

JANUARY 28, 2024 SUNDAY - DAY 21

# PRAY THAT WE WOULD NOT GRUMBLE AGAINST ONE ANOTHER

JAMES 5:9

## JESUS IS THE JUDGE

The readers of James' letter were victims of mistreatment by the wealthy (Jas. 5:1 - 6). Such trials often produce grumbling or complaining. James writes to encourage them to "not grumble," but rather be patient. Believers are encouraged to show stamina without grumbling. The literal meaning of the Greek word translated in most English translations as "grumble" is "to groan" or "to sigh heavily." It reflects an inward, unexpressed feeling of sorrow created by undesirable circumstances. Mark uses this word for Jesus in Mark 7:34. Paul uses it for believers in Romans 8:23 and again in 2 Corinthians 5:2, 4. There is no room for this in the family of God.

**The reason for not grumbling is "lest you be condemned."**

We are to treat one another in such a way that you will not need Jesus to act as a Judge, and the Judge is already at the door. Blaming another, condemning another, often leads to condemnation upon self. The context of this encouragement is a discussion on patience with three illustrations.

The first is of the farmer who patiently waits for his land to produce crops. He must prepare the soil, and then sow the seed during the time of the "early rain" toward the end of October. Then the farmer has to keep the fields free of weeds, being patient, and trust God for a harvest just after the "latter rain" in late April or early May. So, too, they were to be patient, not grumbling, because the return of the Lord was near.

Grumbling prevents us from developing patience. Instead it develops a critical spirit and a faultfinding lifestyle. Sometimes we even blame our predicament on others.

## JESUS WILL RETURN

While the lesson is one of patience, the reason James gives for not grumbling is the imminent return of Jesus. They lived as though Jesus were returning at any moment.

The New Testament urges us so to live. They were only a few years away from the days in which Jesus promised his followers that he would return, and yet they were grumbling. We are two thousand years removed from his prediction, and we likewise grumble. Regardless of the age in which one lives, grumbling is forbidden in light of the sure return of Jesus. The story goes of a man who entered a monastery sworn to the discipline of silence. Each monk was allowed only two words every ten years. After ten years of silence, each monk was called in to confer with his abbot in his customary two word dialogue. The abbot asked him, "After ten years among us, what you would like to say?" "Food bad," the monk replied. Then he went back to his cell. Ten years later, he was called in again. This time he said, "Bed hard," and returned to his contemplation. Finally, after thirty years, he was called in for a third interview. With exasperation, he said, "I quit!" "It doesn't surprise me at all," said the abbot. "You've done nothing but complain around here for thirty years."

**Grumbling and complaining are not spiritual gifts, contrary to what some might claim.**

They are habits that drain the body of joy. Remember how the grumbles among the people of God brought death and disaster in the wilderness? A whole generation of grumbles had to be buried in the desert before the Israelites could possess the land.

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This doesn't mean we should not address situations that need correction. But be tactful when you express your concern.

In a country church in Croatia at the beginning of the twentieth century, an altar boy named Josep Broz served the priest at Sunday mass. Nervous and fearful, he dropped the cup. Angrily, the priest slapped the boy and shouted, "Leave, and do not come back!" He never did. That boy became known as Tito, the Communist leader of Yugoslavia. About the same time in Peoria, Illinois, another altar boy named Peter John also dropped the cup at mass. Instead of grumbling and condemning, the bishop smiled and gently whispered, "Someday you will be just what I am." That boy grew up to be Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen, one of the most eloquent spokesmen for the Roman Catholic Church.

We are like students fighting in a teacher less classroom as the teacher is returning from a visit to the office. We are like workers fighting in a supervisor less work place while the supervisor is returning from a conference with the boss. We are like children fighting in a parent less room while the parent is returning from responsibilities in another room. Don't grumble. The Lord's return is at hand.

Pray that we would not grumble against one another.

**Do not grumble against one another,  
brethren, lest you be condemned.  
Behold the judge is standing at the door!**  
Jas. 5:9

## PRAYING FOR ONE ANOTHER

1. Pray that God himself will control your tongue each day.
2. Pray that God will give you a heart to see and applaud what is good rather than notice and complain about what is bad.

3. Ask God to reveal all the wound you have received through others complaints and pray for deep, permanent healing.
4. Pray for an epidemic of joyful gratitude in your congregation.

**There are obvious benefits to  
confession. The process allows us  
to experience God's forgiveness.**

**Whatever shame and revulsion we might  
experience as we publicly confess under  
the Holy Spirit pales in comparison to the  
blessings received when we are obedient.**