EVERYTHING DEPENDS UPON YOUR POINT OF VIEW
Numbers 11.1-17

Now the people complained about their hardships in the hearing of the LORD, and when he heard them his anger was aroused. Then fire from the LORD burned among them and consumed some of the outskirts of the camp. When the people cried out to Moses, he prayed to the LORD and the fire died down. So that place was called Taberah because fire from the LORD had burned among them. The rabble with them began to crave other food, and again the Israelites started wailing and said, “If only we had meat to eat! We remember the fish we ate in Egypt at no cost—also the cucumbers, melons, leeks, onions and garlic. But now we have lost our appetite; we never see anything but this manna!” The manna was like coriander seed and looked like resin. The people went around gathering it, and then ground it in a hand mill or crushed it in a mortar. They cooked it in a pot or made it into loaves. And it tasted like something made with olive oil. When the dew settled on the camp at night, the manna also came down.

Moses heard the people of every family wailing at the entrance to their tents. The LORD became exceedingly angry, and Moses was troubled. He asked the LORD, “Why have you brought this trouble on your servant? What have I done to displease you that you put the burden of all these people on me? 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? Where can I get meat for all these people? They keep wailing to me, ‘Give us meat to eat!’ I cannot carry all these people by myself; the burden is too heavy for me. If this is how you are going to treat me, please go ahead and kill me—if I have found favor in your eyes—and do not let me face my own ruin.”

The LORD said to Moses: “Bring me seventy of Israel’s elders who are known to you as leaders and officials among the people. Have them come to the tent of meeting, that they may stand there with you. I will come down and speak with you there, and I will take some of the power of the Spirit that is on you and put it on them. They will share the burden of the people with you so that you will not have to carry it alone.

Intro
Illus- Pizza
Not so long ago I ordered a pizza from across the street
• They make pretty good pizzas- I you like pizza
• Not too expensive
But being a little a selective on what I ordered, I asked for a thin and crispy pizza
• With extra cheese
• And lots of onions
Now, having ordered from them before, I expected to get a nice round pizza
• That’s what I usually got in the past
• So I expected no less this time
Ques- But do you know what I got instead?
I got my pizza
• Thick and crispy
• Lots of cheese and extra onions
• But one thing more
• It was square
At first, it didn’t bother me so much
• But as I pulled out a square or two
• I got to thinking, I don’t know if I like a square pizza
• Then I got to be thinking, I wonder if I got gypped
• And I thought as I pulled out another couple squares, I really did get gypped
And then the final thought…

I don’t like square pizza

Now, I don’t know if any of that is true

- I just didn’t get what I was expecting
- It tasted fine
- But the looks threw me

Maybe square pizza doesn’t bother you, but I would contend that the way things look to you matter a whole lot to you

- The clothes we wear
- The haircuts we pay for
- The cars we drive

Some things just gotta look right

Ques- But could it be that what something looks like is one of the most ineffective way of looking at things?

Illus- Chitlin’s

A few weeks ago I went out to lunch after church to King’s in Kinston

- My first time there
- So while we were waiting for the order I decided I was gonna walk around, and that’s what I did
- I was looking for the hot bar- but really what I was looking for was chitlin’s

I have never eaten any, so I wanted to see what they looked like

Didn’t find any

Ques- So do you know what I did do?

I went home, got on the computer and looked it up- and here is what I learned…

- There are Chitlin’s
- There are Cracklin’s
- There is Hog Maw
- And there is Tripe

Ques- How many of you know the difference?

1. Chitlins

- Are also known as “chitterlings”
- They’re made out of pig intestines
- You can fry them or boil them

2. Tripe

- Tripe is similar to chitlins
- The difference being they are made from the pig’s stomach, and not the small intestines
- Most tripe is from cattle or sheep
- Unless it is hog maw, which is pig (also known as paunch)

3. Cracklins

- They are made out of pork fat
- And in case you are wondering, cracklins and pork rinds are not the same thing
- Pork rinds- or pork skins- are made just from the skin of the hog
- Cracklins are the skin with the layer of fat beneath

Now, I didn’t find any of this garbage at King’s
- I am afraid I am like the ancient Israelites and the manna
- I would rather have a pizza any day

But here’s the thing about pizza…

**Ques:** If pizza was all you had, how many days would it take before you started to complain?
- If it was a life and death situation, I don’t think I would complain, but that’s just me
- Not everyone has the same tolerance level

But you can find yourself in unusual circumstances- and when you do- the real “you” comes out of you
- And that’s when you find out if you got the right stuff
- At times, leadership in any calling- and Christianity too- means that sacrifices must be made- to accomplish extraordinary things

1. **If You Are Not Willing To Risk The Unusual, You Will Have To Settle For The Ordinary**

**Illus-** Being A Nice Guy

**Ques-** Have you ever been in a situation where you just didn’t feel like doing the unselfish thing?
- Maybe some know-it-all is demanding you listen to them for the 100th time?
- Maybe it’s somebody who is trying to impress you?
- Or maybe it’s just someone who thinks they are God’s gift to mankind?

Sometimes I don’t feel like being nice to such people
- I don’t always feel like doing the unselfish thing
- I want to just lie on the couch and watch TV
- I don’t want to do one more thing today
- I don’t want to handle another problem

But just because I don’t feel like it doesn’t mean I shouldn’t do it

It’s like praying or reading the Bible
- I’ve found that if the only time I pray is when I feel like it, then Satan makes sure I never feel like it
- If the only time I read my Bible is when I feel like it, then Satan makes sure I never feel like it

**Ques-** But that’s not maturity, is it?

Maturity is when you live your life by your commitments, not by your feelings

The difference between successful people and unsuccessful people is that successful people are willing to do what unsuccessful people don’t feel like doing
- They develop habits
- They stay committed

You don’t get to the Olympics because you feel like it
- You get to the Olympics by hours and hours of training that you didn’t feel like doing
- You don’t get to become a master musician without hours and hours of rehearsal that you probably
didn’t feel like doing all the time

And godliness is no different
  • Some have the idea that some sort of stardust miraculously touches their head

But that kind of magical thinking requires no discipline
  • No restraint
  • No practice
  • Not tolerance or patience
  • And no habits built for a lifetime

Godly men and women choose to develop the habits that produce godliness no matter the situation

That’s what this passage is all about- and it is also what’s necessary to follow Jesus…

2. Following Jesus Requires Persistence- You Gotta Give Up, To Go Up

The key is to look not at the problem- but at the Lord
  • To see everything from his point of view
  • For it’s all surely different from there

Ques- But since we are not God- ay least some of us know we are not God- how do we do this?

I. DON’T JOIN AN EASY CROWD; YOU WON’T GROW- GO WHERE THE EXPECTATIONS AND THE DEMANDS TO PERFORM ARE HIGH (vs. 1-6)

HEB 11.1 Now the people complained about their hardships in the hearing of the LORD, and when he heard them his anger was aroused. Then fire from the LORD burned among them and consumed some of the outskirts of the camp. 2 When the people cried out to Moses, he prayed to the LORD and the fire died down. 3 So that place was called Taberah because fire from the LORD had burned among them. 4 The rabble with them began to crave other food, and again the Israelites started wailing and said, “If only we had meat to eat! 5 We remember the fish we ate in Egypt at no cost—also the cucumbers, melons, leeks, onions and garlic. 6 But now we have lost our appetite; we never see anything but this manna!”

What the Israelites were missing was the goal- it was not the comforts of home
  • God’s goal was to move them or the Egyptians would have destroyed them
  • They forgot
  • And they made it worse because God wanted winners- and they wanted to be whiners

Ques- Do you see what God was doing?
  • He was forcing them to move
  • He was forcing them into action
  • He was motivating by not giving them a choice- but motivation is only half the battle…


Habits come in all flavors
  • You got them
  • I have them

Ques- So what makes the difference in how we get them?
  • That’s the question we need to ask
  • Because whatever they are now, they can be changed
Illus - Smoking Habit

Ques- Do you know anyone who quit smoking?
- They say it is a hard habit to break
- My dad refused to quit until he had a heart attack

Then there are those where the damage is irreversible

Our friend, Dot’s husband, Milton- died of COPD
- He quit smoking too late
- And all of us know stories like this

Ques- So why don’t they quit?
- There’s a payoff

Too many time they say, I want to quit
- But they can’t
- And too many times, if they don’t they die

Yet the answer is so simple- in order to break any habit, you must replace it with another habit stronger than the original
- This is why we need brainwashing by Jesus
- This is why we command mission trips
- This is why we get the youth started off right- before they become like too many adults- who get the church hopping bug

In life- if you take your comfort now, you will pay for it in your future
- But if you pay your dues now- you will enjoy your future beyond your wildest dreams
- But that’s true for anyone
- God’s goal is better than that…

2. God’s Goal Is Redemptive In Nature- If You Want To Blessed Then Don’t Rest

If you see a need- fill it
- If a position is vacant- take it
- The goal is service- so why not offer it

Illus- Jesus Called Busy People

If you ever noticed one thing about the apostles, Jesus called busy people

You might remember the calling of the first disciples…

MT 4:18 As Jesus was walking beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon called Peter and his brother Andrew. They were casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. “Come, follow me,” Jesus said, “and I will make you fishers for men.” At once they left their nets and followed him.

And look what James and John did…
21 Going on from there, he saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John. They were in a boat with their father Zebedee, preparing their nets. Jesus called them, and immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him.

We gotta expect Jesus to hold us to the highest standards
- That takes commitment
It is not the easy road
Rather, it is where the demands on performance are high

Somehow or other the church got the idea we are here to cater to everybody’s wishes
That is not the correct view
The need is redemption

When Jesus says,

\[\text{JN 10.10} \]

The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.

...he is not referring to you having 4 TVs and a 3 car garage

**II. THE PROPER POINT OF VIEW IS... WHAT IS IT GOD IS CALLING YOU TO? (vs. 13-15)**

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. 15 If this is how you are going to treat me, please go ahead and kill me— if I have found favor in your eyes—and do not let me face my own ruin.”

This narrative now shifts- it is now Moses who complains
- He was under so much pressure he asks God to take his life
- He missed the point too
- But for other reasons- in addition to what the Israelites wanted…

**1. Under Any Leadership Position- There Is Always A Need To Take The Longer View**

The easiest thing in the world is to complain- many people do
- But those people usually aren’t leaders
- And even if they are, they don’t stay there very long, for leadership demands sacrifice

**Illus- Leadership Under Christ**

Consider what Christ calls on us to do
- Carrying a cross
- Being an unworthy servant
- Having the nature of a child
- The low seats at the table
- Generosity to a fault

**Ques-** How can anyone follow Christ and not do this?
- No one will do this without taking a longer view

**2. But It Is The Longer View That Sustains You**

When Moses cried out to God- he did the right thing- he just needed to shift his point of view…

**Illus- Survival Training**

I remember back in my Navy days, we had to undergo survival training
- So they took us out into the woods
- They dropped us off
- No food or water
- And we had to figure out how to survive on our own

Now, to start, they did give us a canteen of water- but other than what we could carry in our pockets that was it
What was interesting was what happened next…

- Some guys got hurt
- One guy slashed his wrist accidentally and had to be rushed to the hospital
- Others had been out on survival before
- They had an advantage

But most did not

- You got to see some who were big shots- become humbled real quick
- They talked big in front of other people
- But when it counted
- They couldn’t handle it

You don’t really know a person until you see them under adverse conditions

- You can only what they say at face value

But God is different- what he says- he will do

- And whatever he calls you to, he will see you through

### III. GOD’S GOAL IS REDEMPITIVE- AND EACH PERSON HAS A ROLE TO FILL (vs. 16-17)

16 The LORD said to Moses: “Bring me seventy of Israel’s elders who are known to you as leaders and officials among the people. Have them come to the tent of meeting, that they may stand there with you. 17 I will come down and speak with you there, and I will take some of the power of the Spirit that is on you and put it on them. They will share the burden of the people with you so that you will not have to carry it alone.

Here is the climax of the story- and it’s not what many think it is

- It is not about food
- It is not about the miracle of manna and quail
- It is not about the Israelites
- It is not about placating Moses

**Ques-** Do you see what God is up to?

- He wanted to be involved
- He wanted to be known by them, loved by them, and solve the problem for them

But he was never asked

- They did their own thing
- Until the burden got overwhelming

**1. What They Should Have Done Is Go To God First- Not Last**

God’s plan is perfect

- But that also means yours are not- yours will fail you

**Ques-** Do you see what God is doing?

- He blesses that which is redemptive
- That means if you are trying to do it your way, forget it
- If you are doing what you do to lift up yourself, forget it
- If you are trying to impress anyone, forget it

But what you can do is go to God with a redemptive plan- and that means God is quite likely to bless it

- But you can’t just talk
You gotta go to God first, not last

**Conclusion**

The thing is, you gotta get in on God’s plan and stick to it
- But that goal has gotta be redemptive
- It is not for us to choose
- It never was
- And that is why we follow through on God’s point of view
- And then he will bless you
- It’s guaranteed

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Disclaimer: I wish to express my gratitude to all the saints before me who are traveling the Narrow Way. Their love and generosity is reflected in my own humble efforts to prepare sermons for the body of Christ. Grace and Peace.