

Thursday November 5th

Numbers 11 4-11

Key verses 12-14

*12 Did I conceive all these people? Did I give them birth? Why do you tell me to carry them in my arms, as a nurse carries an infant, to the land you promised on oath to their ancestors? 13 Where can I get meat for all these people? They keep wailing to me, 'Give us meat to eat!' 14 I cannot carry all these people by myself; the burden is too heavy for me.*

There is much to learn from these verses. Unlike the Israelites who were grumbling among themselves, Moses is now grumbling before God! We do not read anywhere of the people taking their worries directly to God but no doubt they did complain to Moses. He is clearly burdened with their concerns.

Modern Christians can behave in exactly the same way. Rather than put their concerns directly before God they will grumble to each other about this and that, seek support for their issues and then lay it upon their pastors. The concern, the gossip and the grumbling infected every family (v10). Such is human nature that we seem to dwell on the negatives rather than the positives! In the grand scale of things their moans were pathetic! They were in a desert and complaining about the 'type' of food they were miraculously being given. We, of course, have the benefit of hindsight but aren't we also guilty of overlooking the big picture for the sake of our present grumblings!?

Next see Moses as he takes his concerns to his master. As their leader, he shoulders the responsibility of his people and ends up taking it out on God (v11). He is basically saying, 'I can't take it anymore!' He has a collapse of confidence so great that it culminates in the despair of v15. It seems he'd rather die than carry the burden any longer.

Depression is a very real and prevalent problem among Christian pastors who are burdened with the state of the souls of those they shepherd. Little does any of us know of the wrestling in prayer that has gone on our behalf by people who care about our spiritual nature. Little do we know of the effects of those burdens on their mental health.

Whether we identify with the people or with Moses, the answer is always the same. Cling to Christ more closely, look to him for strength and guidance, trust his word and his promises.

Spurgeon suffered greatly with depression. He declared, 'Tears can clear the eye so that we can see with an improved vision and perspective'.

Look to the Lord and his strength; seek his face always. (Ps 105 v 4)