

Who comes to mind when you think of grumblers in the Bible. Israel tops the list. They murmured all through the trip from Egypt to Canaan. This behavior led to Moses striking the rock and losing the opportunity to enter the land. The grumbling influenced the negative report from the spies which led to a faithless decision by the nation. They wandered in the wilderness for forty years. An entire generation died. The negative disposition has devastating effects on the speakers and the hearers of such murmurings.

Another person we might think of is Judas. He complained that the ointment was wasted when it was poured out on Jesus. He said money could have been raised and given to the poor by selling the perfume. Actually, Judas was a thief, and he wanted more money in the bag he kept so he could steal it.

Ahab is another notable complainer. 1 Kings 18:17 says *“And it came to pass, when Ahab saw Elijah, that Ahab said unto him, Art thou he that troubleth Israel?”* The drought that was caused by Ahab’s sins was blamed on Elijah. Often we complain about others instead of observing our own fault.

When King Jehoshaphat asked Ahab if there was another prophet they could hear from about the battle, Ahab responded, *“...There is yet one man, Micaiah the son of Imlah, by whom we may inquire of the Lord: but I hate him; for he doth not prophesy good concerning me, but evil..”* (1 Kings 22:8). Ahab believed Micaiah was guilty of *“negative preaching”*.

When Naboth refused to sell his garden to Ahab (the sale was contrary to the law of God) he was displeased and pouted in his room (1 Kings 21:4). Ahab never thought Naboth, Elijah, and Micaiah were right. Their messages were true. He was the evil one who needed to change. His accusations about their *“negativity”* was all a lie. Which of these character’s examples do we want to be following at judgment: Ahab, Judas, or Israel’s first generation?

# Mooreville church of Christ

720 N. Indianapolis Road

Mooreville, IN 46158

November 10, 2019

## Sunday:

9:30 a.m. Bible Study

10:30 a.m. Worship

3:00 p.m. Worship

## Wednesday:

7:00 p.m. Bible Study

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## Announcements

We will begin meeting at 3:00 for the p.m. worship service today. This should assist those who cannot attend because of darkness after the 5:00 p.m. service. Please tell others you know who visit us about the change.

Continue to pray for those who have fallen away from the Lord. They are gone, but they are not forgotten.

Valerie Ringham and Reva Collier have both been out with flu like symptoms. Continue to pray for their recovery. Also remember Ethan’s brother in your prayers.

We are trying to stay ahead with Bible class teachers. We will need a new teacher for the high school class and the Sunday morning adult class in January. If you have a recommendation for a teacher or a subject for the adults see the elders. There is a sign up sheet for downstairs classes.

**Wherever  
God can use  
me is where I  
want to be.**

# Too Much Negativity?

Ron Roberts

We often hear the complaint that there is too much “*negative preaching*” from the pulpit. Often what is meant by this is that there is too much condemning of worldliness, rebuking of lukewarm members, and correcting of doctrinal error. There are too many sermons that ask for better attendance, more modest dress, and less gossip. Those who ask for more “*positive preaching*” usually mean they want to hear more about God’s love, the hope of Heaven, and the blessings to be gained in this life through the Gospel. In essence what they want to hear is what God has done for us and not what we are required to do for Him.

Much of what is condemned as “*negative preaching*” is simply the opinion of the member. The person who does not want to change his sinning, views a sermon that calls for his correction as “*negative*”. The member who is unwilling to improve his attendance gets tired of hearing sermons on that subject. The saint who has friends and family in denominations does not want to hear about the one true church and the errors of the churches of men. He sees this as “*negative*” and believes it will drive away his family and friends who may periodically visit the worship services of the church.

Some people prefer the “Hell Fire and Brimstone” sermon and see it as “*positive*”. They feel we need to highlight the wrath of God in order to get people out of sin. Some members like the practical sermon. They want to know what they need to do to please God. Condemning people who are not in the assembly seems useless to them. True “*positive preaching*” is the preaching that is **true to God’s word, is understandable, and is delivered with a disposition of trying to help.**

What is labelled as “*negative preaching*” is often no more than a negative disposition of a preacher. He comes off as superior. He sounds like he enjoys firing the wrath of God at the audience. He spends all his time shouting at everyone and making them feel worthless. He has lost the way of conveying God’s love in his lessons. He has lost touch with how he makes members feel each Sunday. He has concluded his job is one of condemning everyone who hears his voice. He convinces himself that the congregation is shrinking and there is talk of firing him because most of the members are worldly.

That being said, there may be an overabundance of “*negativity*” in the church. We spend so much time looking at the condition of the world, the growth of false churches, and the declining numbers in our assembly; that we get the “*negative*” feeling that all is lost. We are quick to notice those who are not in attendance but fail to notice those who are. We are proficient at condemning but have forgotten how to compliment. To a great extent we have adopted the worldly behavior of complaining.

Philippians 2 says, “*Do all things **without murmurings and disputings**: That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among who ye shine as lights in the world; Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither labored in vain*” (14-16).

1 Peter 4:9 reads, “*Use hospitality to one another without grudging.*” 2 Corinthians 9:7 says, “*Every man according as he purposed in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.*” James 5:8-9 records, “*Be ye also patient, stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh. Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned behold the judge standeth before the door.*”

We need to be hospitable without complaining about the amount of work that is involved. We need to give without griping how tight the budget is. We need to not grumble about one another nor to one another. When we complain about what we do in the Lord’s service we make Christianity distasteful to the world. We are to be *lights* that show people the way to God. We cannot do this if we behave the same way the griping masses do. We are not *blameless* or *harmless* when we murmur. We are not *holding forth* God’s word as the *sons of God*. We are imitating the world and that makes us part of the *crooked and perverse nation*. To overcome this “*negativity*” we need to make a conscious effort. This grumbling has become a bad habit with many of us. It can be fixed by focusing on God and His goodness in our lives.