

## Faith Matters # 12 – Complaints to God – May 21

**Scene 1:** You're thrilled because you received an invitation to the Queen's Garden Party at Buckingham Palace. You find yourself 2<sup>nd</sup> in line to be received by her majesty, the Queen, and you overhear the person ahead of you say: "I don't see how you can live in such luxury when so many people are homeless, hungry, and poor." Of course, you're shocked at the person's rudeness and lack of respect. That's scene 1.

**Scene 2:** You've opened your Bible at random and find yourself reading these words: "Lord ... I must question you about matters of justice. Why are the wicked so prosperous? Why do dishonest people succeed? You plant them, and they take root; they grow and bear fruit. They always speak well of you, yet they do not really care about you." (Jer. 12:1f). Hold it a minute, Jeremiah. Don't forget who you're speaking to, someone greater than any Queen or King.

If you were to glimpse at the Old Testament book of Job, you'd hear him say: "Listen to my bitter complaint. Don't condemn me, God.... is it right for you to be so cruel? To despise what you yourself have made? And then to smile on the schemes of the wicked? (10:1\*) "You hit a man who is about to fall. But thieves and godless people live in peace, though their only god is their own strength" (12:6f \*). Then Job turns to us and asks, "Why does God let evil men live?" (21:7\*).

It's unacceptable for a person to speak so disrespectfully to the Queen, but the Bible gives us many examples of faithful people complaining to God about what really troubles them. They want to know why the heathen prosper, why good people die young. Even Jesus cries out in pain, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Matt. 27:46).

So you see, it doesn't make you any less of a Christian to be honest about your doubts and complaints to God. In the Bible we hear not only what God says to us, but also what people, sometimes angrily or upset, say to God. God is big enough to hear our complaints. It's a sign of faith to know that.

(by Rev. Willard Pottinger – Erskine Presbyterian Church, Hamilton)

\* *Today's English Version*. All others, *New Revised Standard Version*