

Expository Files

Editors: Jon W. Quinn, Warren E. Berkley



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Edited by Jon W. Quinn & Warren E. Berkley

Front Page

Sixty Years ~ Milestone or Millstone? Warren E. Berkley

What happened in 1947? Noteworthy people were born: Elton John, David Letterman, Dave Barry, Richard Dreyfuss, Dan Quayle, Mitt Romney and Warren Berkley. That was sixty years ago.

There was a time when I thought I would always look like a kid; always be inexperienced and never reach any maturity. I am still short. But I show some of the signs of age, and though I'm not altogether satisfied with my progress, I have learned some thing through the years of experience.

I don't think our parents spent much time thinking or talking about how great their kids would be someday. They were too focused on the immediate challenges to form extraordinary visions of ambition about us. They simply wanted to take care of us, supply our daily needs, keep us from hurting each other, keep others from hurting us, and above all – teach us to serve the Lord. Our mother takes a great deal of pride in how we turned out. And we have no doubt, our father (who died in 1960) would be pleased. We cannot reflect back on any dire poverty, but it was hard. Daddy worked several jobs and for a time, there were seven of us living in a two bedroom wood frame house (that is still occupied by our mother today). Church activities were at the center of our lives. We had a peaceful neighborhood, good schools, great Christian friends, relatives nearby, good medical care and a great ice cream

truck. My childhood was pleasant and “normal.” I had baseball, tree houses, grape vines to smoke, a bicycle and two sisters to annoy.

Our tragedy was the death of my father just before Christmas in 1960. Without any warning, while I was helping him get a Christmas tree to carry in, he fell in the backyard and was dead within minutes. A massive heart attack from a blood clot. Everything changed and life was harder but we were not ruined or traumatized for life. He left us in survivable condition financially, and the difficulties found their defeat under the determination of faith that was his legacy.

Another life change came for me in 1966. The draft board in Ft. Smith, Arkansas was, like many in the south, an institution under pressure to fill the ranks of the services. And as the Viet Nam war gained momentum, the draft board became a threatening force (sometimes sending out draft notices to arrive the day after a young man graduated from high school). I was not college material, nor did I have any possibility of paying for college, so I had to make a choice. Sign up for three years with some choice about military occupation. Or, be drafted and almost certainly be sent to war. I “played” off my ability as a trumpet player, auditioned for the Army Band and was accepted. I spent a little over three years as an Army musician. No combat for me. But I played taps over many 18 year old boys who were carried out of combat.

With preaching and Paula, two exceptionally rich influences came into my life. Just months after my discharge from the service, I married Paula, went to college and started preaching. I needed a good wife, still do and Paula fulfills that need perfectly. From our union two boys were born, both hardworking men of faith. In 1981, we adopted our daughter. Now at 60 I boast of eight grandchildren.

I don’t know exactly what it means to be “cut out” for preaching or have native ability for the task. I do know that I love it and cannot imagine any other life’s work. I’ve always wanted to present what the Bible says, so that people can not only understand it, but find motivation to apply it and learn more of it through their own study. Sometimes I think, I’ve just recently learned what preaching is all about. I have a much clearer view today, compared to the 1970’s. It is about getting the message to people, and living your life in such a way you are credible.

No retirement plans occur to me at all. I am realistic. I understand there will come a time when I cannot carry the workload effectively. I've told Paula, when my mind takes such a turn that I am careless and hard to listen to – please get me out of the pulpit. She will not be hasty in that.

After all these years preaching, I really have no complaints about my brethren. I've always been treated fairly. I was fired one time but looking back – it was probably mostly my fault. After that experience, we moved to Kansas where I had almost ten years of one of the best works I've ever had. Overall I must say, I've worked with some of the greatest people on the earth, and lived in some of the best mobile homes on the market.

Expository Files was an idea conceived with Jon Quinn, about 15 years ago. We were – it may be – the first electronic magazine published by brethren who share our conviction about the work of the church. Well advised by the pioneer, Mark Copeland, we put the “paper” out through an old system called CompuServe and AOL. We offered the journal on disks (3.5's), then to our web presence. Most recently, we have a place on bible.ca that yields thousands of hits each month. We have no good way to measure who reads the magazine or how much good it does. We just know we have readers, and we know we are building an archive on bible.ca that will be accessible for future generations. EF has been one of the very pleasant projects of my life.

I pray I'll have another 20-25 years of work. I want to see my grandchildren baptized into Christ. I want to travel with Paula and spend more time with my children. I want to see Laurel Heights grow. I want to take care of my mother, kill a few more deer and climb a few more mountains. Thanks to all who have helped a little man.

Behind All Fighting – Poor Attitudes

(Jas. 4:1-4)

Warren E. Berkley

External conflict always means, there are some wrong attitudes somewhere. Conflict is not the result of some sort of mystical fate or “karma.” It cannot be explained away as simply chance and time, bringing different personalities together. External conflict always means, somebody has an attitude issue (maybe more than one). This is true on the international scale, within nations, in communities, institutions, local churches, marriages and families. External conflict is always evidence of internal trouble. About this,

James 3:16 is clear: “For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing will be there.”

What does this mean? When you find yourself in conflict with someone (in the middle of a fight, or ugly division – maybe before the fight breaks out), **FIRST – examine yourself.** Are you thinking clearly, objectively and according to truth. Read James 3:17,18 and use that to measure your heart. Take full inventory of motives and methods.

Or as James said – “Where do wars and fights come from among you? Do they not come from your desires for pleasure that war in your members? You lust and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and war. Yet you do not have because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures,” (Jas. 4:1-3).

Writing the Same Things
(Phil. 3:1)
By Jacob Hudgins

“For me to write the same things to you is not tedious, but for you it is safe”
(Phil 3:1)

A dormant fear for the preacher is the inability to consistently study, write, and present needed sermons without growing redundant. Not only must he wrestle with staleness in his thinking and continuing in his comfort areas, he also must deal with an audience which is largely familiar with what he will teach. Thankfully, Paul had a similar problem and by the Holy Spirit gives us this verse to remind us of our responsibilities in the teaching process and the proper approach to truth.

Paul is repeating the themes of the Philippian letter in this section. First, he tells them to “rejoice in the Lord”(3:1), something he has addressed before (1:18, 2:2) and will repeat again (4:1, 4). Then he tells them to “beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the mutilation”(3:2). There were false brethren out there (1:15, 2:15) that they needed to avoid and overcome. As Paul repeats these themes, he tells the Philippians that telling them these things again does not bother him because it is good for them. *“For me to write the same things to you is not tedious, but for you it is safe”(3:1).*

First, writing the same things *“is not tedious.”* Preachers, teachers, elders, and all Christians must never grow weary in preaching the truth! We must guard against the truth becoming *“tedious”* to us because we are familiar with it. Jesus commanded His apostles to *“Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned”*(Mark 16:15-16). Can you imagine how familiar the gospel message became to the apostles as they went from town to town, preaching it *“to every creature”*? How frustrating to find themselves preaching the same sermons because they were needed every place they went! Yet Paul tells us it was not tedious to him!

We must be willing to teach and re-teach, again and again, until the lesson is learned. Teachers must remember the deep need their audience has for the lessons the Bible teaches. If Paul had not warned of false teachers, wouldn't many Christians have been taken away by the *“dogs,” “evil workers,”* and *“mutilation”*? Paul was motivated not simply by a desire to relieve himself of his responsibility to teach, but because he deeply cared for those he taught. *“So affectionately longing for you, we were well pleased to impart to you not only the gospel of God, but also our own lives, because you had become dear to us”*(1 Thess 2:8). Can we teachers say this of those we teach?

Paul also mentions that *“for you it is safe”* to hear the same things. This reminds us that as hearers, there are some things we need to hear again and again. If we know the message already, we need to be reminded of it. Peter says, *“For this reason I will not be negligent to remind you always of these things, though you know and are established in the present truth”*(2 Pet 1:12). The message is too important to be bored with it because our spiritual safety is at stake! But perhaps—just maybe—we are not the only one listening! Maybe someone has not heard this truth and desperately needs to know about giving, or the Lord's Supper, or the work of the church, or sexual morality. If it is safe for you, can't you rejoice in the truth of the message?

This passage does not advocate preaching on one's *“hobby”* or being redundant in our teaching. However, it is clear that we ought to preach and rejoice in the New Testament gospel. We must beware the danger of being like the Athenians, who *“spent their time in nothing else but either to tell or to hear some new thing”*(Acts 17:21). Newness in preaching is probably not safe! At some point, not much will be new to us, yet we still need to hear!

Let us as teachers be consistent and always ready “*in season and out of season*”(2 Tim 4:2) to preach the word. It will not change, and we must preach it consistently. Further, may all of us as listeners rejoice in the gospel of our great God, “*with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning*”(James 1:17). His word will not change, but we can still rejoice in it!

The People's Call to Gideon
(Gideon series part 3 of 3) – see May and June for parts 1 and 2)
(Judges 8:22-35)
By Jon W. Quinn

Gideon was the fifth judge of Israel. He played a small but important role in the history of God's people. Gideon lived during a time when Israel had forsaken God and had worshipped idols. The nation had abandoned its true source of national strength and the source of its blessings much like our own nation has done today. God had withdrawn his blessings and protection, and the nation had suffered. As voices began to call upon God for deliverance, God used Gideon to answer the need. Gideon was a reluctant leader who was finally convinced of the power of God. He ultimately led the children of Israel in victory over their enemies, the Midianites. We find the account of this part of Israel's history in Judges chapters 6-8.

The Man Who Would Not Be King

After the military victory against the Midianites, the people of Israel had an idea. God was with Gideon, and had given victory despite the overwhelming odds against it. The people decided that it was time that they had a king to rule over them and they wanted Gideon to be that king. “Then the men of Israel said to Gideon, “Rule over us, both you and your son, also your son's son, for you have delivered us from the hand of Midian.” But Gideon said to them, “I will not rule over you, nor shall my son rule over you; the LORD shall rule over you.” (Judges 8:22-23).

Gideon took up a collection of gold in order to make an ephod. An “ephod” was a garment with shoulder straps and often worn by priests performing their rituals. Later, the people “played the harlot” with the ephod, becoming a snare to Gideon and his house (Judges 8:27). The phrase “played the harlot” in this context refers to idolatry. It appears that after Gideon's death, the people took the ephod that Gideon had made to

commemorate the victory that God had given them and used it to worship Baal.

Gideon died at a "good old age." Not long after he died, the children of Israel "played the harlot" with the Baals (Judges 8:32-35). They soon forgot the service that Gideon's household had rendered. One of Gideon's own sons, Abimelech, decided that he ought to be king. This time, it was not "like father, like son". Abimelech's mother was a concubine from Shechem, and so Abimelech went to his mother's city and raised gold from her people. With it, hired mercenaries, and captured and executed all of Gideon's other sons except for one.

Abimelech was made king in Shechem and that lasted for about three years. There was much treachery and betrayal among his allies, and ultimately this all leads to the destruction of Shechem and those who had helped him, as well as his own death.

"Thus God repaid the wickedness of Abimelech, which he had done to his father in killing his seventy brothers. Also God returned all the wickedness of the men of Shechem on their heads, and the curse of Jotham the son of Jerubbaal came upon them." (Judges 9:56-57).

Who Shall Be Your King?

When the people asked Gideon to be their king, he refused. He said, "The LORD shall rule over you." Good answer!

Later, in the not too distant future, the people of Israel would again ask for a king. They would approach the prophet Samuel with their request, and Israel would finally get for themselves what Gideon had refused to become. The Lord would tell Samuel to appoint a king for them but also to warn them of what it would lead to. The Lord told Samuel, "Listen to the voice of the people in regard to all that they say to you, for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me from being king over them." (1 Samuel 8:7).

Today, we can have it both ways: We can have the Lord God as King of our lives as well as the Man, Jesus. God reigns in our hearts through His Son Jesus, Deity who had taken upon Himself manhood to become our Redeemer. We are citizens of His kingdom (Colossians 1:13) but His kingdom is spiritual and not of this realm (John 18:36). We can please both our God and our King because they are one and the same. Our King is our leader and friend. He has all authority over His people, the church (Matthew 28:18-20; Ephesians 1:22,23). He provides for us what no other can; eternal life. The day will come when He comes to gather His kingdom together and

take us all home to God (1 Corinthians 15:24). How blessed we are that our Creator, Savior and Redeemer is also our friend and king!

Idolatry

Men have a tendency to worship "religious objects" (Acts 17:22-24). Just as the "ephod" Gideon had made later became a stumbling block to his household, likewise it has been so with other images and artifacts through the ages.

Whether it be the Shroud of Turin, an image of Mary or the alleged remains of Peter, to attach a kind of "magical holiness" to an item is a dangerous superstition. The apostle Paul once said, "But may it never be that I would boast, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world." (Galatians 6:14). While it is true that we "boast" in the cross. We need to understand that "the cross" is a metaphor for the love and suffering of Christ by which He secured our redemption, as well as our own willingness to deny ourselves and follow Him thereby "taking up" our own cross (Mark 8:34). That is much more spiritually significant than to wear a cross of gold on a chain around one's neck.

Things Do Not Always Go Well When Things Go Well

Finally, we note that people often forget God when things are going well (2 Corinthians 12:7-10). It happened repeatedly in old Israel. Perhaps we see it in our own nation today. It is sad that so many of us have forgotten the firm dependence on Divine providence that our forefathers and founders of this great nation once had. We read of it in their documents and even see it chiseled in stone on the buildings they built. Just as in Gideon's day, many are attacking the true source of our national strength, the "Judeo-Christians" ethics which gave the foundation to the nation our ancestors built. Israel suffered because of her neglect. Shall we suffer likewise?

It was God's grace and power that defeated the Midianites. It was not Gideon and the 300. And yet, it was necessary that Gideon obey God, for without obedience there would have been no victory. When we obey God today, can we say that we have saved ourselves? Not at all. In our obedience to the gospel, it is not that we are trusting in our power to save, but in God's power (Hebrews 5:9). Praise God for His salvation!

But Jesus... I Didn't Know I Was a Liberal!
(Matthew 7:13-29)
By Jerry Blount

" Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity." Matthew 7:22-23

I would like to consider the impact of this prophecy straight from the mouth of Jesus. A couple of things come out rather clearly about the judgment:

- 1) You are not going to just stand there like a bump on a log before the throne of God. You will speak, present your case, and be judged largely on what you did with the words of Jesus.
- 2) What is today often described as "liberalism" would seem to be the direct cause of the condemnation of a vast majority of Christians in the day of judgment.

If we were to back up and view this passage in context say vs. 13-29 our "first impression" actually becomes set in concrete. It becomes clear that this is exactly what Jesus is warning us about. Let's see...

Vs 13-14 The warnings about the broad road versus the narrow one. Today this has become a cliché, everyone seems to quote it, few think through it's implications.

Vs 15-20 False teachers and their fruits.... Here Jesus gives us a key to our text for today. Vs. 20. "So then, you will know them by their fruits." Note that in vs 22-23 quoted above, what they considered a good work and evidence of their faith, Jesus considered and affront to His headship.

Vs 22-23 (Today's text) Jesus condemns them for iniquity. NASV translates as Lawlessness. i.e. an assault on Jesus' right to lead.

Vs 24-27 The wise man and foolish, building on the rock and the sand.
Note: Vs. 24. "Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts on them, may be compared to a wise man . . ."

So for today's consideration, define "lawlessness" (iniquity in the KJV). Actually Jesus defines it for us in Vs. 26. "Everyone who hears these words of Mine and does not act on them" If you follow the teaching or direction men rather than Jesus... That is what He has condemned here.

Today by ignoring Jesus' warning, we have wound up with Churches charging admission (like the Pharisees in the temple), Practicing homosexuals, and women in the pulpit claiming to be doing the will of God, instrumental music diluting the sacrifice of our lips and many more innovations of man.

Within the bounds of morality, you can do anything you want in your own name. However, when you doing things in the name of Jesus (even if you define them as "many wonderful works") . . . You had better be sure Jesus defines them as such!

These people were shocked at the outcome...

Can you afford to be?

Can you find the things you do, or your church does in the Bible?

This would appear to be an important question...

Here is a list of things to attempt to find in the Bible

1) Any kind of denominational headquarters on earth (Jesus' headquarters is at the right hand of God!)

2) Any creeds other than the Bible (I Corinthians 1:10. "Now I exhort you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all agree and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be made complete in the same mind and in the same judgment.")

3) Any successor to Peter or the other apostles or prophets.

- 4) Infant baptism or sprinkling baptism (See Romans 6)
- 5) Laying your hand on the TV, praying, then sending them a check! Can you find any pleas to support all these Johnny come lately ministries?
- 6) Any of these worldwide ministries other the church itself founded by Christ.
- 7) Any organization on earth other than or larger than the local church. (Note in the bible the affiliations of the congregations were not with any denominational structure only with Jesus)
- 8) Churches setting up hospitals, various types of benevolent homes, schools, daycare, baseball teams, carnivals etc.
- 9) Can you find even one example of churches selling or charging anyone for anything? Note: you will find a contribution (I Corinthians 16:1ff). You will also find people repeatedly selling in order to give (acts 4:32-5:12). BUT! You will also notice the church did not get involved.... Why? Maybe one episode with the money changers was enough?

Can you find the things that many churches spend their time doing . . .in the Bible?

Can you afford to wait until the judgment to see if Jesus approves of your behavior or ... your church's behavior?

Topic Page:

{Since I'm in a sentimental mood about the past, on the occasion of my 60th birthday, here's something I wrote in 1978, shortly after I met Jon Quinn.}

UNSCRUPULOUS TACTICS
Warren E. Berkley

{This was first published in THE SPIRITUAL DEVELOPER, Jan. 1, 1978. That was a semi-monthly publication of the Mulvane Church of Christ, Mulvane, Kansas. I worked there in the 1970's. While this article was

written almost 30 years ago, and some of the references may be understood only by considering the history of that time, the main observations continue to be relevant. I have polished the grammar, corrected a couple of typos, but otherwise have left the article in original form. –web }

“Unless the contrast between truth and error is kept up, truth itself will lose its brightness, its efficacy, and its sanctifying influence over its devotees. Men will cease to regard it as of value, if error is not kept in contrast with it.”

These words come from the pen of David Lipscomb. Though originally written in 1898, they reflect Biblical principles essential to our survival as a distinct people. Unceasing vigilance is needed to separate truth from error. And this vigilance demands that false teachers be exposed. If there be any who doubt the propriety of the practice, they should read the following: Acts 15:23-29; 17:17; 18:28; Gal. 2:11; Eph. 5:11; Phil. 1:16,17; 1 Tim. 1:3, 18-20; 5:20; 2 Tim. 2:17,18; 4:1-2; Jude 3, etc. The soft, sentimental, compromising attitude of some towards error IS ERROR.

But I have one plea to make in this article: LET'S NOT BECOME SO AGGRESSIVE, HASTY AND ROUGH THAT WE RESORT TO UNKIND AND UNSCRUPULOUS TACTICS! Whether or not the job of exposing error ought to be done IS NOT THE QUESTION here; I'm concerned, in this article, with **THE TACTICS EMPLOYED IN DOING THE JOB.**

Some Examples

1. MONETARY REWARDS. I receive several bulletins published by "conservative" churches every week. Ever now and then I get one with "\$100 REWARD" written across the top in huge letters (I nearly "pitched" one a few years ago, thinking it was just another Publisher's Clearing House Sweepstake). The aim of such a monetary reward is to challenge someone to prove some false doctrine, or meet a preacher in debate. I realize how difficult it is to get denominational preachers to discuss the teachings of the Bible. I'm fully aware of how hesitant some "liberals" are to talk about the "issues" that divide us. But I do not believe that this justifies the practice of offering money to people to study the Bible. And I can't understand how we can criticize the "liberals" for their carnal rewards in their bus ministries,

then turn right around and offer a false teacher \$100 if he'll try to prove his doctrine. I don't believe you'll find any Biblical basis for this.

2. NO SOLID EVIDENCE. Before marking anybody as anything, we ought to double-check our ground of evidence. There are men who are false teachers and should be marked as such. But, when we put that "name" on someone, WE SHOULD BE READY TO PROVE THAT HE IS, IN FACT, A FALSE TEACHER. Conclusions must be justified by sufficient evidence (see 1 Thess. 5:21; Eph. 5:10; Acts 24:13; 25:7). You may think that brother so-in-so doesn't "bear down" on this point the way he ought to, or you may think he is weak on some subject, BUT THE REAL QUESTION IS: HAS HE TAUGHT SOMETHING THAT IS NOT IN HARMONY WITH THE NEW TESTAMENT? If we don't have any real solid proof, we had better be careful about using the term: "false teacher."

3. DISTRACTING PERSONAL REMARKS. In exposing false teachers, great care must be exercised to STICK WITH THE REAL ISSUE AT HAND. If a young preacher, for example, is a false teacher, castigating him for being a "21 year old boy" does nothing for your case. A false teacher is a false teacher, whether 21, 81 or 101. Age is not the issue, THE FALSE DOCTRINE IS. Distracting personal "slams" and insults do nothing toward resolving differences among brethren and they have no place in preaching the truth.

4. GUILT BY ASSOCIATION. It is believed by some that if a brother can somehow be associated with a known false teacher, that makes him a false teacher. But that's just not so! If I'm closely associated with a known false teacher, that may be a good reason to be concerned about me. Further, I need to be warned that that association may be detrimental to me (1 Cor. 15:33; Eph. 5:11). But the mere fact that I'm "associated" with a false teacher does not make me a false teacher! The "guilty by association" theory must always account for the nature of that association. Jesus was associated with "publicans and sinners," but before we charge Him with guilt, we must consider the nature of that association (see Matt. 9:19-13).

5. Being Disrespectful. I don't care how false a teacher is, or how grossly wicked someone is, common decency and respect must never be surrendered! Being bold is necessary, not being ugly and insulting. On a recent radio program in Wichita (Remember, this was 1978, -web), Madalyn Murray O'Hare was the guest. Listeners were allowed to call in by phone

their questions or comments. One young man told her *where she could go!* Others called in with no valid questions or comments, they just wanted to give her a good verbal lashing. I stand firmly opposed to the destructive work being done by this infidel (that is what she is). In fact, I was one who called in with a question designed to show a flaw in her philosophy. There is NEVER A TIME when it is permissible to be unkind or vindictive (see Rom. 12:1-21).

Conclusion

Let no one accuse me of discouraging the aggressive and urgent work of upholding God's truth. I'm committed to that work! But let us never think that the end justifies the means, or that "anything goes" if we are right. Let us never think that fairness and respect can be ignored in the interest of exposing error. "... Let us work that which is good toward all men, and especially toward them that are of the household of the faith," (Gal. 6:10). *See also 2 Tim. 2:24-26.*

Plan of Salvation By Jon W. Quinn

Plan #1

Announced by the apostles, inspired by the Holy Spirit, to new believers in Christ who asked what they must do:

Acts 2:36-38

"Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ -- this Jesus whom you crucified." Now when they heard this, they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brethren, what shall we do?" Peter said to them, "Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."
(Acts 2:36-38).

Plan #2

On the back page of a tract, sinner were urged to pray this prayer to be saved. This prayer is not found in the Bible; nor were alien sinners commanded to pray for their forgiveness.

The Sinner's Prayer:

"O' Lord, I accept that I am a sinner and that Jesus died for my sins. I now accept Him into my heart as Lord and Savior asking for your mercy and forgiveness in His name. Amen."

The editors of Expository Files are happy with plan #1 and thankful to the God of all grace for it. We cannot recommend Plan #2 at all, but will change our minds when this prayer can be shown to us in the Bible.

The Final Page 14.11

Is it Right to Complain to God?

(Psalm 77)

By Jon W. Quinn

In the 77th Psalm we read in verse 1 "I will cry unto God with my voice." And in verse 3 "I complain, and my spirit is overwhelmed." And then verse 7 "Will the Lord cast off forever? And will He be favorable no more?"

What a "Gloomy Gus"!

Seriously though, where is the joy that faith and serving God is supposed to bring? What right does this person have to complain to God? Is there ever a circumstance where it is right to bring a complaint to God?

First, we need to notice that the Psalmist was crying out in behalf of Israel, his nation. It had suffered much due to a lack of faith and obedience among the people. But now things seemed to be turning around. Would God ever favor the nation again? The Psalmist does indeed feel great distress and at this moment sees only the dark side of things. Was he right or wrong?

Well, probably most of the complaining done today is wrong. Throughout the pages of the Bible we find many cases where God becomes angry with the complainers and murmerers and grumblers (Num. 11:1; 14:26-29 for examples). Many believe that their lot in life is unfair - and focus on that rather than the mercy, hope and blessings of God. Also, there is the fact that we did not receive from God's hand what we really deserve. It

was once asked, “If Thou, Jehovah, shouldest mark iniquities, who could stand?”(see Psalm 130:3).

If, on the other hand, we are speaking our minds and hearts to God, expressing our needs as well as our confidence in Him and our willingness to be faithful whatever the circumstance, then such is needed. Always trusting and being satisfied with His final decision - knowing that God wants the best for us eternally. The Psalmist recalls God’s deeds and affirms his confidence in God:

11 I shall remember the deeds of the LORD;
Surely I will remember Your wonders of old.
12 I will meditate on all Your work
And muse on Your deeds.
13 Your way, O God, is holy;
What god is great like our God?
14 You are the God who works wonders;
You have made known Your strength among the peoples.
15 You have by Your power redeemed Your people,
The sons of Jacob and Joseph.
Psalm 77:11-15