

Thanksgiving –November 27 , 2014
Text: Deuteronomy 8:1–10
Theme “Spoiled Rotten Brats”

We are spoiled rotten brats. How many times a day do you complain about stuff in your life not going the way you want it to go? In all my years of ministry I have never heard the complaint, “well I woke up this morning and was completely abandoned by God floating in a void of darkness.” No God provides amazing things for us, and even for people all over the world who curse his Holy name! Beyond the air to breathe and food to eat we have cars, electronics, fancy vacations, comfortable homes, warm beds, great food. We cannot even list the thousands of blessings we have just because God chooses to give them to us.

We are like the Israelites complaining that there is not enough of something or that we don’t like what God is providing, or that someone else is getting something we’re not getting. The Israelites complained, complained, complained.

When will we learn that if the Lord is withholding something from us, it is because he wants us to learn something first or that whatever we think is good is actually bad for us? You know he sends us into challenging situations on purpose. He leads us into difficulties to learn: to learn to be thankful for all that he has given to us, to learn to trust him to care for us in all situations and

sometimes, most importantly, to learn about the power and abilities we have if we will only use them.

God makes that third point clear in our text from Deuteronomy.

“And you shall remember the whole way that the LORD your God has led you these forty years in the wilderness, that he might humble you, testing you to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep his commandments or not. And he humbled you and let you hunger and fed you with manna, which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that he might make you know that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD. Your clothing did not wear out on you and your foot did not swell these forty years. Know then in your heart that, as a man disciplines his son, the LORD your God disciplines you.”

Discipline is not punishment. We are never punished for our sins because Jesus was punished for us when he died and was damned on the cross for us. But we are disciplined because any parent who loves his child disciplines him. Discipline is rooted in teaching. A child has to be taught and the lessons are not always fun. When I ended up sitting in my room for a weekend because I missed curfew, I did not go to my parents and thank them for being so strict. I cursed the day they had been born and ranted and raved

against them...quietly...and to myself, but nevertheless, curse, rant and rave I did. And yet I learned the importance of being on time, doing what you promise to do, having the integrity to admit when you're wrong. These were valuable lessons that followed me into adulthood because my parents did not want to be my friend. Their primary goal was to teach. That is how God is as well. He will teach us and sometimes the lesson is not fun, but it is always valuable and always brings blessings so complaining is not helpful.

Today is the national day of Thanksgiving. For most Americans, today is a day of eating to excess, being with family and watching sports on TV. God may be mentioned sometime during the day, but he is not the focal point. And today is not a day to recount the lessons God has taught us through hardship or the humility into which he has led us because hardship and humility are not very valued things in our world. Nevertheless, some today will remember to take the time to turn around from wherever they are and come back to thank Jesus for the innumerable blessings he bestows upon us. We remember today that despite all the complaining we spoiled rotten brats do, were it not for him, we would have absolutely nothing. And because of him, even the difficulties and challenges of life are turned into blessings.