

September 14, 2025 Session 2
Provision Numbers 11:1-17

Intro: To express a need is different than to complain. Complaining usually involves finding fault or to make accusations. I think most of us experience daily pain or displeasure, but we don't blame anyone, and it wouldn't do any good if we did. However, complaining often involves placing blame away from ourselves. The police officer gave me a ticket, but I was the one who was speeding. Complaining is our response when we feel that our perceived needs are not being met. In reality, much of our complaining is caused by unrealistic expectations or inconvenience. Because of the continual complaining and opposition of the people, Moses found himself constantly in prayer to God. In prayer, he was either lamenting over the waywardness of the people or interceding for them before God. For almost a year, the children of Israel had been camped at the foot of Mount Sinai. At long last, the nation was ready to move out. The tribes had been organized in assigned locations in the line of the march. Within this line of march, two groups of Levites also marched transporting the parts to the tabernacle and its sacred items. Everyone knew where to be and what to do. The journey had begun! Unfortunately within a short time the joy and excitement of the journey turned into complaints against God and the leadership of Moses. The complaints began typically over one of three things—hardship, food, and leadership. In the cycle of complaint, the next element was some type of judgment from God against the rebellion.

First Rebellion (Numbers 11:1-3) read in Bible The first rebellion illustrates a pattern: the Israelites complained, God brought judgment, the people cried out to Moses, and Moses interceded with God on their behalf. When the people complained, it displeased the LORD. The people may have been complaining about the hardship of the journey. They had been at Mt. Sinai for over a year and they were probably not used to moving. I guess they didn't agree with the saying "When the going gets tough, the tough get going." It is human nature to sometimes complain about one thing when there is a deeper concern.

Dissatisfied Followers (Numbers 11:4-9) p. 21

It doesn't take much to rile a crowd. Instigators, identified as "riffraff" were gathered. These people were a mixed multitude that accompanied the children of Israel as they departed from Egypt.

This is an indication that not all who left Egypt when God delivered the Israelites were descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. What foods do you crave and to what lengths would you go to have them? “Who will feed us meat?” What a strange question. The Israelites brought flocks of animals with them when they left Egypt. The real question may have been a general complaint and exaggeration about the hardships of the journey. It also may have been that they didn’t want to use up their livestock supplies. This complaint began with the riffraff but was taken up by the entire group. We have seen with our own eyes, in real time, how influencers (riffraff) can turn a group of people into an angry, destructive mob.

Vs. 5 The foods they craved were what they had eaten while in Egypt. What they called free fish is a misnomer. The fish had come at the terrible price of miserable slavery and harsh treatment. They had forgotten the toil of slavery, glossing over the hardships in Egypt because of their cravings. In their cravings, they demonstrated ingratitude. They did not acknowledge that God had delivered them from slavery, taken them as His people, and provided for their needs during their journey. God had provided manna about a month after they left Egypt, and it came without cost or labor. The people would gather up the manna in the morning, grind it up like flour and make flat bread from it. The loss of appetite can be translated as: “our bodies are dehydrated.” The dryer wilderness climate may have contributed to the people’s discomfort.

Vs. 7 Manna took its name, “What is it?” from the exclamation of the Israelites when they first saw it. The taste was described as a pastry cooked with the finest oil.” One source compared an ingredient mentioned, coriander seed, to poppy or sesame seeds. Coriander seed was added to the manna for flavor along with Bdellium, an aromatic resin. This is a stark contrast to the people’s complaints of how much they disliked manna. It would be like complaining about having an endless supply of crispy cream donuts that were healthy. Jesus compared Himself to manna. **John 6:33-35** “*For the bread of God is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.*” Then they said to Him, ‘Lord, give us this bread always.’ And Jesus said to them, ‘I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst.’ This is what we as Christians and followers of Jesus firmly believe. Jesus is our Savior and gives us eternal life.

Vs. 9 God was faithful to provide manna every night along with the dew. It was a daily gift. Manna kept longer than a day bred worms and stank. But on the day before the Sabbath, the Israelites were to gather enough for two days, for on the Sabbath day no work was to be done.

Besides providing food, manna was an important lesson that God often provides for his people one day at a time.

Frustrated Leaders (Numbers 11:10-15) p. 23

The discontent expressed by the rabble-rousers spread quickly throughout the entire camp of the Israelites. Weeping was heard everywhere, from family after family. The nature of discontent is to spread easily to others. Sadly, people find it easier to complain about their circumstances rather than do something about it. Because of this discontent of the people, "the LORD was very angry." Moses was also provoked by the Israelites actions and complaints. He was angry at the people and the burden they were in his life, and he was frustrated with God for having given him such an overwhelming task of leading these rebellious people. Just as the people were sick and tired of manna, Moses was sick and tired of them. As a classroom teacher, some years it seemed like I was given "the class from hell." With so many student behavior issues and low student skills, it was difficult to teach.

Vs. 11 We can come to God, our Father with our concerns. Moses expressed despair, discontent, and even a hint of rebellion against God. Moses was no superman; he was a human being just like us. His level of frustration had reached the breaking point. Moses was suffering and had needs that were insurmountable. He poured out those frustrations to God. Did you ask God why concerning the events of this week? I did. So much emotion surfaced. First the political assassination of Charlie Kirk, and then the next day, Roxie went home to be with Jesus. Why? Some people called me, and as God helped me I was able to share with them how God led me through this sorrow. First, God made me aware that they, Charlie and Roxie, deserved to go home. They deserved to go to their heavenly home. Neither of them suffered long: an initial pain, unconsciousness, and the next thing they saw was Jesus. There is nothing in this world that is better than that. Second, I/we need to boldly speak the name of Jesus as our Savior and Lord. Charlie Kirk may be heard more now than before as people who have not heard him debate are now listening to him address the questions many people of all ages want to ask. Charlie answered questions factually, and asked questions that got people, especially college students, to think about what they believe or don't believe. Moses' first question was rhetorical, the answer being obvious: No. The next question had more meat to it. Pun intended. "Where can I get meat to give to all these people?" Projections of the Israelite camp population put the number of men, women, and children at this time to be in excess of two million people.

God is used to feeding people. **Matthew 14:17,21** *“And they said to Him [Jesus] ‘We have here only five loaves and two fish.’” “Now those who had eaten were about five thousand men, besides women and children.”*

The Lord God feeds His people, and the richest food is the living bread from heaven, Jesus. Overwhelmed by the weight of leadership, Moses had a great sense of loneliness as the only leader of the people. “I can’t carry all these people by myself.” I can’t do this! This was a declaration that the entire task of leading the nation was more than Moses thought he could handle. This wasn’t just a complaint, rather it was a passionate appeal for deliverance. Remember when God first called Moses, and what his response was? **Exodus 4:10** *“Then Moses said to the LORD, ‘O my Lord, I am not eloquent, neither before nor since You have spoken to Your servant; but I am slow of speech and slow of tongue.’”* Yes, I have made excuses when God had impressed upon me to do something. All the more reason to stay closely connected to Him, and believe that He will provide what we need. Even those with the strongest faith can still become frustrated and feel defeated. Moses’ plea to God helps us realize we can be honest before God. In his despair, Moses told God he would rather be dead than continue to go through what he was experiencing with the Israelites. Moses laid the responsibility for this crisis at God’s feet, and he gives us a good example to follow. God understands our frustrations and offers grace when we pour out our hearts to Him. God is our confidence, and He will give us peace and direction to do the right things.

Gracious Provision (Numbers 11:16:17) p. 25

“The LORD answered Moses...” The LORD answers us! These are precious words of God’s faithfulness. God gives us answers. While Moses desired death, God dealt with him in grace. Rather than responding in anger toward the complaint of Moses, God graciously took the steps necessary to provide for the needs of the situation. In mercy, God did not give Moses and the people what they deserved. Instead, in grace, God gave Moses and the people what they did not deserve. God’s answer to Moses’s complaint was to provide other leaders who could give assistance to Moses in leading the people, and provide quail as another food source beyond the daily provision of manna. God instructed Moses to choose elders and officers known to him. They would have already been recognized as leaders on the tribal and clan levels. God’s direction was to give these seventy men greater leadership, influence, and responsibility. This new body of leaders would give immediate assistance to Moses with

the burden of leadership. The number seventy speaks of an adequate representative group who could support and administer Moses's leadership. In the New Testament the size of the Sanhedrin (the governing Jewish body) was also seventy, and carried over from Moses's time. The seventy leaders Moses chose were to be brought to the tabernacle, also called the tent of meeting. They were to help bear the burden of the people that had been carried up to this point by Moses alone. God would endorse the seventy men before the tabernacle.

Vs. 17 "I (God) will come down and speak with you there." God speaks to us! The gifts and influences of the Holy Spirit of God would be put on these men to assist Moses in leading the people. God bestowing His Spirit on others did not diminish the leadership abilities of Moses in any way. These leaders were given what Moses had: gifts of leadership, wisdom and discernment. When another person accepts Jesus as their Savior, it does not diminish my indwelling Spirit. Jesus's death paid for all the sins of humanity, past, present, and future. God could save every person on the planet because He already paid all that sin debt. That to me is fantastic.

1 Timothy 2:3-5 *"For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the [God] Man Christ Jesus."* The truth is that we need to confess our sins and repent, receive God's forgiveness, wear the righteousness Christ gives us, and be Saved. We should never take God's provisions for granted, and always take our concerns to God. We can tell God what we think we need because He knows what we need. We can trust God to provide what we need to carry out the tasks He gives us, and stop making excuses why we think we can't.