



INTRODUCTION

Hey students! How are you? Happy Thanksgiving! I am happy to be here with you today. My name is _____ if you don't know me, and it is my honor to be your pastor. If I have not had the privilege of meeting you yet, please let me have that opportunity. Come up to me after youth group and introduce yourself. I want to make sure you get connected here.

I love Thanksgiving, don't you? I want to hear everyone's favorite Thanksgiving food! My favorite is _____. Some of my favorite memories about Thanksgiving are _____.

And what is Thanksgiving about? Shout it out. Right, it's about being Thankful. It's about zooming out on your life and getting enough perspective to see that you've got some good things going on. You may be going through tough times but there is always some good that God is working in your life for which you can be thankful.

TENSION

Today, I have not come to talk to you about mere thankfulness actually. Instead, I want to rotate Thanksgiving 180 degrees and look at it from another angle. I want to speak to you today about *complaining*. The opposite of thanking is complaining, am I right?

Growing up I always complained about... [Leader note: share something funny that you used to complain about as a kid.]

Now I would say the thing I complain most about is... [Leader note: be honest here and share what really is a complaining trend in your life right now.]

You know, I am so thankful that Thanksgiving is a holiday, because it's the antidote to the pool of complaining that I've been swimming in. I really think complaining seizes our joy. We need to shake off this shadow that has become our most devoted follower. We need to live every day like it's Thanksgiving (but maybe without all the gluttony.)

And wouldn't you know, the Bible has a lot to teach us about this subject. In fact, the Israelites, or the Jews, were God's chosen people and were HUGE complainers. When you read the Old Testament and see the things they said and did, you will realize that they were so annoying! And these were God's favorites. This was the lineage that would lead to Jesus. And yet, over and over again we see that they were grumblers. I think we are going to see that we can relate though.

BIBLE

First let me give you a little bit of backstory. Think back to the story of Joseph and the technicolor dream coat. If you remember, Joseph was sold into slavery in Egypt, and yet, he eventually became Pharaoh's right-hand man, Joseph. Joseph's family (Jacob, whose other name was Israel, was his dad, and his 12 sons became the 12 tribes of Israel) moved to Egypt during the 7-year famine that Joseph saved Egypt from. So, they settled there and eventually Joseph died and time went on and the new Pharaoh of Egypt forgot about Joseph and became intimidated by the way the Israelite nation was multiplying. So, he put them into slavery for hundreds of years until the time of Moses, who you may have heard of, led them out of Egypt through a series of plagues, culminating in parting the Red Sea and entering the wilderness.

Now first of all, the Israelites complained twice during this whole ordeal when Moses was trying to lead them out of slavery. They were actually upset that they were being rescued from slavery! You can check this out in **Exodus 5:1-22** and **Exodus 14:11-12**.

But after Moses and the Israelites got to freedom, the complaining went to a whole other' level!

Exodus 15:22 The taste of the water bothered them.

Exodus 16:1-4 They didn't like the bread Moses gave them in the desert.

Exodus 17:1-4 They were thirsty.

Exodus 32:28 They got impatient waiting for the 10 commandments, complained, and built a golden calf idol to worship.

Numbers 11:33 They complained about the food again.

Numbers 12:1-12 Miriam and Aaron complained about Moses' leadership.

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