

Saint Timothy Lutheran – Edmonds, WA

September 27, 2009 – Rev. Craig A. Patterson

“Who Am I, Their Mother?!”

(Text: Numbers 11: 4-6, 10-16, 24-29)

Context: After demonstrating His great power and love for His people by parting the waters of the Red Sea and delivering the people out of slavery in Egypt, the complaints from the people were heard by Moses and by God. They were questioning God’s care for them. They were complaining about the doughy-food (manna) that the LORD had, miraculously, provided for them in the desert. They wanted to change the menu. They desired to have some meat! Their selfish desires and endless requests were wearing Moses down. In fatigue and frustration, Moses cried out to God, “I alone am not able to carry all this people, because it is too burdensome for me,” (Numbers 11:14). Moses desired to die rather than continue in this role. Thus, the LORD responded by instructing Moses to choose seventy elders to assist him and to bear the burden of the people with him. Later, the LORD would provide meat in the form of quail. The people would then eat and eat meat until they had more than they could eat. The LORD would then strike them with a severe plague. Many died who had been greedy and they were buried in that place, Kibroth-hattaavah (literally “graves of craving”).

I. Easily, Sinful Mankind Can Take God’s Countless Blessings And Provision For Granted.

- A. The children of Israel, who had witnessed God’s powerful and gracious hand continued to complain about all sorts of things.
 - 1. This complaining wore out the servant of the LORD, Moses, whom God had given to serve the people.
 - a. This complaining led Moses to request from God his own death. (11:15).
 - 2. Spouses, parents, employers, church workers, etc, can feel as though they are taken for granted and unable to keep up with the fickle, frequently changing, wishes of the people whom they serve.
- B. As servant-providers (like Moses) or as the beneficiaries of this servant-care (like the people of Israel) we, too, can forget God’s good intention (love) toward us and His more-than-able-power (omnipotence) to provide for us.
- C. Looking only to ourselves, we shall wear-out and run-out of energy and ability.
- D. Complaint against God’s servants is complaint against God (who sent them).
- E. God will punish unbelief. (In this life and the life to come. He is Judge.)
- F.

II. God Continues To Work With Sinners, Turning Their Hearts To Repentance and Faith.

- A. Moses was given assistance in the form of seventy elders to help him.
 - 1. “Gather for Me seventy men from the elders of Israel...” (Num. 11:16ff.)
 - 2. Today, pastors, missionaries, teachers, etc. are given helpers.
- B. God, mercifully, did not destroy all of the people of Israel.
 - 1. Many survived the severe plague and God continued to lead them. (See Numbers 11: 34-35.)
- C. Preserving His chosen people, God kept His promise to provide the world with a Savior through His chosen people.
 - 1. The “seed of the women” that would redeem sinners and deliver a blow to the devil’s head was not deterred by the complaints of the children of Israel.
- D. The LORD is still busy strengthening His servants in order that they may serve those who are the “called-out-ones” (ekklesia) and bring them safely to their heavenly home.