

Conquering Complaining

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[0:00] Philippians chapter 2 verses 14 through 18.

! Do all things without grumbling or disputing, that you may be blameless and innocent children of God, without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, holding fast to the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I may be proud that I did not run in vain or labor in vain.

Even if I am to be poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrificial offering of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with you all. Likewise, you also should be glad and rejoice with me.

May God add a blessing to the reading of his word. Would you please be seated? The story goes that one Sunday after John Wesley, the English pastor, preacher from the 18th century, after he had gotten done preaching one of his sermons, he was approached by a lady from his congregation.

And she said to him, Pastor Wesley, do you mind a little bit of criticism? And so John Wesley looked at her and he replied, No, what seems to be the matter?

[1:31] And she said, Well, I am deeply offended by your bow tie. The streamers are too long. And so John Wesley looked at her and he said, Okay, you know, let's find some scissors.

And he grabbed some scissors and he handed them to this woman. And he said, Well, why don't you cut them to the length that you think is appropriate? And so she did. She cut off to the length she thought was right.

And then John Wesley looked at her. He said, So this is fine now? And she said, Yes. And he said, Okay, will you hand me the scissors back? And so she did. And then he said to her, Do you mind a little bit of criticism?

And she said, No. And he said, Okay, well, I'd like you to stick out your tongue because it's offending me and I think it's a little bit too long. All that to say, In the church, we tend to complain a lot, don't we?

Not just in the church, in our world. This is what I think is ironic about our present situation. We live in the most affluent nation that the world has ever known, past or present.

[2:41] Right? Here in the United States of America, we have more than anybody has ever had. However, we seem to also complain and be dissatisfied and be upset more than any other nation, past or present.

Now, I like to think that, you know, we're like the kid on Christmas Day who's had a big Christmas list and he's opened up all of his gifts. And he's surrounded by all of these new toys.

But all he can think about is that one toy. That one toy that was on his list that he didn't get. And so he's pouting and he's moping and he's upset because he didn't get that one thing that he wanted. There's always something more, it seems to me, with not just myself, but with the nation that we live in. We can't be content with what we have.

We're constantly complaining. And I think there's five categories of complainers that we see in our world today. The first is the natural.

[3:49] The natural complainer. This is the person who is perpetually pessimistic. They are like Eeyore from Winnie the Pooh. They wake up in the morning and they say, if it is a good morning, which I doubt.

Right? They're just naturally pessimistic. They're always complaining. From sunrise to sunset. The second is the whiner. The whiner.

This is the type of person who always asks, why me? Or says, it isn't fair. This is the person who struggles when they see others happy.

Like a sibling on his birthday, right? And he's opening up all these presents and he has a younger brother. And the younger brother sees him opening all these presents and it's tearing him up inside. And he's whining and he's crying, you know, because it's not him. He's not the one who gets all the presents and everybody else is happy. Oh, look, you know, it's a new whatever. But the little brother is always, no, you know, why not me?

[4:51] Why not me? It isn't fair. Why can't it be my birthday today? The whiner. The third is the victim. And we see a lot of that in our society today.

This is the type of person who says, no one appreciates me. They are the type of person who, when they are under pressure or when they are feeling stressed, they want everyone to know about it. And they complain to others so that they will feel sorry for them. The fourth is the cynic. This is the type of person who says, nothing ever changes.

It's no use. Why should we even bother? And then fifthly, we have the perfectionist. And this is someone who says, is that the best that you can do?

I bring all these up not so that you can elbow your spouse sitting next to you in the pew, but that you can understand that one of these five probably explains yourself.

[5:55] And if you're like me, you've been able to pull off all five at one point in time. Complaining is an issue that we all struggle with.

We all struggle with complaining. But I don't think we realize how serious of an issue the Bible says that complaining is. And so that's what I hope that we will see from Scripture today.

That complaining is a serious issue. Now, here's the other thing I want you to know. Don't do what many like to do with a sermon like this, which is to think of all the other people that they know that should hear it, right?

Oh, if only such and such was here today. They really need to hear this message. Or, you know, you're looking at the side of your eye to somebody, you know, down the pew or across the way and thinking, I hope they're paying attention.

And I hope that they're taking notes. Don't do that today. Okay, first, think about yourself. And so this is what I do every Monday morning when I get into the office and I begin to work on the sermon is I pray this.

[7:00] God, please first convict me. And boy, has he convicted me this week. When you're thinking about complaining, right, you realize how much you actually complain on an everyday basis.

And you see that it's not something that God wants to be a part of our life. But let's be real about this. Complaining is a hard attitude to break.

But we can break it. We can conquer it with the help of God's word and by the power of his Holy Spirit living inside of us. We can conquer complaining.

So how do we do that? Well, first of all, we must realize that complaining is not one of the fruits of the Spirit. Verse 14. The apostle says again, do all things without grumbling and disputing.

You guys know the fruits of the Spirit, right? Listed in Galatians 5.22. These are the attitudes, the Bible says. These are the characteristics that are to exemplify the believer of Jesus Christ.

[8:06] These are the types of attitudes. These are the types of characteristics that a believer should have. They are love, right? Joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control, and grumbling and disputing are not a part of that list.

In fact, they're contrary to that list. They are the opposite of those attitudes, aren't they? How weird would it sound to hear, here's the fruit of the Spirit's love, joy, peace, grumbling, kindness, goodness, disputing.

It doesn't fit because those are attitudes as a Christian that we should not possess. Look at 1 Peter 4, 9 through 10. There he writes, show hospitality to one another without grumbling.

As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another as good stewards of God's varied graces.

So what are we seeing here? Well, that we are, one, to share the gifts that the Holy Spirit has given us, and two, that grumbling and disputing are not those gifts.

We are not to share our grumbling and our disputing with one another because they don't accomplish what we hope and think that they will.

[9:24] So what we should do is keep those things to ourself, or really, primarily, what we should do when we have a grumble, when we have something to dispute about, we should take it to God first.

First, we'll get there eventually, but look at Philippians 4, verses 6 through 7. There, the Apostle Paul writes, Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God, and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

So usually, the things that we are anxious about are the things that we tend to complain about. When you take those things to God first, when you let Him know how you're feeling, what will happen is that you'll have peace over that situation, the Scripture says there.

And it will come in either one of two ways. One, you will see how foolish your complaint was. Or two, God will give you wisdom on how best to handle that complaint or that dispute that you have. I feel like I've run into a lot of Christians who are convinced otherwise. They think that complaining is how you get things done in the church.

[10 : 43] But ask yourself this question. When someone complains to you, does it cause you to change? Does it?

When someone is constantly bringing their complaints to you, does it make you want to change? Does it make you want to listen to what that person has to say anymore? Does it make you think well of that person?

So why do you do it to others? The first step in conquering our complaining is to recognize that it is not one of the fruits of the Spirit.

And so instead of complaining and grumbling against one another, we should take those complaints to God first. And again, in so doing, realize either one, it was foolish and it should be dropped.

Or two, it's something that really needs to be addressed. But there's a much better way that it can be handled. And God will give you wisdom on how to approach that situation.

[11 : 50] Secondly, how do we conquer complaining? We recognize how serious a sin complaining is. We recognize how serious of a sin complaining is.

Let's look at verse 15 again. That you may be blameless and innocent children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world.

So in reality, every complaint that a believer makes is ultimately against God. You understand that? Every complaint that a believer makes ultimately is a complaint against their Lord.

When you complain, what you are ultimately doing is shaking your fist at God and His sovereignty and His authority. And what you're saying is, I don't like what you've done. I don't like it.

I don't think you should have done it this way. I don't think that you truly have control. And I don't want to do this. Or it should be different, God.

[12 : 52] What you're really saying is this. I could do it better. I could be a better God than you are. What a great sin that is.

But again, complaining is hard to break. Because it's etched into our fallen human nature. Who was the first one who ever complained? Adam.

Complaining against God, remember? When Adam and Eve had eaten of the fruit of the tree of knowledge, right? Their eyes were opened. They saw their nakedness.

And they ran in shame. And they hid from God. And then God calls them out. And He has this exchange with them. And He asks Adam, you know, and I'm paraphrasing. What's going on? How do you know now that you are naked?

And Adam says basically this, right? It was her fault. It was this woman. You gave her to me, God. You know, remember how it was before her?

[13 : 51] Things were good. Remember, you declared it was so. We were doing just fine. And then she came. And she messed it all up. That's basically what Adam was saying there.

But it didn't work. It didn't fly. God didn't believe it. And then Eve did the same thing. Well, it was the devil. The devil made me do it.

So there we see at the very beginning, since the very first moments after the fall, man has complained and they've complained against God. In verse 15, Paul uses many of the same words that appear in Deuteronomy 32.5.

Many of the same words he uses in verse 15. Are the words used in Deuteronomy 32.5. Let's look at it. There it says they have dealt corruptly with him. They are no longer his children because they are blemished.

They are crooked and twisted generation. And so here in verse 15, inspired by the Holy Spirit, I believe that Paul is recounting Israel's time of wandering in the desert.

[15:00] Paul points us back to their example to remind us, just how serious of a sin complaining is and the serious consequences that result from it.

Moses was a great man, but he was a man like you, like me. He wasn't perfect. He was known to be a complainer. And there are several instances where Moses complains to God.

He complains to God that God sent him to the people in the first place. Remember? You sent me to Pharaoh. I told him to let the people go and Pharaoh got mad about it. Maybe, you know, this isn't the way that it should be going, God, because now things are worse for them.

And as they travel through the wilderness, we see that there's this continual complaining against, you know, Moses against God. Moses with the people, the people against God. After he had miraculously delivered them all from the pursuing Egyptians in the Red Sea, you remember?

They get to the other side and then they start complaining because they don't have water to drink. And then they show up at Moriah and the water was unfit to drink there. And by a miracle, God graciously responded by purifying that water.

[16:11] And they had enough. And then he leads them out to the oasis at Elam. And there they have plenty of springs and they have plenty of food, but then they've got to continue on. And then not long after that, they start complaining again.

And what they're saying to God is this. We should never have left. Oh, that we could go back. And be slaves again. Instead of being out here having to put our faith and trust in God.

Who had continually showed up, right? But their memories were short. And so we see that complaining is serious. It's a serious sin. Finally, in Numbers 13, they arrive at the land that God had promised to give them.

And so it says that they sent out some spies to spy out the land, the promised land that they were going to be given by God. And so 12 spies were let out into this promised land.

Caleb and Joshua were two of those men. And they looked it over and they came back with this report. Caleb said, Let us go at once. Let's occupy it. For we are able to overcome it.

[17:21] But the other ten men did not see as Caleb and Joshua saw. And they gave a bad report. Remember, they said this. We are not able to go up against the people.

For they are stronger than we are. So they brought the people of Israel a bad report about the land that they had spied out. Saying that the land through which we have gone to spy out is a land that devours its inhabitants.

And all the people that we saw in it are of great height. Then the Bible says all the congregation raised a loud voice. And the people wept that night. And all the people of Israel grumbled against Moses and Aaron.

Saying, Why is the Lord bringing us into this land to fall by the sword? Would it not be better for us to go back to Egypt? The people rejected God's plan.

They rejected God's chosen leaders. And they rejected God himself. Complaining is a serious sin because at the heart of every complaint, is rebellion.

[18:26] Rebellion against God. God's response wasn't to say to them, right? You know, hearing all their grumbling and complaining and disputing. You know, maybe you guys are right.

Maybe you're right. Maybe I'm wrong. You know, I'm going to do things your way. Is that how God responded? No. Let's look at how God responded to see how serious he takes the sin of complaining.

In verse 11. And the Lord said to Moses, How long will this people despise me? And how long will they not believe in me? In spite of all the signs that I have done among them.

In verses 22 through 23. Here we see the consequences. God says, None of the men who have seen my glory and my signs that I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, And yet have put me to the test these ten times and have not obeyed my voice, Shall see the land that I swore to give to their fathers.

And none of those who despised me shall see it. Verses 28 and 29. Say to them, As I live, declares the Lord, What you have said in my hearing, right?

[19:33] All that complaining. I will do to you. Your dead bodies shall fall in the wilderness. And of all your number listed in the census from 20 years and older, Who have grumbled against me.

And finally, verses 34 through 35. According to the number of the days in which you spied out the land, Forty days, a year for each day, You shall bear your iniquity for forty years, And you shall know my displeasure.

Does God take complaining seriously? Yes, He does. Why? Well, there's three things we see from that encounter with God and His people there in the wilderness.

First, when you complain, you are complaining against God Himself. We've gone over this already, but just to reiterate, When you complain, you are in fact saying that you doubt the sovereignty of God.

You are shaking your fist at Him, saying that you could do it better. Again, God delivered these people from their bondage to the Egyptians. He set them free.

[20 : 49] He promised to bring them to a land that was flowing with milk and honey. He brought them there. But they doubted God's ability to deliver it over to them. After all that He had done for them, they still doubted.

Should they have doubted? No. It was by God's strength that the Egyptians were washed away, right? It was by God's strength that they were led to this land that He was going to give them to them by His strength.

It was a land that belonged to Him. There was other occupants in it, but it was His land. And if God said, I'm going to give it to you, then He was going to give it to them. No, they shouldn't have doubted.

Well, how about us as Christians? God has likewise delivered you from the bondage of sin. He has set you free from it.

He has promised to complete the good work in you that He began at your conversion. He's promised you a better promised land.

[21 : 53] One that is eternal. You can enter into it because Jesus has endured the wrath of God for your sins. He's clothed you in His righteousness.

He's sealed you with His Spirit. Look at Romans 8, 35-39. Do you believe this? Who shall separate us from the love of God? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword?

As it is written, For your sake we are being killed all the day long. We are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered. No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.

For I am sure of this, that neither death nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Do you believe that that's true? Well, since these things are true, do we honestly have a legitimate gripe to bring before God?

[23 : 07] God who works all things together for our good? I love this quote by Timothy Keller. It's only a sentence, but there's so much truth packed in it.

He says, If we knew what God knows, we would ask exactly for what He gives. If we knew what God knew, if we knew all the things that God knows, we would say, Yeah, that's the way it should be.

The way you're doing it, that's exactly how it should be. But since we don't know what God knows, we trust Him. And instead of complaining, we walk by faith.

The second thing, when you complain, you sin against God. When you complain, you sin against God.

Here's the thing, God doesn't merely suggest, you know, Hey, maybe you shouldn't complain so much. He doesn't suggest that. He commands it. He says, Stop complaining.

[24 : 09] Stop complaining. Thirdly, those who complain are in danger of not entering the promised land. They are in danger of not entering the promised land.

Now here's the thing, it's about a two weeks journey from the Red Sea to the promised land, yet it took the nation of Israel 40 years to get there.

An entire generation died in the wilderness because of their grumbling and their disputing, because of their complaining. That's how serious God takes this sin.

But now you might be thinking, Well, okay, Pastor Mike, I know that you are trying to tell us that complaining is a serious issue, and I agree that we should take it seriously, but this is not the unpardonable sin, right?

Is it really that big of a deal? Isn't it faith alone in Christ that is required for salvation? It's only unbelief that a person will not enter into heaven, right?

[25 : 17] Yes, that is precisely my point. Because at the root of every heart, of every complaint, is unbelief.

And understand this. This is what I'm trying to say. This is a sin that you must repent of. It's not a sin that God won't forgive.

But if your life is characterized primarily by an attitude of complaining, instead of the attitudes of the gifts of the Spirit, then you are in danger.

You may not truly be saved. You understand that? If you're constantly complaining, if that marks who you are, at the root of all complaints is unbelief, then you may not truly be saved.

I want to back that up by having us look at John chapter 6. I've been in this chapter in my Bible study this week, and there's a lot of awesome things to have pulled out of it.

[26 : 28] And in John chapter 6, beginning in verse 2, I want you to see this. I don't have the slides for you. I'll have some in a moment. But in John chapter 6, verse 2, it says, And a large crowd was following him, because they saw the signs that he was doing on the sick.

Right? So this is how this chapter begins. Jesus has drawn a large crowd to himself. Why?

Because he's doing things that are amazing, that are causing people to wonder in awe of who this man is.

They're not quite sure who he is, but they're following him, because they want to see what he's going to do. He's saying amazing things. He's doing amazing things that no other normal man could do. And so Jesus has a large crowd out following him.

And Jesus sees this large crowd. And if you remember, he sees that they don't have any way to eat. And so he does the miracle of the loaves and the fishes. Right? He takes a little sack lunch, and he multiplies it, and he multiplies it, and he multiplies it.

The Bible says there was 5,000 men, not including their wives and their children, who Jesus fed that day, and they had leftovers afterwards. So we're talking about 15, 20,000 people who are following Jesus at this point.

[27 : 50] That's a large church, right? That's a mega, mega, mega church. But let's see what happens now. As we go down to verse 26, Jesus starts saying some things to them that are challenging.

In verse 26, he says, Truly, truly, I say to you, you are seeking me not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves. Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you.

For on him God the Father has set his seal. So they said to him, What must we do to be doing the works of God? Jesus answered them, This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent.

So they said to him, Then what sign do you do that we may see and believe? What work do you perform? Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness as it is written.

He gave them bread from heaven to eat. Jesus said to them, Truly, truly, I say to you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but my Father gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is the one who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.

[29 : 07] They said to him, Sir, give us this bread always. So you see what's happening here? Let's stop here. The day before, they wanted to make Jesus king. They saw what he had done.

Jesus knew, right, their minds, knew that they wanted to take him and make him king because they saw this amazing miracle. Their stomachs were full. And so Jesus retreats from there and he goes up to be by himself.

And then the disciples get in their boat. They cross over to the other side. That night, Jesus walks on the water. And he has that encounter with Peter and his disciples. They get over to the other side. All these people wake up in the morning and they see Jesus isn't here.

His disciples left. He's done something amazing again, right? How did he get over there? So they run over to the other side, this large crowd of people. And then Jesus again starts to talk to them about why they are following him.

And they present this challenge to him. They say, yeah, yeah, yeah. And again, I'm paraphrasing. Basically, this is what they're saying. Yeah, yeah, yeah. That was an awesome miracle what you did. But you know what was even better?

[30:16] In the Old Testament, when Moses, you know, the bread came out of heaven. You know, we saw you take that sack lunch and you multiplied it. That was awesome. But wouldn't it be cool if you did that?

Man, we'd really like to see that. Just bread falling from heaven. We would believe you if that was the case. And then Jesus continues. Verse 33.

For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world. They said to him, sir, give us this bread. Jesus said to them, I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me shall not hunger and whoever believes in me shall never thirst.

But I said that to you that you have seen me and yet you do not believe. All that the Father gives me will come to me and whoever comes to me I will never cast out.

For I have come down from heaven not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me. And this is the will of him who sent me that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day.

[31:19] For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life and I will raise him up on the last day.

So now look at this. The Jews grumbled about him. They complain about him because he said, I'm the bread that came down from heaven.

And they said, they complained, right, to one another, is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How does he now say that I have come down from heaven?

Right? So basically they're saying, we know this guy. All of a sudden he's saying that he descended from heaven. Well, we know who he is. He can't be speaking the truth. They refuse to believe it because of their complaining, right?

Jesus answered them, Do not grumble among yourselves. No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him.

[32:22] And I will raise him up on the last day. It is written in the prophets, and they will call, and they will all be taught by God. Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to me.

Not that anyone has seen the Father except he who is from God. He has seen the Father. Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes has eternal life. I am the bread of life.

Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. This is the bread that comes down from heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die. I am the living bread that came down from heaven.

If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. And the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh. Then look at this.

The Jews then disputed among themselves, grumbling, disputing, saying, how can this man give us his flesh to eat?

[33:23] So Jesus said to them, truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.

For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink. Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him. As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so whoever feeds on me also will live because of me.

This is the bread that came down from heaven. Not like the bread the fathers ate and died, whoever feeds on this bread will live forever. Jesus said these things in the synagogue as he taught at Capernaum.

When many of his disciples heard it, in verse 60 it says, they said, this is a hard saying, who can listen to it? And now jump down to verse 66. This large crowd, thousands of thousands of people. It says, and after this, many of his disciples turned, and turned back, and no longer walked with him. Do you see what is happening here?

[34:41] Right? These people wanted Jesus up and to a point. But when it came down to believing in Jesus for who he truly was, they couldn't understand it.

They couldn't receive it. Instead, they complained, and they grumbled, and they disputed. Why? Because they never truly belonged to God in the first place.

They weren't truly his children. But the ones who believed were. And so what I want you to see is that if you are constantly complaining, and grumbling, and disputing, it may be the case that you are not truly a child of God.

In which case, you must repent, and stop your complaining. Again, they like Jesus to a point, but their grumbling and their complaining led many to abandon him.

I'll say it again. If grumbling and complaining and disputing best characterizes who you are, then you, my friend, are far from God, and you must repent.

[35 : 54] You must. So how else will we conquer sin? Well, thirdly, by remembering your mission. Remember your mission.

Complaining is a contradiction to our God-given mission. Paul says, in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, we, we as Christians, are to shine as lights in the world, holding fast to the word of God.

Let's look at Matthew chapter 5, verses 14 through 16. There Jesus says, you are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden, nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house.

In the same way, when you're light, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works, and give glory to your Father who is in heaven. So we see that the Christian life should not be marked by complaining, but by godly living, which gives testimony to the truth of His word, and the reality of His saving power.

If you have a family member, if you have a co-worker, if you have a neighbor, and all they see you doing is complaining, when you go and try to share the gospel with them, how credible of a source do you think that you're going to be for them?

[37 : 14] I'm not going to believe what you say, right? I've seen you. I see how much you complain. I see how much you grumble. I see how unhappy you are. You're going to try and tell me that this gospel thing can transform me?

I don't believe that. Remember our mission. We hold fast to the word of God, which a better translation for that is holding forth, or holding out the word of God.

As we live our Christian lives, we hold out the word of God, because it's a lamp unto our feet, and a light unto our path. And we use it as we go out engaging our communities with the word of God.

And we seek to enlighten them with the word of God. And we seek to encourage them with the word of God. And we seek to equip them with the word of God, so that they will go back out, that they will engage others.

Fourthly, how do we conquer complaining? We rejoice instead of complaining.

[38 : 25] Paul says, Do you remember where Paul is when he's writing these words?

He's in prison for preaching the gospel. And if there's anyone who has a legitimate gripe, it's the Apostle Paul, right?

He's been through a lot in his Christian life. He has been beaten. He has been in prison. He has had a lot of bad things happen to him as a result of his Christian witness, yet he still says here, How could he do that?

Well, here's the secret. It's not really a secret, but this is how he was able to do that. His focus was on the cross of Jesus Christ.

He understood the cross. And when you understand the cross like Paul, you realize that you don't deserve any better than what you got.

[39 : 47] In fact, you deserve much worse. You understand that? When you look at the cross, and you see what Jesus went through for your sins, you realize, I deserve a lot worse than I have it.

I deserve eternal torment in hell for my sins against God. But then you see another thing when you look at the cross.

I am receiving something much more than I ever deserve. You understand what I'm saying? Jesus bled and died for me in my place on that cross, forgiving me of my sins that I might have eternal life. And so you look at the cross and you see, I'm not getting what I really deserve to get. But man, I am getting far better than I ever could have hoped for.

Forgiveness of my sins. Being adopted as a son or daughter of God. An everlasting life. Do you believe that today?

[41 : 04] Do you believe that? Now there's some serious issues in the church and I don't want you to leave here thinking, well we can't talk to our deacons or our elders or our pastor about anything because they'll point the finger in our face and say we're complaining that we're going to go to hell for it, right?

That's not what I'm saying. There are some serious issues and concerns that we've got to deal with, right? And they're not complaining. But I hope that you have been able to see what complaining is. And before you start grumbling and before you start disputing and causing dissension within the church, for everybody's sake, yours primarily, take it to God first. Take it to God first. and keep your focus on the cross of Jesus Christ.