I Have No Right to Complain

Have you noticed how many times per week we are given an opinion poll? Apparently, our opinions are now objective truths that need to be shared — or at least we are being mesmerized into thinking that the world is on the edge of their seats waiting for our thoughts. Part of this odd phenomenon is the reality of complaining becoming an art form. We can now complain to more people than ever before. We can now publish our complaints with the hope that people will encourage us to complain some more. But where do we find in the Bible any encouragement to have opinions and complaints that are contrary to the example given us in the life of Jesus?

 As many of you know, I fell off a ladder several years ago. I blacked out and fell about ten feet and I awakened in an ambulance. I was told that I had three broken ribs on my spine, with one that was bleeding, and a broken rib in the front. I suffered a concussion that was bleeding on the brain. Both areas of bleeding stopped in a couple of hours. I am being healed, and I suppose I could complain about what I cannot do yet, but for what purpose? If I were to complain, it would be to exclude God from the remarkable healing He is doing. I can walk. I can think. I can celebrate Mass. I can hug my wife and children and grandchildren. There is heat in my house. I have a bed. But most of all, I have the love of God shining through my wife and family and people who are concerned. I am sure that there will be those who will focus on the fact that an almost 76 year old should not be on a ten foot extension ladder, and while they may be correct, their opinion is not healing me, although I obviously will become increasingly cautious about my activities. But how many times have I been on a ladder and not fallen? How many times have I barely missed being in some type of accident? How many times has God protected me as I have traveled into difficult areas and traveled around the world? Shouldn’t I be spending more time thanking God for how many times I have been delivered? *I have no right to complain*.

 As I have felt a great deal of pain in the areas where the broken ribs are, I have wondered more specifically about the elements of the scourging that Jesus endured, and then upon being scourged how far He had to carry the Cross. I have been either attending or officiating at the Stations of the Cross for many, many decades, and sometimes I spent more time worrying about the Procession, the music, the “correct” form and the right vesture than I have about pondering the pain of being scourged, being beaten, carrying the cross, trying to take a deep breath — *I have no right to complain*. Jesus in three years of public ministry endured infinitely more than I have in 50 years of public ministry and He continues to endure the pain of those who in this world have turned their backs on Him. All too often we have sought consolation from God, and then received it, only weeks later to forget. If someone forgets me, if they speak ill of me, if they don’t send me a Christmas card anymore, if they are upset with me for something I may have done unintentionally, what right do I have to complain? Jesus has taken all of the pain upon Himself, and every once-in-a-while we are allowed to have a brief encounter with His pain so that we will never forget what He has done for us. *I have no right to complain.*