

The University Heights Messenger

October 17, 2010

“Adam, Stop Complaining!”

Those are the words I had to yell at myself Wednesday evening. Interestingly the word “complaint” can have many different meanings depending on the context of its usage. For the sake of this article I will be using it as we most commonly think of it. A complaint is “*a statement that a situation is unsatisfactory or unacceptable.*”

For a couple of weeks I had been hoping, and praying, for rain. My grass certainly needs it but more importantly those who make their living from the soil have been having great difficulty the past few months due to little rain. Wednesday evening we were the recipients of a steady, soaking rainfall. When I walked out of the building after worship Wednesday night and the first drop struck me squarely on the head, I hustled with Jacob to the van, *complaining internally about the rain each step of the way!*

As I sat in the van waiting for Jackie (I would have gladly pulled up to get her but she had followed me out. I feel it is important that you know that!), I thought about some things. **Matthew 5:44-45** shows that rain is one of God’s blessings to all people. Any farmer can easily verify the truth of that! I had been asking for rain for a couple of weeks. When God provided it I started complaining about it! After kicking myself I thanked Him for that blessing and asked forgiveness for my momentary slip.

On the way home that night Jackie and I began to talk about a new meal plan we’ve started. The plan details a dinner each night and tells you exactly what to buy from the grocery store for the week. We have chosen the “low carb” plan. Just a few

minutes after kicking myself for complaining about the rain, I found myself in the midst of a little rant about the meal plan! Truth be told millions of people around this world, some of them in this very city, would give an arm to be able to sit down and enjoy the meals I ate, and complained about, this past week. God has blessed us with the means to buy the food, the utensils to prepare it with, and a house with a kitchen where we can cook it all. What have I to complain about?

I’m reminded of some Old Testament examples of God’s goodness being met only with complaints. Consider first Israel during their Exodus. They had been rescued from terrible bondage in Egypt. They were led and protected by God throughout their wandering. Their clothing was preserved so that it would not wear out. Of course, none of that would have mattered if they had no food to eat. Again, God provided. In **Exodus 16:3-4** we find Him preparing to send the bread from heaven that would feed and sustain them during their years in the wilderness. By the time we come to **Numbers 11:4-6** we find them complaining about it. They continued to long for what they had eaten in Egypt when they were in forced captivity! How ungrateful.

Another example of complaining when thanksgiving should have been offered can be found in **2 Kings 5:1-14**. Naaman was a leper. He longed to be healed of his leprosy so he was told to go to Elisha. Elisha sent a messenger to him telling him to wash himself seven times in the Jordan River. Of course, Elisha was simply telling Naaman to do what God had instructed. Naaman refused at first, angered that Elisha did not come out to him and wave a hand

over the leprosy to heal him. Imagine that. God told him simply to wash seven times in the Jordan and one of the most terrifying diseases of that day would disappear from his body. Surely this was a cause for rejoicing! Naaman did not see it that way and instead complained.

Let us suppose in both cases that God acted as your average human would act. Suppose that with Israel He said, "You don't like the food I'm providing? Fine! Every one of you can starve. I will not give you anything anymore!" He would not have been out of line, would He? What about with Naaman? Suppose during Naaman's rant God spoke to him and said, "You refuse to do what I've instructed My prophet to tell you? Fine! You had your one chance and you blew it. Live the rest of your life as a leper and die that way!" Again, He would not have been out of line.

Let's take my complaints. Suppose God had said, "You don't like the rain? Fine! Whatever city you're living in will never see rain again!" Or, "You don't like your food? Fine! I'll take away your means to buy it and then let's see what you've got to say!"

Fortunately, our God is not like your average human. I find myself discouraged and frustrated when I try to do something nice for a person, try to bless them in some way, and am met only with complaints. Certainly God feels that discouragement and frustration more keenly than we. Yet He keeps on blessing and caring for us. Next time we find ourselves complaining about something let us pause to see if we're actually complaining about a blessing. If so we would do well to immediately ask for forgiveness and start thanksgiving.

AL

IN NEED OF PRAYERS:

Ruel Baker is not strong enough to come home. Currently they are preparing to move him to a hospice room. As of the time of this bulletin he is still in room 653 and can receive visitors. There will be further updates today.

Our members: **Glenn Davis, Glenn Kimberlin, Janet Brundige**

Others: **John Bennett, Dennis Brennan, Sara Phillips, Robert and Sarah Brundige, Warfel family, Gail Hunter, Kay Montgomery, Jean Gartland, Wes Kidd, Vera Howerton, Gail Stein, Glenn Goldy, Shannon Gilbert, Chuck McDavitt, the Shamas family.**

UPCOMING EVENTS:

The information meeting will be next Sunday at 5.

BIBLE READING SCHEDULE

Sunday: Prov 21-22, Ps 71, John 13
Monday: Prov 23-24, Ps 72, John 14
Tuesday: Prov 25-26, Ps 73, John 15
Wednesday: Prov 27-28, Ps 74, John 16
Thursday: Prov 29-31, Ps 75, John 17
Friday: Eccles 1-3, Ps 76, John 18
Saturday: Eccles 4-6, Ps 77, John 19

SERMON TOPICS:

Sunday AM. How Shall The Young Secure Their Hearts?
(Psalm 119:9-16)

Sunday PM. Where Is Your Loyalty?