your place to declare the word of God.

At least that's how it seems. Moses says, are you jealous for my sake? And he says something quite wonderful, doesn't he?

We see, as we learn later on, that Moses was the most humble man who ever lived. Verse 29, Moses replied, are you jealous for my sake? I wish that all the Lord's people were prophets, that the Lord would put his spirit on them.

[32 : 23] Moses hasn't got this attitude. Look, I'm the leader here. I'm the one. I'm the number one. I'm the generalissimo. Everybody's got to respect me. You know, nobody can do what I can do.

He has the attitude which I would say that all church leaders and pastors and ministers should have. In fact, the ministry that a pastor or a church leader or a preacher has been given is really that ministry which longs for, seeks for, wants others in the church to be serving and ministering themselves.

They want to, in one sense, if I put it in a nice and possible way, do themselves out of the job. They want the Lord to raise up others to preach. They want the Lord to raise up others to care for the church. They want to raise up others.

Ephesians chapter 4 where Paul tells us that Christ has given to the church the gifts of pastors and teachers and evangelists and prophets. Why has he given them?

To equip his people for works of service. My prayer, dear friends, for you is that the Spirit of the Lord would equip you and empower you and use you and work through you and speak through you.

[33 : 44] That's just what Moses wanted as well. But now we get back to the main event, the complaining, the craving people.

That's a bit of an aside. We've looked into the life of Moses and God's provision and the importance of supporting and caring and building one another up and now we get to those accusers of God.

Verse 31, a wind went out from the Lord and drove quail in from the sea. It scattered them up to two cubits deep. Waist deep. I just find it, I don't know, I just find it so humorous the picture.

There they are. They say, we want meat, we want meat and there's this big camp as it were and in come, well I can only imagine tens of thousands, hundreds of thousands of these small quail birds and you can't walk for them.

It's like, you know, when you had snow and it's six foot deep but this is just quail and there's feathers everywhere and there's squawking everywhere and there's noise everywhere and they're up to their waist as far as a day's walk in any direction.

[34 : 51] God's answered them. They wanted meat, they've got meat and the people I imagine are going, yeah, this is fantastic, this is great so they gathered them up and they plucked them and did whatever they needed to do to them and they spread them out around the camp and then they started to eat them but the joy of the meat turns very quickly to grief as before the meat is even

swallowed.

look at that, but while the meat was still between their teeth before it could, before they'd swallowed a mouthful of quail, a plague, a severe plague and many of them die.

Therefore, verse 34, the place was named Kibroth Hatapah because they were buried, the people who craved other food. Not everybody, not the whole community.

We're not sure, we're not told how many killed other places, we're told how many were killed but there must have been many of them, they were people. Plague is struck and so they again call the spot where they are by, give it another name, Kibroth Hatapah which means graves of craving. They remember what happened there. Why did God judge them so severely? One of the reasons of course many people say they have no time for the God of the Bible is they look at the Old Testament and they say, well this God, he's a malicious God, he's an angry God, he's a petulant God.

[36 : 34] These people are just complaining and moaning. If God struck down every person who complained and moaned then everyone would be dead because we're all moaning and complaining. Surely this is over the top. Surely God putting these people to death it's not a just judgment.

It's not fair. Why did God put them to death? Why did God give them what they wanted and then kill them?

Let's go back a moment. Let's go back to verse 20 because this is very important that we understand that we might understand why it was that God acted as he did.

God does not act unjustly. God does not act unfairly. God is not a petulant God. He's not a God who simply loses his temper like we do or as a child.

He is God who does all things thoughtfully, meaningfully, carefully, justly. Verse 20. We'll read from verse 19.

[37 : 43] You will not eat it for just one day or two days or five days, ten or twenty days, but for a whole month until it comes out of your nostrils and you loathe it because, here's the reason, you have rejected the Lord who is among you and have wailed before him saying, why did we ever leave Egypt?

To complain against God's goodness and mercy is to reject him. How does complaining reveal rejection of the Lord?

Well, look at what we see there. They rejected God's saving grace. They wished that they had never left Egypt. They wished that God had left them alone in their slavery, in their sin.

They say there, why did we ever leave Egypt early on in verse 18 if we were better off in Egypt? God had come to their rescue.

For 400 years, they'd been in slavery. They'd cry to God pleading with him to come and save them and to rescue them. He had sent Moses to them and by his great power, he had overthrown the mightiest army in the world at that time.

[38 : 57] He had defeated the oppressor, Pharaoh, their enemy, and he'd brought them out of slavery. He'd brought them into a place of freedom and they despised God's kindness.

They despised it. They despised his deliverance. They said in one sense, they were saying, God, we don't even want you in our lives.

We don't want you bothering us. We wish you just left us alone. That's what they're saying. It's not just a little bit of a murmur and a complaint.

It's a rejection of God and his loving kindness and grace. Surely that, then, is a just consequence. Isn't it a just God who is going to ultimately condemn those who regard his salvation through Jesus' son as a bad thing, as a despised thing?

Surely isn't it the case that when we come to that day of judgment and we stand before God and men and women say, why on earth should you reject me and put me into a place of eternal separation from you, then God will simply say, but you have rejected me.

[40 : 08] This is just the consequences of your choices and of your actions. I have sent my son into the world for you. I've given great evidence of the love and kindness I have to you by allowing him and putting him to death so that your sins could be forgiven.

I've given this wonderful good news for you to be able to come and receive and trust and enjoy me now and for eternity. I've made the way for you to conquer death and you have despised me and rejected every advance of my loving kindness.

Isn't God just then to say go to the place where you deserve? Where you have chosen? God, you're unwelcome here.

God, you're unwanted here. Dear friends, we must be ever thankful for the salvation that God has given us.

One of the ways that we can be delivered from complaining and moaning and murmuring is by ever reminding ourselves of the wonderful grace of God in saving us.

[41 : 22] Dear friends, we don't deserve God's grace. We don't deserve his salvation any more than the Israelites did. We don't deserve to be rescued from the consequences of our sin and our wickedness, but God has done it.

We certainly deserve God giving the most precious possession he had, his only begotten son, to suffer and die for us. Let us spend a lot of time meditating and rejoicing in and thanking God for and delighting in.

We won't have time to murmur or complain. Is it because we haven't fully appreciated our salvation that we complain?

Is it because we have counted it a familiar thing? What's the saying? Familiarity breeds contempt. Breeds contempt. We're so used to the fact that Jesus died for us.

We're so used to the fact that God has forgiven us. We've taken it now as a, well, it's a right, isn't it? Something that really, well, we deserve. Dear friends, let us never forget from what Christ has saved us.

[42 : 30] Let's never forget the cost that he paid for you. The second thing as well here, and I think this probably becomes more akin to our own situation as believers, they rejected the Lord's care for them and his wonderful provision.

Remember what they said in verse 6? Now we've lost our appetite, we never see anything but this manna. They rejected the Lord's provision, his care for their daily needs.

They rejected what he had done. There they were in the wilderness. They had nothing. They had no crops. They had no bread. They had nothing.

If the Lord hadn't given them manna, they would have died of hunger in the wilderness. But God miraculously sends them bread every day in the form of the manna. He gives them what they need. He gives them and provides for them in a wonderful, marvellous, loving way and they despise that and reject that and what do they want? They want more. Well, we've got bread to eat.

[43 : 34] Yes, we aren't going hungry. The Lord is providing for us in every way that we want but we just want more. It's not enough, God. you haven't given us enough.

You're not looking after us as we want. And isn't this aspect of their complaining more like our own if we're honest?

God has given you life, health, measure of strength but we want more. We're like the folk around about us in the world.

We crave what the world craves. We're caught up with that passion for material possessions. Why can't I have a bigger house? Why can't I have a better car?

Why can't I have newer clothes? Why can't I have that experience, that wealth, that possession?

We've allowed ourselves to be fooled by the world around about us.

[44 : 35] It's constantly proclaiming and saying get this and it will make your life better. Do this and you will feel fulfilled and satisfied. Experience this.

And what do we find that around about us we have got men and women who are still hungry and still craving and still thirsting and they've got the new car and they've got the bigger house and they've got the better job and they've got the larger pay packet and they're still miserable as sin. Why are we so stupid into thinking that somehow those things would satisfy us? When they don't satisfy them they haven't even got Christ.

And the answer again surely to us complaining and craving and wanting more is thankfulness for what we have. Do you have a pair of shoes on your feet?

That's a lot more than many people in the world. Do you have a roof over your head and a bed to sleep in? Well that's more than many people in the world. Do you have a car to drive?

[45 : 50] That's more than most people in the world. Do you have a job? Do you have family? Do you have loved ones? Dear friends it's the old chorus isn't it? Count your blessings name them one by one and you'll be surprised at what the Lord has done.

But we don't count our blessings we don't number them one by one and so actually we think that God has let us down somehow. I deserve better.

I deserve more. If God you were really love me then you wouldn't withhold these things from me. Of course he would. Of course he would.

Those of us who are parents know that there is a time to give and a time to withhold. When your child is trying to reach up to the knife drawer you don't say let me help you and get you some of those really nice sharp knives out that you can cut all your fingers off with.

No because we love them. And whatever God has withheld from us it is not because he cannot give us those things but because he knows that they are not good for us.

[46 : 54] He knows that what we need and what we have been given is more much much more than we could possibly need. People of God complained.

They complained because they forgot the wonderful salvation they had. They complained because they forgot the wonderful care with which God had provided for them.

Dear friends they named those places that they might remember them. Let us not forget them. Let us name before the Lord those things that he has done for us.

Let's remember before him with thankfulness the blessings that we do have in Christ. Paul says every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in yours there is nothing that God will ever withhold from you that is for your good.

He gives us everything. Here is Paul writing to Timothy and I will close with these words. Godliness with contentment is great gain for we brought nothing into the world we can take nothing out of it but if we have food and clothing we will be content with that.

[48 : 14] Those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction.

We know that we turn on the telly and open the paper every day and we see that for the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil. Some people eager for money have wandered from the faith pierced themselves with many griefs.

and he says to the believers in Philippi my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus.

Let's so do not worry saying what shall we eat what shall we drink or what shall we wear for the pagans run after all these things and your heavenly father knows that you need them but seek first his kingdom and his righteousness and all these things will be given to you as well.

Amen.