

Holy Week Devotions-Saturday: Grumbling to Gratitude



“And do not grumble as some of them did—and were killed by the destroying angel.” 1 Corinthians 10:10

We’ve almost made it to Easter! Today we are looking at the following stanza of the **True Lenten Discipline** poem.

FAST from discontent; FEAST on gratitude.

(Here is the full poem of True Lenten Discipline. Here are the devotions for Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday. Here is the link to the True Lenten Discipline Podcast.)

Today we will start out by looking at how seriously God takes our **attitudes** and obedience to Him. Our verse in 1 Corinthians is referring back to Numbers 16 when the Israelites were on their journey out of Egypt. Three men, Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, became insolent and were sinning by complaining against Moses and Aaron. They were of the Levite tribe and felt that they should be part of the priesthood too. Their attitudes were spreading to those around them. A dramatic standoff occurred and what happened is that these men and all that belonged to them were swallowed up by the earth.

The next day the entire Israelite Community **grumbled** against Moses and Aaron blaming them for the deaths, and God was so upset with the rebellious camp that he started a plague. Aaron made atonement for the people’s offense by offering incense,

but not before 14,700 people were killed. This plague is what the the verse in 1 Corinthians 10:10 is referring to.

Phew. This is a sad, scary story, but it shows us the importance of our attitudes and obedience to God. God was serious about weeding out evil from the camp, because He knew how fast it spreads. Today, as Christ followers, we have Jesus standing between us and God, making atonement for our sins, but God still takes our attitudes seriously.

The word for *grumble* is *goggyzo*, and it means “to murmur, mutter, say anything against in a low tone, of those who confer secretly together, discontentedly complain.”

It's all too easy to fall into complaining when life doesn't go the way we want it to, isn't it? Thoughts of “my life would be better if ...” echo through my mind. The stanza of the poem redirects our thinking to **gratitude**, to being **thankful** for what we have, where we are right now. Mary Kane often refers to the illustration of Daniel in Daniel 6:10 as a person who offered thanks even in the midst of dire circumstances.

At the advice of his satraps (who wanted to trap Daniel), King Darius had issued a decree that for the next 30 days, no one could pray to anyone or anything but King Darius, otherwise the person would be thrown in the lion's den. Verse 10 says that when Daniel heard this, he went home and prayed, giving thanks to God, just as he had done before. Now if anyone had cause to grumble, it would have been Daniel, but instead he chose to count his blessings and thank God. God protected Daniel from harm when he was thrown in the lion's den.

The word for *gratitude* is *charis*, and it means “joy, pleasure, delight, sweetness, charm, loveliness.” When we dwell on these things in our lives, it lifts our spirits and puts our focus on God. Let's cultivate that habit and redirect our focus. When we start to complain about something, let's stop and mentally list one thing we are thankful for in our life. And

the first thing we can be thankful for this **Easter** is Jesus' atonement for our sins, which has given us abundant life.

Application: Today let's leave behind the "My life would be better if ... mentality, and put on the mantle of gratitude and thanksgiving by actually making a list and counting our blessings. We'll be able to clearly see God at work in our lives, even if we're in the midst of a difficult situation.

Prayer: Lord, we do thank you that you loved us so much that you sent **Jesus** to atone for our sins. Thank you for the gift of eternal life in heaven and the life you have given us to be lived out on earth. Help us to focus on our blessings. Amen.