

Last month we heard Elijah asking God that he might die. Today we hear Moses tell God, “*Kill me at once!*” What is it about the prophets of God that they despise their place here among the living? But it’s not just prophets. When life becomes overwhelming, the question of whether life is worth living can pop up in anyone’s mind.

For Moses, what overwhelms him is the burden of carrying all this people. Their number is immense. Six hundred thousand. But that is just the men. Add in the women and children and that is a lot of people.

Yet it’s not just the number of people. Moses knew how many there were when he led them out of Egypt. It’s the fact that they are so obstinate. Their grumbling never seems to stop. “*Give us meat to eat!*” is their latest complaint. The complaint that sends Moses over the edge. God was giving them manna to satisfy their hunger, but they were sick of it. In our text, the people recall the fish they ate in Egypt, along with cucumbers, melons, leeks, onions, and garlic. They don’t want the bread that God is giving them. “We are tired of even looking at it!” they complain. “Give us meat with all the fixin’s!”

Their complaining causes Moses to complain. You’ve heard the saying, “If the wife ain’t happy, ain’t nobody happy.” Well, the wife is this multitude of people; the bride of Christ; the church in the Old Testament. And they ain’t happy. So, neither is Moses.

And neither is God. “*The anger of the Lord blazed hotly,*” says our text. Would you complain to an angry God? Moses does. “*Why have (You), he cries...laid the burden of all this people on me? Did I conceive all this people? Did I give them birth, that You should say to me, ‘Carry them in your bosom’...to the land You swore to give their fathers? I am not able to carry all this people...the burden is too heavy for me...if You will treat me like this, kill me at once!*”

Have you ever complained like this to God? “Oh, I would never!” we might reply. Why not? We complain to each other. We take our gripes to family, friends, coworkers. Why not take them to God? And don’t tell me that you have nothing to complain about. I know better. I have plenty, and so do you.

It’s time for us to be like Moses and take our complaints to God. If we don’t, we will become like the rabble among the Children of Israel. They had complaints. But they complained about God instead of complaining to God. And that is a huge difference. Moses did not complain about God. He complained to God. God was not angry at him, but He was angry at the Children of Israel.

When we complain about God it leads to rebellion. This rebellion we see popping up among the Israelites again and again. But had they learned to complain to God rather than about God, we would have seen a very different story in their journey through the wilderness.

You and I are on a journey, too. And because life in this world is a wilderness, we have many complaints. Complaining to God is one thing, but we tend to act like the Children of Israel. We grumble about God. The way He provides; what He provides; the burdens He gives us.

And even this, we grow tired of the manna that He gives to us. The Bread from heaven, the true Bread, Jesus Christ. The Israelites were tired of even looking at it. Do we get that way? “Enough of Jesus already! Give me something else from the menu. Give me meat to eat. I’m sick of always hearing about Jesus, and Baptism, and the Lord’s Supper.”

Moses complained to God because of his burden. Does God ever complain about us? Complain that you and I, with all our grumblings about Him, are too heavy a burden for Him to carry?

No, my friends. God is He who carries burdens. This is why Jesus came to us. To carry our burdens for us. He did this for Moses. God took his burden and He stretched it out over seventy elders of Israel. The burden was too heavy for Moses. And God helped him. From here on out, Moses could carry his burden because he did not carry it alone.

“*Cast all your burdens upon Me,*” Jesus invites us. And, in fact, He already took our burdens from us. When Jesus walked to the cross on Golgotha, He was like Moses walking through the wilderness. Moses felt alone, but Jesus was alone. God lifted Moses’ burden from him, but not from Jesus. Think about what He carried to His cross. Sin, guilt, pain, suffering. He carried it all. And not for six hundred thousand, or even ten times that number. Jesus carried the burden of every human being.

He carried yours, too. Jesus carried the burden of your sin. He carried your guilt. He was burdened with the punishment that you and I deserve for all our complaints about Him. Jesus faced an angry God. Angry at Him because Jesus became the sinner in our place on the cross.

Does all this mean that we should stop complaining to God? Stop reminding God of the burdens that we still carry? No. It means that you never carry your burden alone. God stretched out your burden upon the One who was stretched out on the cross for you. Your daily burdens are not punishments from an angry God, therefore. They are necessary to keep you in Christ. To keep your complaints coming to Him instead of about Him.

And why wouldn’t He take all your complaints? He takes your sins. He accepts your guilt. And in return He gives you mercy. He forgives you. He pardons your sin. He forgives each and every one of you.

In a little while you will come up to His altar. Bring your burdens, your complaints; bring your sinfulness; bring everything that plagues you. Jesus takes it all from you. And He gives you His own body and blood. The very body and blood that died on the cross for you; that purchased forgiveness, life, and salvation for you. Your burden is too heavy for you, but not for Jesus. He goes with you, my friend, in your journey, and you are never alone. Amen.