



## CELL GUIDE

**TOPIC** The Courtyard of Contempt

**SPEAKER** Elder DSP Edric Sng

**THEME** Spiritual Insight or Blindness (John 8:12)

**DATE** 23-24 Feb 2019

# MESSAGE SUMMARY

## INTRODUCTION

Elder Edric addressed the issue of harbouring a critical spirit through the experience of Moses, Aaron and Miriam in Numbers 11:35-12:16. This follows from his previous sermon about the graves of craving where he addressed the issue of complaining amongst believers.

## MOVING FROM THE COURT OF CONTEMPT TO THE ABUNDANCE OF GLORY

In Numbers 11:35-12:3, Elder brother Aaron and elder sister Miriam criticised Moses for marrying a Cushite (dark-skinned) woman. It revealed a deeper jealousy they had against their brother and leader (1 Cor 3:3; Phil 2:3; Jas 3:14-16) that escalated complaining into a critical spirit.

But Moses' humble response provides lessons on how we can move from the court of contempt to the abundance of glory:

### 1. Man's critical spirit begets God's wrath (v1-2)

The Bible warns against being critical of the leaders God has placed above us (Ecc 10:20; Jas 4:11). Judging others brings judgment upon ourselves (Matt 7:1-2; Pro 14:30; Rom 13:1-2).

#### **BUT Man's faithfulness begets God's fortitude (v7-8)**

God brought comfort to Moses by validating him. When we are unfairly treated or unjustly dealt with, allow God to be our vindicator (Psa 105:15; Gal 6:17). Our responsibility is to be faithful to God; He will fight our troubles and give us courage and strength in times of adversity.

### 2. Man's sinfulness begets God's judgement (v9-10)

As a consequence of Miriam's and Aaron's contempt for Moses, the presence of God (represented by the pillar of cloud) left and Miriam's skin turned snow-white (in direct contrast to her criticism of Moses' wife). God's judgment is a withdrawal of His presence (Psa 51:11; Eze 5:11; Exo 33:15).

#### **BUT Man's intercession begets God's mercy (v11-13)**

In compassion, Moses responded to Aaron's plea and beseeched God in His mercy to heal his sister instead of retaliating or defending himself.

## CONCLUSION

A **critical spirit** reaps **consequences**. We should thus say sorry to those we hurt and release forgiveness to those we hold in contempt. God promises His **comfort** and **compassion** so that we can move from a place of contempt (*hazeroth* in Num 11:35) to a place of abundance and blessings (*paran*, Num 12:16).

# QUESTIONS

1. What do you think makes people develop a critical spirit (like Miriam & Aaron)?

2. Learning from Moses, when wronged or hurt, why do we need  
a) God's promise of *comfort for us* as we release judgement?  
b) God's *compassion* to release forgiveness?

3. Are you in the shoes of Moses now? Or have you been behaving more like Aaron and Miriam recently? If neither apply, share a time when you were.