

## Doctrine of Murmuring

1. Murmuring is presented as a great sin and a constant problem in the church of the *Old and New Testaments*.
2. A common Hebrew word for murmuring is *luwn* (loon); or *liyn* (leen); which means *to stop* (usually over night); by implication, to stay permanently; hence (in a bad sense) to be obstinate (especially in words, to complain). When people murmur they stop and stay rooted on a particular concern to the point of wearing out their welcome. There is a refusal to move on.
3. People murmur for any and every reason. Sometimes the complaint is valid. More often than not the complaint of the murmurer is not valid. There should be a holy hush.
  - People complain when basic necessities are scarce, such as food or water. *Exodus 17:3 And the people thirsted there for water; and the people murmured against Moses, and said, Wherefore is this that thou hast brought us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our cattle with thirst?*
4. Ultimately all sin is against the Lord, as David acknowledged in Psalm 51. By attacking Moses, the Exodus Generation attacked the Lord who brought them out of Egypt. Because of the sin of murmuring, the Lord caused individuals in the Exodus Generation to perish from twenty years of age and upward.
  - *Numbers 14:29 Your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness; and all that were numbered of you, according to your whole number, from twenty years old and upward, which have murmured against me.*
5. People complained when church discipline was administered.
  - *Numbers 16:41 But on the morrow all the congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron, saying, Ye have killed the people of the LORD.*
6. God knows when people murmur, even when they do so in private. Murmuring is intrinsically evil because it is unfair. The tongue of the murmurer states as being true, things which are manifestly false.
  - *Deuteronomy 1:27 And ye murmured in your tents, and said, Because the LORD hated us, he hath brought us forth out of the land of Egypt, to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us.*
7. There is no sin that is singular. The essence of sin is like an octopus. It has many tentacles that reach out in other directions. The sin of murmuring leads to open rebellion. Those who speak against providence will not listen to the voice of God in gospel obedience.

- *Psalms 106:25 But murmured in their tents, and hearkened not unto the voice of the LORD.*
8. If God is gracious He will grant a new heart to His people. Bible doctrine shall replace murmuring, and kindness will replace complaining.
- *Isaiah 29:24 They also that erred in spirit shall come to understanding, and they that murmured shall learn doctrine.*

Before he enlisted in the Union Army to fight during the US Civil War, Joshua Chamberlain was a quiet and unassuming college professor. In the crucible of military combat he distinguished himself for his heroism in holding the line on Little Round Top during the Battle of Gettysburg. He was later awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor. To recognize Chamberlain's contribution to the Union victory, General Ulysses S. Grant designated him to receive the first flag of surrender at Appomattox Courthouse. The defeated troops of the South expected to be ridiculed and humiliated. Instead, Chamberlain showed them kindness and respect. For this, the Confederate commanding officer wrote in his memoirs that Chamberlain was "*one of the knightliest soldiers of the Federal Army.*" As a committed Christian, Chamberlain reflected the grace of Christ. We too need to stand for what we believe but also to be kind to those with whom we disagree. Paul exhorted Timothy, "as a good soldier of Jesus Christ . . . be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, in humility correcting those who are in opposition" (2 Timothy 2:3,24-25). In conflict and in reconciliation, our response should reflect the gracious heart of a knightly soldier of Christ. —Dennis Fisher

"Oh, to be like Him, tender and kind,  
Gentle in spirit, lowly in mind;  
More like Jesus, day after day,  
Filled with His Spirit now and always."

Ellsworth

9. Jesus used the concept of murmuring to illustrate spiritual truths. In one parable some servants are found speaking against the goodman of the house because he wanted to show grace and mercy to all alike.
- *Matthew 20:11 And when they had received it, they murmured against the goodman of the house.*
10. Religious hypocrites, after the spirit of Judas murmur against others who are trying to do good. With unabashed arrogance they offer an alternative plan as to what should be done with resources.
- *Mark 14:5 For it might have been sold for more than three hundred pence, and have been given to the poor. And they murmured against her.*

11. Those who murmur have a negative influence on others. When Judas began to speak against a great lady of grace and offered an alternative plan as to what should be done with resources not within his disposal, he influenced others disciples to join him in his sin. In Mark 14: 5 we read, “*And they [the other disciples] murmured against her.*”
12. The scribes and Pharisees were constantly speaking against Christ and against His disciples. They did not like the Lord’s teaching nor did they like the company He and His disciples were keeping.

#### **Dislike of the Lord’s Doctrine**

- *John 6:41 The Jews then murmured at him, because he said, I am the bread which came down from heaven.*
- *John 6:61 When Jesus knew in himself that his disciples murmured at it [doctrine], he said unto them, Doth this [teaching on election] offend you?*

#### **Dislike of the Lord’s Company**

- *Luke 5:30 But their scribes and Pharisees murmured against his disciples, saying, Why do ye eat and drink with publicans and sinners?*
  - *Luke 15:2 And the Pharisees and scribes murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them.*
  - *Luke 19:7 And when they saw it, they all murmured, saying, That he was gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner.*
13. Using an event from the *Old Testament* church, the church of the *New Testament* is prohibited from murmuring. An implied judgment of great severity is forewarned.
    - *1 Corinthians 10:10 Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer.*