

THE POWER OF ONE

Numbers 16:41-50

REVIEW: PRINCIPLES WE ARE LEARNING

- #1 – God is our difference maker.
- #2 – God’s grace is our protection.
- #3 – God’s gifts are good.
- #4 – Choose the easy way.
- #5 – Brokenness is good!

TODAY:

- **#6 – Brace for grace.**
 - Can you imagine? Jesus cleansed Temple: “My house shall be called a house of prayer!”
 - Prayer or Profit – when you pray from the latter, your requests will go nowhere.
 - They used it to strike bargains – Brace for impact!

OUTLINE: NUM. 16:41-50

- **24 Hours Earlier:** Korah’s Rebellion (16:1-40)
- The Day After (Numbers 16:41-50)
 - How blame-casting fogs a mirror (16:41)
 - What Israel deserves (16:42-45)
 - What a godly intercessor accomplishes (16:46-50)

KORAH'S REBELLION (16:1-40)

- **24 hours earlier:** Grumpy Group #1 – starts with 4
- Spreads to 250 “well-known men”
- “You have gone too far, Moses & Aaron!”
- Not content with significant esteem, they aspire to climb one rung higher. Dangerous ambition!
- They dress up their ambition to sound spiritual. “All are holy...”

KORAH'S REBELLION (16:1-40)

- Moses says: “**You** have gone too far!”
- Okay, Grumpy Group #1 (250 men), report for duty as priests and we’ll see what God thinks!
- Grumpy Group #2 – Dathan and Abiram are complaining because Moses has “tricked them.”
- Even worse, in their eyes, Moses has appointed himself prince of the death-march.

KORAH'S REBELLION (16:1-40)

- Both groups don’t see the real problem staring back from the mirror. “It’s not enough, God!”
- God’s first option – total do-over!
- Moses and Aaron appeal – don’t judge all for some.
- Very well! God proposes that the congregation declare themselves by putting some distance between themselves and rebels!

THE CORE PROBLEM

- They did not see their real problem – pride, anger against God, disappointment with God, and resentment toward God.
- They are blaming God (disguised as blame for Moses) for not blessing them enough to satisfy their ego (group 1) or for consequences of their own making (group 2)! (In the wilderness by choice!)

THE RESULTS

- Group one got burned and group two did not pass “go” and went directly to Sheol!
- Now put Yourself in Israel’s Sandals!
- I would be on my best behavior! Wouldn’t you?
- This is not what we discover a mere **24 hours later!!**

THE DAY AFTER (NUMBERS 16:41-50)

A. **Blame-casting Fogs the Mirror (vs. 41)**

But on the next day all the congregation of the sons of Israel grumbled against Moses and Aaron, saying, “You are the ones who have caused the death of the Lord’s people.”

*Inconceivable! “All the congregation...grumbled.”
Against M&A. You (not they) are the cause!*

WHAT DOESN’T MAKE SENSE

- The people are taking up an offense for Korah – does this make sense on any level?
- They blame Moses: “You are the cause!” Reality check! He was their rescuer!
- They are actually mad at God but expressing it by being mad at His servants.
- ≠ a Psalm of Lament because of blame!

WHAT DOESN’T MAKE SENSE

- Blind to their real problem, they are courting their own extinction
- How about you: Have you ever taken up an offense for someone else or been mad at God?
- What should they have done? Learn from Korah’s bad example!

B. WHAT ISRAEL DESERVES (VSS 42-45).

It came about, however, when the congregation had assembled against Moses and Aaron, that they turned toward the tent of meeting, and behold, the cloud covered it and the glory of the Lord appeared. Then Moses and Aaron came to the front of the tent of meeting, and the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, "Get away from among this congregation, that I may consume them instantly."

B. WHAT ISRAEL DESERVES (VSS 42-45).

- Israel deserves nothing less than instant annihilation.
- God's wrath is on the move.
- God advises Moses (and Aaron) to put distance between themselves and the people.
- "God is a liability (not asset)" – saying this puts every gift from God at risk (including life itself).

C. WHAT A GODLY INTERCESSOR ACCOMPLISHES (VSS. 46-50).

Then they fell on their faces. Moses said to Aaron, "Take your censer and put in it fire from the altar, and lay incense on it; then bring it quickly to the congregation and make atonement for them.

C. WHAT A GODLY INTERCESSOR ACCOMPLISHES (VSS. 46-50).

For wrath has gone forth from the Lord, the plague has begun!" Then Aaron took it as Moses had spoken, and ran into the midst of the assembly, for behold, the plague had begun among the people. So he put on the incense and made atonement for the people. He took his stand between the dead and the living, so that the plague was checked.

C. WHAT A GODLY INTERCESSOR ACCOMPLISHES (VSS. 46-50).

But those who died by the plague were 14,700, besides those who died on account of Korah. Then Aaron returned to Moses at the doorway of the tent of meeting, for the plague had been checked (Numbers 16:41–50).

C. WHAT A GODLY INTERCESSOR ACCOMPLISHES (VSS. 46-50).

- **How Ironic!** “Since incense was symbolic of prayer, Aaron in effect was appearing among the people to intercede in prayer for them. It must have been clear to all that **one censer in the hand of a man of God far excelled 250 in the hands of that many sinners**” – E. H. Merrill

JESUS DOES WHAT AARON DID

- We deserve nothing less than instant annihilation.
- God’s wrath will be on the move in a day yet future.
- God has appointed Jesus as our intercessor.
- As our High Priest, He stands between death and life.

JESUS IS INFINITELY BETTER!

- The former priests, on the one hand, existed in greater numbers because they were prevented by death from continuing, but Jesus, on the other hand, because He continues forever, holds His priesthood permanently. Therefore He is able also to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them (Heb. 7:23–25).

TWO WAYS TO DRAW NEAR

- Israel drew near to God to call God to account!
- We draw near to God to plead for grace!
- God is a disappointment.
- Jesus is our only hope.
- Israel came before God depending on themselves.
- We come before God depending on who Jesus is.
- They received judgment.
- We receive grace!

TWO WAYS TO DRAW NEAR

- Let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin. Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need (Heb. 4:14–16).

HOW TO BRACE FOR GRACE!

- I need better, I need more.
- I need grace, I need mercy.
- Give me what I deserve.
- Save me from what I deserve.
- Do this because I am worthy!
- Do this simply because Jesus is my Intercessor.
- If God answers this prayer, brace for impact!
- As God answers this prayer, brace for grace!

PRINCIPLE #6: BRACE FOR GRACE

- Draw near to God through Jesus. In His name = purely and simply because of Who He is and what He has done...
- Ask for mercy, God's compassion on those in need!
- Ask for grace, God's undeserved kindness, especially to those in a mess of their own making!

PRINCIPLE #6: BRACE FOR GRACE

- **How to:** Eliminate the language of merit – “This is what I deserve.”
- Affirm Who God is – God of mercy and grace.
- Affirm your solitary credential – “I am His!” It is the name of Jesus... Answer me as you would answer Jesus, because I am His.
- Vaclav Havel z.b.

Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need (Heb. 4:14–16).

We come, asking for mercy and asking for grace, simply because Jesus is our intercessor. But we know He is our perfect intercessor – **so we come boldly and expectantly** in His name.