



Sermon Discussion Questions  
September 29, 2024  
*In the Wilderness*

## **STOP DREAMING ABOUT EGYPT**

Numbers 11:1-15 & 31-35

1. **Opening Discussion Questions:** (in a group setting you may not want to use all of these)
  - a. Has there ever been a period in your life when it seemed that everything was perfect – or nearly so? Describe that time and what made it especially noteworthy. Looking back, do you think you would have been happier had that period continued or are you really glad that life moved on?
  - b. When you were growing up was there a particular meal that you remember your mother serving regularly (perhaps even weekly)? Was that meal something you looked forward to or would you have preferred to never see it again?
  - c. When going to a restaurant some people prefer to order the same dish whereas others would rather go to a different kind of restaurant and order something new every time. Which group do you most closely identify with? Would you consider yourself an “adventurous eater”?
2. **Sermon Outline/Key Points**
  - a. Many Israelites Longed to Return to Egypt.
    - i. A pattern of grumbling began to set in.
    - ii. An ungodly longing for the past set in.
    - iii. Their complaints broke Moses' spirit.
    - iv. God punishes them by giving them what they want.
  - b. Longing for the Past Is Displeasing to God.
    - i. God's people still often long for the past.
    - ii. Stop dreaming about Egypt! Dream about serving God now and moving forward.
  - c. Longing for the Past Is Discouraging to Others.
    - i. We seldom realize how discouraging it is to long for the past.
    - ii. Be an encourager rather than a discourager.
3. **Study/Discussion Points:**
  - a. **Sunday Afternoon**
    - i. As soon as possible after listening to the sermon set aside some time to ponder these questions prayerfully:
    - ii. What one thing most stood out to you in this sermon?
    - iii. What new truth did you learn or of what truth were you reminded?
    - iv. After listening to the sermon, is there a Scripture passage you feel led to meditate on or commit to memory this week?
    - v. What is one thing you feel God is leading you to do after hearing this message?
    - vi. Did God convict you of a need to make any changes in your life and walk with Him?
  - b. **Monday:**

- i. First read Numbers 10:11-13 & 33-34 to transition from last week's lesson and set the stage for this week.
    1. How stressful would you consider this first stage of the Israelites' journey to be?
    2. What two factors would have reassured the people during this journey?
  - ii. Now read Numbers 11
    1. What are the main events recorded in this chapter?
    2. Which one strikes you as being most significant and relevant to our lives today?
  - iii. While the Bible does not specifically say that the events of this chapter occurred at the first stop (wilderness of Paran) if they did in what manner would history be repeating itself – see Exodus 15:22-27?
    1. What significant differences are there between the event described in Exodus and that in Numbers 11:1-3?
    2. In which case does the grumbling/complaining seem more justified?
    3. Why might these differences account for God's very different response?
  - iv. Consider Psalm 139:1-6, Hebrews 4:13 and Matthew 6:31-32. How should verses such as these guide us when we find ourselves in situations where we are tempted to complain?
- c. **Tuesday:**
- i. Read Numbers 11:1-9.
  - ii. Whether the events described in verses 4-9 are the same as those of verses 1-3 or perhaps describe a subsequent occurrence is uncertain. In either case, there are lessons we can learn.
    1. First, read the description of God providing the people manna in Exodus 16:1-5, 14-18, and 31. The events in Numbers 11 take place at least 2 years after God started providing manna.
    2. How did the people respond in both of these accounts? How is the complaint fundamentally different in the second? If in the first the complaint was about not having something, what is it in the second?
    3. Do you see a significant difference in complaining, especially complaining to God, about what you don't have (and really need) as opposed to complaining about what He has given us?
  - iii. When the Israelites based their complaints on a memory of the food they had while in Egypt what significant facts were they forgetting?
    1. How does Exodus 3:7-10 show that God was addressing their greatest need?
    2. What does God promise to do in Exodus 3:8? Why is it we tend to always focus on the near term and ignore God's promises for the future?
    3. How would promises like those in John 14:1-3 and Romans 8:28 help us respond appropriately when we find ourselves in situations where we are tempted to complain?
    4. Who do you think the "rabble" was that started the complaints (see Exodus 12:38 and Joshua 8:35)? In what way might those individuals Paul describes in 2 Corinthians 11:13 & 26 and Galatians 2:4 and Jesus alludes to in the Parable of

the Weeds (Matthew 13:24-30 & 36-42) be the “rabble” today (see also Acts 20:28-30 and 3 John 9-11)?

*d. Wednesday:*

- i. Read Numbers 11:10-15.
  1. While the craving started with the rabble who ended up complaining? What does that suggest about who the “families” were listening to most?
  2. What was God’s response? How does it compare to His anger after Aaron had made the golden calf idol (see Exodus 32:7-10)?
  3. How did Moses react? How did his response differ from when the golden calf idol was made (see Exodus 32:11-14)?
- ii. How does Moses’ complaint differ from the complaint that the people were making? To whom were the complaints made? Why does that make a difference?
  1. What is the difference between complaining to God and complaining about God?
  2. 1 Peter 5:7 tells us to “Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.” How can we do this without having it become a self-satisfying complaint? What examples did Christ (Luke 22:42) and Paul (2 Corinthians 12:7-10) provide that will help guide us?
- iii. What two things did Moses specifically complain about (verse 13 and verse 14)?
  1. What does Moses’ statement in verse 15 say to you about his state of mind and about his relationship with God?
  2. We know that Moses sinned when he struck the rock at Meribah (Numbers 20:1-13). In your view is he sinning here? If so, what is the sin and is it prevalent in our churches?

*e. Thursday:*

- i. Read Numbers 11:16-17 and 24-29.
  1. While God’s response to Moses’ two complaints is interspersed, what significance is there in the fact that the leadership complaint of verse 14 is addressed first?
  2. Based on what God tells Moses He will do, and then does (verses 17 and 25), what do you think was the nature of the leadership these seventy men would provide?
    - a. How would it have probably differed from that of the leaders Moses appointed in Exodus 18:17-26?
    - b. What parallel might we see in the church (hint, see Philippians 1:1)?
- ii. Since God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, have no limits (their power is infinite) why do you think that the Bible says that God “took some of the power of the Spirit” that was on Moses and gave it to the 70 men? What does it show the men and the entire community? Does it mean that Moses now had less of the Spirit’s power? That the 70 men only had a small helping?
  1. Two men, Eldad and Medad, did not assemble with the other 68. What reasons can you think of for their absence? How did God respond (judge) to their absence? How might this serve as an example for us today?
  2. What do you think of Joshua’s response in verse 28? How is it similar in nature to what the people were doing in verse 1?

- iii. Read verse 29 carefully meditating on what Moses is saying. Compare it with Joel 2:28-29, Mark 1:8, Acts 2:17, and Galatians 3:14. How are all Christians beneficiaries of Moses prophetic wish?

f. **Friday:**

- i. Read Numbers 11:18-23 and 31-35.
  - 1. How did God promise to respond to Moses' second complaint and the complaint of the people? Was His promised response a blessing or a punishment?
  - 2. What application can we draw from this account concerning our prayers (complaints)? How does the Lord's Model Prayer in Matthew 6:9-13 or Luke 11:2-4 show us the proper way? If we are sincerely using His model what must our response be to whatever He gives?
- ii. Why is Moses's response to God in verses 21-22 surprising? What events in Moses' life should have prepared him to accept God's answer without any doubt (see Exodus 16:13)? How might this example of a failure by Moses help us as we live our lives and as we disciple others?
- iii. Numbers 11 begins with God being angry (verse 1) with the people and ends with God again (still) angry (verses 33-34), but this time it results in an immediate punishment. Compare these verses to Psalm 78:23-32.
  - 1. While it must be speculation, what actions by the people might have aroused God's anger (Psalm 78:29)?
  - 2. What omission might have contributed (see Mark 6:41, 8:6 and Luke 22:17-19 & 24:30)?

g. **Saturday:**

- i. Read Numbers 11 slowly, meditating on the lessons God is teaching His people and how those lessons may apply in your life.
- ii. Read Job 23:12, Psalm 1:1-2, Jeremiah 15:16, Matthew 4:4, Luke 10:38-42, and 1 Peter 2:1-3. Instead of being concerned mainly about physical food and things of this world where should our appetite be focused?

**4. Application:**

- a. Spend part of your quiet time this week considering what your habits and schedule demonstrate about your true appetite. How focused are you on what God says is important as opposed to pursuing the "American dream"?
- b. Christians complaining is a problem that is probably experienced, to some degree, in every church. Consider how and when you may be contributing to such a problem. Pray that the Holy Spirit will give you the wisdom to distinguish between complaining and raising issues that really need to be addressed.

**5. Prayer Points:**

- a. Adoration – Psalms 8:1 and 29:1-2
- b. Confession – Proverbs 28:13 and 1 John 1:8-10
- c. Thanksgiving – Psalms 95:1-2 and 100:4-5
- d. Supplications –Matthew 21:22 and John 16:19