

Murmuring

All of my prayers include a request that God will reveal to me the truth about the mistakes that I don't realize are actually sinful. There should be no place in a true born-again Christian's life for complacency where repentance is concerned. We are all sinners regardless of how dedicated we are to living our lives in godly ways. What most troubles me are the sins of which I am unaware. They may be sins that I subconsciously refuse to give up, and have therefore calloused over in my conscience. Regarding these, I pray that God will remove the callouses and expose them in a way that I cannot weasel my way out of dealing with them. Then there are the sins that we cannot discern to be sins. These too, I pray, that God will clearly and unmistakably reveal to me. Most recently in answer to these prayers, God has shown to me a form of sin that I commit that, absent His blessed grace, I would not have otherwise discovered.

As I write this, I only know that murmuring is a sin, and that this sin is troubling to my soul. It is a cause of grief to my indwelling Holy Spirit, as is the presence of any sin. I consider myself as someone who has been blessed with the mission of studying God's inerrant Scripture, and to search its depths in order to better understand its truths. Therefore, I'm particularly sensitive about doing anything that will dampen my Holy Spirit's eagerness to light my path, and to guide me in producing unblemished fruit, through my teachings and writings.

Scripture commands us not to grieve or quench the Holy Spirit. (See my study called: Don't Quench or Grieve the Holy Spirit) It doesn't take too much thought to realize what it is that can cause these affects. What else can it be but sin! As with nearly all of my written "musings" the purpose of this effort is at this point 100% for my edification. It will be shared if I am satisfied that, through the guidance of the Holy Spirit, I have sufficiently unscrambled my thoughts, and I have written in a manner that may be of benefit to others.

We all murmur, gripe, and complain and never consider it as sinful. By what authority do I claim that murmuring is a sin? The first is found in 1Corinthians 10:6-11 as it refers to Old

Testament examples of sins that are applicable to all ages including today. “*6 Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted. 7 Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play. 8 Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand. 9 Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents. 10 Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer. 11 Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.*”

Here we find a list of things cited as examples that we are to restrain from doing. These are: verse 6, we are not to be listening after evil things; verse 7, we are not to be idolaters; verse 8 we are not to commit fornication; verse 9 we are not to tempt Christ; verse 10 we are not to murmur. Then verse 11 speaks of the Old Testament activities by God’s chosen as examples for our guidance. Thus murmuring is on the list of sins, set forth as examples for this and every generation unto “the ends of the world are come.” Second, in Philippians 2:14, God commands through Paul, that we are to “*Do all things without murmurings and disputings:*” This of course, is also expressing the authority of the New Testament directly to us in this matter of murmuring. What more evidence is necessary? None!

The next question for which an answer must be sought is, what is murmuring, and at what point does simply stating true negative facts and feelings become sinful murmurings? It’s interesting that in the Corinthians reference, the translation is from a Greek word meaning simply “murmur, grumble,” while a close, but different Greek word is used in Philippians meaning “grumbling, grudging, and murmuring.” This seems to add an even broader and more sinister tone to that which God has commanded us to purge from our lives. Is it sinful murmuring when we honk the horn and speak or think ill of a driver who seemed to be doing something stupid? Was the honk early in the situation so as to pre-empt the action by alerting the driver? Or was it later in order to demonstrate your “righteous” condemnation of his action? There is a big and obvious difference from murmuring perspectives. Grumbling, complaining and murmuring have become almost a universal part of our daily conversations regarding government, politics, weather, food, social status, services, salaries, jobs, the media, traffic, and even some aspects of church

activities. These are but a few of a more comprehensive listing that it would be quite easy to compile.

Those of us who are born-again Christians should examine ourselves regarding this, as well as all other aspects of our lives. We should do this with fear and trembling as God, through Paul in Philippians 2:12 states we are to work “out our salvation with fear and trembling.” Those to which he spoke were saved souls. This command was to make visible for our inspection the inner workings of our salvation to determine the spiritual quality of our inner thoughts and feelings, to see if they conform to our outer expressions of our faith. How appropriate this verse is when the next verse 13 reminds us that “For it is God, which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.” As we already have seen, verse 14 is where God commands that we “do all things without murmurings and dispute.” As saved souls, we are blameless before Christ. Blameless is an interesting word in its application during the Gospel writing period. Those who sold wine would allude to its quality as “blameless” which meant it was not diluted but of the highest quality. Jewelers would claim their products were “blameless” that the metal was pure, absent of having been alloyed with cheaper metals. And so it is with the Christian character. Murmuring dilutes the quality of our character before our Savior, Lord and Master Christ Jesus.

Is murmuring a punishable sin? All saved souls, are punished here on earth for every sin we commit while we live. God’s perfect justice demands that all sins are to be punished. God Himself, through His vicarious suffering paid the full price for all of our spiritual sins, the sins that would have prevented our souls/sprits from eternal life. However, that retribution was only to provide eternal life after physical death. That was not a payment that nullified the need for earthly retribution for our earthly sins. God’s perfect justice demands a just earthly payment for the sins of the redeemed. This justice does not necessarily apply to the unsaved, because the just payment for all their sins will occur in the lake of eternal suffering. One very telling example of this is found in Numbers Chapter 14. Here murmuring is cited as the basis for the Israelites 38 years of punishing wandering, until everyone of the age to have effectually murmured at that time had died, many prematurely. There are other places in both the Old and New Testaments that illustrate physical punishment applied to the sin of murmuring or its equivalent, and being reconciled through physical punishment. The transgressions of Aaron, Mariam and Moses are

three other Old Testament applications. God called and removed His people from Egypt in order to prepare and send them into the spiritual darkness of Canaan. They failed to do this then, and for millennia since. It was their continuing times of murmuring that was a major example of why they never yet achieved their appointed mission which is identified in Daniel 9:24-27

The most vital element regarding our topic has to do with the heart. All true Christians have by the grace of God, new spiritual hearts. The new heart is unique and limited to all redeemed Christians. This entire study is of relevance only to those who have these special hearts. None of this is of any benefit to the unsaved, unless they are seeking salvation and are hungry for relevant information. Sin originates in the mind. It's incubated in thought, and often manifests in physical action. The old heart has little if any power or even desire to prevent sinning. However, intrinsic in the new heart of the saved Christian is the desire to not sin, as well as the power to overcome sin. It has the power to stop the mind before the thought turns into a sin. Now that we realize that murmuring and its several cousins such as griping, complaining and gossiping, are sins, it is essential that we seek to eliminate them from our lives. In order to enhance our understanding of why it's a sin, and why it is particularly important that we steel ourselves against it, we ought to examine what it does to our Christian walk.

As redeemed Christians, we are all sons or daughters of God. As a condition of salvation, we regard Jesus as the Son of God, and as our Lord and Master. Jesus never murmured, and therefore, as we seek to emulate Him and be His earthly examples, we too must not engage in murmuring. When we do murmur, as with all non-Christ-like characteristics which our evil nature likes to engage in, we are both doing violence to His name and are failing in our commitment to truly represent Him to the world. As noted above the consequence of murmuring were well expressed in the Old Testament. A blessed life is one where we are continually expressing our gratitude to God for even the little things in life. We cannot be expressing gratitude while murmuring. Therefore murmuring diminishes an important aspect of the Christian life. Murmuring is an expression of our distrust of God. How can we believe that God is with us and in control of all things, when we murmur about things which we should trust that

He will surely deal with in His own way when He deems it appropriate? Murmuring by those who profess to be Christians project an image to others that puts Christianity in a bad light and therefore makes our witnessing not only ineffectual, but makes us appear hypocritical. Thus the focus on Jesus, and His way to salvation is tragically lost. Some have rightly observed that griping, complaining and other manifestations of murmuring is contagious. Even the most firm-in-the-faith Christian can catch this spiritual disease if exposed to it enough. If unchecked, it will infect other parts of the Body of Christ. From a true Christian perspective murmuring grieves God and tests His patience. Its continuance can only result in Godly disfavor and punishment.

As a final observation (for now) regarding our topic, we should look at where we are in the faith. When a soul is saved he or she are immediately set apart from the world. That setting apart is so that God can begin a work in you that He will perform until the day of Jesus Christ (Philippians 1:6) “Until the day of Jesus Christ means until the end of our mortal lives. That continuous working by God called sanctification is God’s way of preparing us for being the best we can be as we move on to take our place in eternal service to the Lord. Involved in this, is our free will, or volition. We must be participants in this preparation process because God’s sovereign will does not relieve man’s responsibility in the matter. Thus we can conclude that this preparation can proceed well only if we participate willingly in the process. The more receptive, willing and eager to follow His way. The more dedicated to this we are the more affective and beneficial we will be in the eternal realm. All who have the indwelling Holy Spirit cannot but by most eager to trust and obey our Lord to the very best of our abilities in all things during this life. Removing murmuring from our lives is but one evidence of that commitment.