

The Grief of Moses

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- [0 : 00] I'm going to sing now some verses from Psalm 73. Psalm 73, and at verse 23.
- Nevertheless, continually, O Lord, I am with thee. Thou dost me hold by my right hand, and still upholdest me. Thou with thy counsel, while I live, wilt me conduct and guide, and to thy glory afterward receive me to abide.
- Whom have I in the heavens high, but thee, O Lord, alone? And in the earth whom I desire, beside thee there is none. My flesh and heart doth faint and fail, but God doth fail me never.
- For of my heart God is the strength and portion forever. For lo, they that are far from thee forever perish shall, than that a hearing from thee go thou hast destroyed all.
- But truly it is good for me that I draw near to God. In God I trust that all thy works I may declare abroad. These verses, Psalm 73, from verse 23 to the end.
- [1 : 13] Nevertheless, continually, O Lord, I am with thee. O Lord, I am with thee.
- O Lord, I am with thee.
- O Lord, I am with thee.
- O Lord, I am with thee.
- O my heart, God is the strength and force of my love.
- [3 : 19] For who live at the back of me, For ever perish thou, Then thou art only from thee, O thou hast destroyed all.
- But to me is this good morning, That I don't hear to God.
- In all thy blood, That all thy works, I am in the rain of God.
- Can we turn now for a short time to the book of Numbers, and we're reading in chapter 11. And we can turn again to the words we find from verse 10 to verse 15.
- Then Moses heard the people weep throughout their families, every man in the door of his tent. And the anger of the Lord was kindled greatly.
- [4 : 54] Moses also was displeased. And Moses said unto the Lord, Wherefore hast thou afflicted thy servant? Wherefore have I not found favour in thy sight, That thou layest the burden of all these people upon me?
- Have I conceived all these people? Have I begotten them, That thou shouldest say unto me, Carry them in thy bosom, As a nursing father beareth a suckling child, And to the land which thou swearest unto their fathers?
- Whence should I have flesh to give unto all these people? For they weep unto me, Saying, Give us flesh that we may eat. I am not able to bear all these people alone, Because it is too heavy for me.
- And if thou deal thus with me, Kill me, I pray thee, Out of hand, If I have found favour in thy sight, And let me not see my wretchedness.

And so on. When I began to study for the ministry, I can't remember having any knowledge Of what is called ministerial burnout.

[6 : 16] If I had heard of it, Then I hadn't really taken much notice of it. I certainly wasn't aware of it as much as I am today.

Not at a personal level, But as something that many have experienced In their time ministering to the Lord's people in particular, And as ministers of the gospel.

Now you may think that Because of that, Talking about ministerial burnout, That it is a modern concept.

That it is a modern experience. And if you think that, Then you would be wrong. Maybe, If we apply it to the situation before us here, Using such modern terminology, We might think of it in that respect.

But, Clearly, If we are familiar with the scripture, There are instances That are set before us Which replicate, The one we find, Brought to our attention here.

[7 : 41] We, Read, In verse 10, That the Lord, Was angered. The anger of the Lord, Was kindled greatly.

We also read, That Moses also was displeased. Now the anger of the Lord, And the displeasure of Moses, You might instinctively think that, They originate from the same source, Or, What gave rise to them, Was the same situation.

In a sense, You would be right. Because, Because, What we see, Brought to our attention, In this chapter, Is clearly, The impetus for what Moses feels, Just as surely, As it is the impetus, For the displeasure of the Lord.

However, When we examine, How, The displeasure of the Lord, Is brought to bear, In, In the judgment, That he brings upon, The people, Who are the focus, Of his wrath.

We find that, Moses is more, Preoccupied, With himself, Rather than, On what brings about, The displeasure of the Lord.

[9 : 13] The Lord is displeased, With, The attitude, Of the people, And, Similarly, Moses is, But his concern, Is not really, The, The fact that, God is displeased, But that, He himself, Has caused, To feel grief.

Now the chapter, Begins with a record, Of the people, Complaining. And they're not just, Complaining to the Lord, Which is appropriate, But, Complaining, Of the Lord.

Complaining about him. And, If you read, The previous, Passages, You'll find that, This complaining spirit, Was a, A developing, Feature, Of the, People.

There was a, Spirit of discontent, Amongst the people. And, And in verse 4, We read, The mixed multitude, That was among them, Fell and lusting.

And the children of Israel, Also, Wept again, And said, Who shall, Give us flesh to eat? Now, What does that mean? Why is there a division, Made, Between this mixed multitude, And, The children, Of Israel?

[10 : 46] Well, If you read, In this passage, And also, In the book of Exodus, We are taught there, That there was, An accompanying group, Of people, Who, Departed Egypt, With, The Israelites.

They were not, Israelites themselves, But they, Took that opportunity, To leave, Egypt, Along with them. They followed, The camp, They followed, The people, Of Israel.

And, Unfortunately, Their, Their, Spirit of discontentment, They, It, It revealed itself, But it also, Influenced, The people of God, And the people, Who bore, The name Israel, That's not to say, That Israel, Were immune, From that spirit, Of, Of discontentment, But, It was encouraged, By, The mixed multitude, That are described, In this way.

Now, It's a, I suppose, It's difficult for us, To imagine, What it was like, For Israel. They were, In Egypt, For, 430 years, And, The, The time there, As a nation, Well, It progressively, Became a nation, Vast in number, And, They, Experienced, Highs and lows, Within, That environment, In that environment, But, A period of declension, Followed them spiritually, And, They imbibed, Some of the, The, The teachings, Of Egypt, And so on, But, God was faithful, To his, People, And brought them, Out of that, But, It's interesting, That, What they, Remember, When they, Experience, Difficulty, In their, Walk, In the wilderness, They go,

Back, In their thinking, In their thoughts, Not to the, Hard, Hardships, That they, Endured in Egypt, But as we read here, They remembered, The, The, The things, That they, Enjoyed there, They remembered, The garlic, And the leeks, And the onions, And the melons, And the cucumbers, Whatever, I don't think much of their, Their menu, But, These are the things, That they liked, Probably, In comparison to what they had to, Endure, During their wilderness journey, But these are the things, They remembered, And does that not, Like us, Rather, When we look back, On our, On our days, Our young days, Or even, Days not so far, Far ago, And so long ago, We tend to remember, The good things, And we, Don't have a,

[14 : 02] Strong recollection, Of the things, That were painful, Or grievous, To us, But in this passage, We also see, That, That God's judgment, Was brought to bear, Upon their people, On the people, Because of their, Discontent, The fire of the Lord, Burnt among them, And consumed them, That were in the, Other most parts, Of the camp, And we're told, The people, Cried out to Moses, And Moses, In his role, As mediator, Cried out to God, And the fire ceased, And, You would think, That that would be, Sufficient to, To bring the people, Back to God, And to, Arrest, Their, Groaning, And their, Mourning, Over the loss, That they, Supposedly, Endured, But, That's not, What happens,

They go on, As they were, And complain again, Our soul, They say, Is dried up, There is nothing at all, Besides this manna, Before our eyes, Which seems, Fantastic to us, So quickly, Even God's judgment, And their eyewitness to it, And they are exposed to it, And yet, They do not recognize it, As God's, Judgment, And God again, Has to, Intervene, And bring them, To their senses, But, The focus really, This evening is on, Something very strange, To us, I would think, And that is, The way Moses, Responds, To the grief, And the complaint, Of the people, Of the people, In verse 11,

It seems astonishing, That, Moses, Begins, What is, Nothing less, Than a tirade, Against God, Against, How God, God, How God, Has afflicted him, How he has, Burdened him, And, In reality, What we have, Is a misrepresentation, Of what God, Is doing, And what God, Has done, God, Never left, Moses, To carry out, Any of, The, Duties, That devolved, Upon him, As a leader, Of the people, He was never, At any moment, Entrusted, With any of these tasks, That God gave to him, By himself, It was always something, That he did, In God's name, And with God's help, And with God's power, At his disposal,

And yet, When Moses speaks here, He speaks as if, God has left it all, To himself, And he's, He's, He's suffering, Because of that, Now that surprises us, Because, This was somebody, Who served, A 40 year apprenticeship, You could call it, In Egypt, He served a 40 year, Apprenticeship, As a shepherd, In Midian, And then God, Set him over, His people, Leading him, Out of Egypt, And all the time, Moses, Moses was being reminded, Of the sovereignty of God, The power of God, And through miracle, And through intervention, Even the parting of the Red Sea, What could be greater than that?

That there was no God, Like to him, How could he forget that? And yet, It seems at this point, That he is overlooking, That fact, One of the commentators, Says, This is the same Moses, That just a short while before, Acting as a mediator, Of God's people, Interceded on behalf, Of the people, And pleaded for them, Pleaded for Israel, That God would spare them, Even if it meant, That his name, Would be blotted out, Of God's book of life, He was a powerful mediator, He fulfilled that role, To, To a degree, That he was to be admired, And yet, He succumbs, At this moment, To an attitude, That is nothing less,

[18 : 56] Than sinful, Now that's the thing, That this passage, Reminds us of, This occasion, In the experience, Of God's servant, Even the most lofty, Of God's servants, He is exposed, For his human frailty, Where he fails, To comprehend, That what he is saying, Before God, Is actually, All wrong, And it's not something, That is unique to Moses, And that's something, We have to remind ourselves of, That we have, The saints of God, Who are, But saints, With feet of clay, You remember, The impatience of Abraham, Who has given God's promise, And yet, He, He doesn't wait, For God to fulfill his promise, The most, The most, Elevated of saints,

As I've said, Abraham, The father of the faithful, And yet, He, Fails in this point, Jacob, When he is, Able to understand, The promises of God, Yet, He, He, Complains to God, When he realizes, Or he's told, That the son is dead, Against me, Are all these things, Remember Elijah, Elijah, Who's, Just experienced, That God's hand, A most powerful, And miraculous, Intervention, When the, The priests of Baal, Are brought, Down to the dust, And yet, He, He runs, From, Jezebel, We read, He himself, Went a day's journey, Into the wilderness, And came and sat down, Under a juniper tree, And he requested, For himself, That he might die, And it said, It is enough,

Now, O Lord, Take away my life, For I am not better, Than my father, We find again, The story of Jonah, The same, Desire, Uttered, By that prophet, Who, Who runs from God, Who runs from the duties, That God, Has given to him, And he says, It is better for me, To die, Than to live, Somebody who knows God, Who is God's servant, Who is given, The duty of, Doing God's bidding, But the thing is, I suppose, When we read, What Moses is saying here, And read it for yourself, Read it carefully, And what you find, Moses saying, He is not stating, The truth, But a distortion, Of the truth, The problem, Problem that he identifies,

Is, One, Where he himself, Believes, That, That he is, Exclusively expected, To do all of these things, And, The most, The most, Well, What it reminds us, Of, Is this, That, Whoever, God's servant is, However, Exalted he may be, In God's plan, And purposes, However, Endowed he is, With God's grace, The outward servants, In need of God's grace, And the moment, They neglect, To put their trust, In that grace, And believe themselves, To be something, That they are not, That is when, There is a,

An opportunity, Given, For failure, To overtake them, Now, It should not, Be a surprise, To us, If we can, Identify, Such, Failings, On the part, Of God's servants, Albeit, In a very small, Portion, Of their, Of their service, A fraction, Where, Most of their lives, They are committed, To what God, Has given them to do, They have an, Exemplary conduct, And yet, At one moment, They expose, Their frailty, Or that frailty, Is exposed, To us, It's not hidden, From sight, If I put it, Like this, One of the great, Challenges,

[24 : 02] That we need, To remind ourselves, If we're not already, Fully, Cognizant of it, If we're not already, Fully aware of it, One of the greatest, Challenges, To Christianity, Today, Is the great, Spectre, Of discouragement, Discouragement, In the experience, Of God's people, And when, Discouragement, When it is, Magnified, When it is, Brought into, Sharp focus, And other things, That are taken, Out of, Of, Of view, Then, That is the, Moment, At which, That weakness, That, Any one of us, Can suffer from, At any moment, That we, Can succumb, To it, If we think of it, Like this, The influence,

Of the Holy Spirit, I would contend, On society, Today, Is, As limited, As, We would ever, Expect it to be, I'm not going to say, That it's never been, Like this before, But I am saying, That the activity, Of the Holy Spirit, Within, The society, Of which, We are a part, Is clearly, Not as, Obvious to us, As we would like it to be, Put it like that, I'm not saying, That the Spirit's work, Is, Is curtailed, Totally, Far from it, But I am saying, That the spirit, Of, Of the world, Is much more, In, In view, I'm not, I'm not saying to you, That the spirit of the world, And the Holy Spirit, Are,

Are equal, They're not, Because the Holy Spirit, Is God, And the spirit, Of the world, Owes its origin, To the enemy, Of our soul, Satan, He is, He, He is, Its source, So they're not equal, They're not, They're not equal, And yet, The spirit, Of the age, Is pervasive, And, We need to understand that, And where the spirit, Of the age, Is, Depressing, If you like, The work of God's spirit, Where the spirit, Of the age, Is in denial, That such a spirit, Works in our midst, Where the spirit, Of the age, Is one that is, Atheistic, And, Opposed, To anything, That is, Genuinely, Of God's doing, Then it shouldn't, Surprise us,

If, Such a thing, As, As this, Belief, That, That works, Against, The genuine, Faith, Of the believer, Should be part, Of our experience, Many years ago, Dr. Martin Lloyd-Jones, Wrote a book, On spiritual depression, And in its day, It was probably, A landmark, Book, Because, Martin Lloyd-Jones, Was a, A, A, Renowned doctor, Prior to, Embracing, The Christian ministry, And he had a good understanding, Of psychiatry, And psychology, But he had a better understanding, Of the spiritual, Mindset, Of the believer, And this is what he wrote,

Many years ago, But it's still the truth, That applies today, In the last analysis, There is only one cause, Of spiritual depression, It is the devil, The adversary, Of our soul, The ultimate cause, Of all spiritual depression, Is unbelief, For if it were not for unbelief, The devil, Could not, Do anything, It is because, We listen to the devil, Instead of listening to God, That we go down, Before him, And suffer his attacks, Now we must understand, That what he's talking about, There is spiritual depression, Not clinical depression, Which a person can suffer, From, Without it having, A spiritual dimension, Although, Very often it does, What he's talking about, Is the depression, That the believer suffers,

[29 : 10] As a result, Of the devil's, Direct attack, Where, The truth of God, Is distorted, Or, The experience, Of God, In their life, Is overlooked, Or, Put into, Abayance, So that it's not, As prominent, As it could, Or should be, Now what was true, About Moses, Was at this point, That, You know, You read this chapter, And shortly before this, Moses prayed unto the Lord, This was his role, He was, He was, He was, The leader of God's people, He was the mediator, Of God's people, And he interceded, On behalf of his people, And God's fire, Was quenched, And yet, You couldn't have imagined, You know, This is something, That is supernatural,

Something that is clearly, God's doing, Something that, It is clearly understood, By him, As, The work of God's, Judgment, And yet, Very, Very quickly, After that, He, Listens, He listens, To the complaints, Of God's people, They are in their tents, They are complaining, About God, They are complaining, That their, The food that God, Has supplied with them, Is inadequate, Or they don't like it, Or they are tired of it, Or whatever, And Moses, Takes that complaint, To himself, It is really a complaint, Against God, But he takes it, Personally, And that is, That is the chink, In the armour, That the devil uses, And that, Brings about,

The complaining, That comes, That comes, To God, Now, The Christian, Is not, Immune, From that, I don't know, Which one of the, Commentators, One of the, Modern commentators, Is talking about, He's talking about, The, The pressure, Pot, Society, That we live in, Looking at the workplace, He says, One twentieth, Of all absences, In the workplace, To do, Has to do, Today, With, With the mind, With the, With the, The effect, That their work, Or the workplace, Has upon their mind, One twentieth, And when it gets, Into, The nitty gritty, Of it, There are even more, Pressures, Brought to bear, Upon the mind, Of the individual,

Because, Of the kind of life, That we live in this world, And the Christian, Must believe, That they too, Have exposure, To that, But their exposure, Is further, Accentuated, By the fact, That they are believers, And they may have, Expectations, Of God, That, That may be, Unreal, That may be, Unrealistic, More, To the point, That God, Should prevent, Them, Having to endure, Such sorrows, Or griefs, Or trials, But what we learn, From here, Is despite, The fact, That God, Sees for, Not to overlook, This, Or pretend, That this is not, Anything to do, With his servant, He deals, With his servant, And he does so, Publicly, So that we can read it, And we can learn from it,

And God addresses, A need that is real, This need that, That, Rather go on, Without, Recourse to God, That God says, Well, You need help, And he supplies, That help, With 70, Elders, Who will support him, In the work, And not, Only, I suppose, There's a two-edged sword there, He, He, He provides, 70, Elders, But he provides, The elders, With what?

[33 : 56] The same spirit, That Moses had, The same spirit, That Moses had, That allowed him, To do the work, He gives to the elders, Who are going to support him, Now, Isn't that saying something, To Moses, That surely should be, The burden, He carries, God is not saying to him, They're not there, He's not dismissing them, But he is saying, Whatever the burden is, You are going to, Deal with them, And meet with them, In the same way, Even though you will have, Others to help you, And, He will endow them, And he does, With the same grace, With the same spirit, Of prophecy, The same, Encouragement, That they, Can, Believe, Where he is, And will be his, Is theirs, We need to remind ourselves,

That, There is a remedy, That God, Has, For, All our fears, And all our failings, If we go to him, For them, And this is, I suppose, The beauty, Of the passage here, Although, Moses is, Complaining, He is not, Complaining about God, He is complaining, To God, This complaint, Should be, Would have been, Would have been better, If he had, Addressed it, In his mind, Before he, He, Spoke it out, Loud, But, That's the way, That Moses learned, By his mistakes, Just as surely, As we too, Must learn, From our, Mistakes, Remind yourself,

Of this, That God's, Saints, Whoever they are, They are not, Whichever saint, You may choose, Be the Old Testament, Or New Testament, There is not one of them, Who are, Independent, Of God, That God, Has raised up, Independent, Of himself, Who has been, Who, That God has chosen them, And set them apart, Because, They could exist, Without him, Or do the work, Without him, That is never, The case, Well may God, Remind us, Of the, Inexhaustible, Resources, That he has placed, At our, Disposal, Before we succumb, To the spirit, That came, To be prevalent, Amongst his people, God gave them, What they wanted, So they came out, Of their noses, Or, I think one of the, Commentators says, We might say, He gave them the meat,

That they wanted, That they came out, Of their ears, But, The Hebrew says, It came out, Of their noses, But some of the, Modern commentators say, What probably happened, Was they, They were, They suffered, From something, Because, Of an overdose, Of, Of, Of, Of, Flesh, That probably, Introduced, Some other bug, Into their system, And, They suffered, Accordingly, Whatever, There's always ways, Of interpreting, That aren't, Necessarily spiritual, May God bless, These thoughts, Just let us pray, Lord help us, To understand, That, When we, View your, Your people, They are always, Vulnerable, And they have, Flaws and failings, Just as everyone, Who are in need, Of salvation, By grace, There's but one, Person, Who was ever, In the world, Who was without sin,

And that is our Lord, And saviour, Jesus Christ, And to him, We would go, For he alone, Has the words, Of eternal life, Bless us in his name, Cleanse from sin, In Jesus Christ, Amen.

[38 : 17] Our closing psalm, Is Psalm 143, We sing in Gaelic, Psalm 143, And in verse 10, The holy, I am a Turkish school, Or stu, My year, Gubjag, O, Smeicht, O spirit, Traudig, My good cheer, No fear, Doc, Ska, Deiname, By euch, My good train, O ye, I hof a mûr, Ska, Dîr and oxur, Mannen boch, Gyr, Rhyblad, Chorst, So lân, Gyr, As domineid, Yf, Tredo, Gras, Ys, Gris, At shent, Ghyllir, Ytac, Cûr, DAW, Cûr, I llân, O■, Drâ, Amih, Ninh, Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[41 : 24] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Amen. Amen.