



Help: Getting Out of the Ditch through HUMILITY

May 23, 2021

Holy Text: Numbers 16:41-49

Review Numbers 16:1-3, 28-35 (Backdrop)

Bishop McLeod preached a message on March 21, 2021 called, “*Dealing with Defilement Pt 3: Avoiding the Ditch!*” In this sermon, we looked at Korah, a leader from the clan of Levi and his followers Dathan, Abiram from Rueben’s clan, and 250 community leaders who all rose up against Moses and Aaron because of jealousy, and I believe entitlement.

Why was there jealousy?

- A lack of trust in God’s plan
- Self-fulfillment in the position that God has placed you
- A lack of thankfulness of where God has you at a particular point and time

Why was there entitlement?

- A belief that they were more important
- A belief in their position
- A belief in their upbringing

Sadly, because of this mindset, over 250 people were swallowed up and never heard from again!

Thoughts from the text:

- Now fast-forward: in the same chapter (**Numbers 16:41-49**), the people rose up against Moses and Aaron, claiming they killed the people of God. (v41)
 - **How soon we forget!** Bishop McLeod preached a sermon called *Guarding against Forgetfulness* (May 2nd, 2021).
- We should not be so ready to jump on the children of Israel about forgetfulness.
 - How many times have you forgotten what God has done for you? Think about how he has blessed you with:
 1. A Job
 2. Your Family
 3. Good health or favorite over a bad doctor report
 4. A financial breakthrough
 5. A better relationship whether with family, friends, spouse, etc....
- If we are honest with ourselves, we will acknowledge that forgetfulness is a part of daily living.
- We tend to forget quickly about things that make us feel uncomfortable, especially if they are bad ones.
- This can be attributed to our upbringing, day-to-day activities, or just what’s going on in the world.
- Forgetfulness can be a positive source of strength or a negative piece of weight. This is dependent upon the individual.

- I do not believe we forget purposely for the most part, but we do forget often.
- This would include forgetting that someone who is full of love, full of forgiveness, full of mercy, full of grace, full of protection, and full of patience.
- The people of Israel grumbling did not sit well with God, so He responded to it with a plague. He allowed Moses and Aaron to move away from the congregation beforehand (v43-v45)
- Moses sent Aaron to go into the midst of the cloud, separating the dead from the living. By the way, Jesus also stands between the living and the dead in this world, and this was the plan since he took on human nature.
- Their behavior resulted in God causing a cloud to come over them, killing over 14,000 people before Moses interceded for them.
- Nevertheless, forgetfulness can keep you in the ditch or elevate you out of it. Sometimes, God will let you go in a ditch (your plan)! The Lord does not force us to do anything and will allow us to stay in the ditch until we realize that God can do all things! Your eyes will eventually turn from yourself and back onto God.
- A downward posture signifies that we are nothing, we need help, and we need to surrender all. From that position, we realize just how much we need Him. It is here that we begin to look upward and see the Lord as high and lifted up. We can more easily see the error of our ways, and the new creature in us can be seen. We begin to see our past, present, and future. We can see things more clearly. We begin to truly see!
- It is important to remember because this leads us to a place of humility. As stated earlier, it is easy for us to forget.
- Scripture is filled with examples of the Lord telling Israel to remember past blessings. Even the Lord Jesus had to tell his disciples to remember him in the act of communion.
- A great example of remembering is when Joshua led the children of Israel across the Jordan:
 - The Lord told Joshua to take twelve men from each tribe who would be tasked with removing 12 stones from the river Jordan as they passed through.
 - Each stone was to be placed at their lodging that night. The purpose?
 - For the tribes to remember the work of the Lord
 - For their children to remember the work of the Lord
 - For the next generation to remember the work of the Lord

“And those twelve stones, which they took out of the Jordan, Joshua set up at Gilgal. And he said to the people of Israel, “When your children ask their fathers in times to come, ‘What do these stones mean?’ then you shall let your children know, ‘Israel passed over this Jordan on dry ground.’ For the Lord your

God dried up the waters of the Jordan for you until you passed over, as the Lord your God did to the Red Sea, which he dried up for us until we passed over, so that all the peoples of the earth may know that the hand of the Lord is mighty, that you may fear the Lord your God forever.” (Joshua 4:20–24, ESV)

- Surely this was a humbling experience for the children of Israel.
- Whether you set aside times to reflect on the goodness of God or you keep a journal of all of his blessings, purpose in your heart to remember the works of the Lord. Doing so will result in your **thankfulness** to God and develop a sweet spirit of **humility**.

Getting Out the Ditch through Humility:

H – Hope

(Jer 29:11) For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.

- Hope is normally viewed as doubt or is expressed in that manner. For example, I hope it will be sunny tomorrow. However, from a biblical perspective, hope is the ultimate mindset we should always have. Otherwise, why do we believe in our Christianity? Why do we love our neighbors and enemies? Why do we try to live a righteous life? Why do we believe in the God we cannot see? **Why, Why, Why?**
- Hope can ensure us of a few things:
 - It is never lost (Rom 8:24)
 - It is confidence in what we cannot see (Heb 11:1)
 - It is not from man (Rom 15:13)
 - It lasts (Prov 23:18)
- Our hope is in Jesus Christ and Him only that is the summation of the why we hope and must continue to hope until His return.

U – Understanding

(Prov 18:2) A fool takes no pleasure in understanding, but only in expressing his opinion.

- Understanding is the ability to bring the facts to the forefront and generate values, doctrines, ideals, main beliefs, etc... For example, you have gathered all the information on building a shed, and you understand the information, but what must I do know.
- Many people (even Christian) live their life without understanding why. Much time is spent on acquiring wealth, possessions, degrees and cultural status or position but it does not fulfill you. The reason is that you must understand God’s plan for YOU.

- This will only be revived when you acknowledge His in everything. Understanding you are His, and if you have accepted Him, nothing or no one can snatch you from Him.
- Understanding your purpose in God will always be bigger than you because His ways are not our ways and His thoughts are not our thoughts.
- If we just understand and believe, God does have a purpose for your life which He does, and it can catapult in walking in your purpose.

M - Mercy

(Eph 2:4-5) But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved.

- We are truly sinners, and without Jesus Christ, there is no hope for our reconciliation or redemption.
- We have often heard of God's grace and mercy and understand that grace is simply God giving us what we do not deserve. Mercy is God not giving us what we do deserve.
- In the Bible, several great leaders had faults, but God was able to use them for His Glory:
 - David was an adulterer (2 Sam 11)
 - Moses was a doubter (Ex 3)
 - Saul was an unbeliever (Acts 9)
 - Jacob was a liar/deceiver (Gen 25 & 27)
- Not only did He forgive (grace) them, but He also gifted them with undeserved favor (mercy) and used them mightily.
- We should respond to this kind of grace and mercy by realizing we are sinners and are deserving of nothing but death. This gift is given freely to us. By accepting it, we begin to grow and desire to spread the good news because we know how messed-up, disrespectful, confused, and blasphemy we were towards God. Thank God for His grace and mercy!
- It has been said to go higher in the Lord; you must get lower. This does not imply your face is constantly in the carpet (although there needs to be time set aside for prayer). Instead, it describes a mindset of humility. *(Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you Jam 4:10).*

I – Iniquity

(Is 53:6) All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned--every one--to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all

(Is 53:6) Like sheep we had all wandered away, each going its own way, but the LORD let fall on him all our crimes (Common English Bible, CEB)

- In its simplest form, iniquity is doing our own thing instead of what God wants.
- Sin and iniquity are sometimes used interchangeably, but there is a slight difference. Sin is missing the mark as with iniquity; it can be looked at why you missed the mark.
- The Apostle Paul says it like this: *“For I do not understand my own actions [I am baffled and bewildered by them]. I do not practice what I want to do, but I am doing the very thing I hate [and yielding to my human nature, my worldliness—my sinful capacity].” (Rom 7:15 Amplified)* We know as Christians we are free from the power of sin; however, we still live in a place where sin is plentiful, and if you do not stay prayed up, it is easy to slip back into this arena.
- We are constantly fighting with ourselves to do what is right, and sometimes we win, and sometimes we lose, but we must get before the throne room that is God and repent and get back in line.
- The bibles say in *Gal 5:17*: *“For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do. This I believe a necessary this internal war because it should keep you on your needs (ESV).”* If there is no fight, I believe you can do whatever you want and whenever you want with no remorse or repentance toward God.
- God has given us free will, and He will not force us to follow Him. Just because you can do something does not mean you should. He put our crimes past, present and future on His shoulders. Repent and turn away from sin and put your iniquities in check.

L – Love

(1 John 4:16) So we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.

- Understanding true love is paramount to loving unconditionally like Jesus. If you listen to the world, it will tell you to love yourself before you can love anyone else. That is just not true at all. Sadly, many Christians teeter towards that way of thinking.
- This does not mean you do not love yourself because this could lead to depression, loneliness, relationship issues, low self-esteem, lack of self-worth, and unlovable behavior. Seek Jesus first, for He is love! Jesus is the one who loved you first. He is the one who knew you while you were still in the womb. Jesus is the one who bore our sins. He is the one who put on flesh to save us. Jesus is Love!
- The one love you can depend on when you are at your lowest and darkest hour is Christ. When you are in the ditch, depend on Jesus Christ, the author, and finisher of our faith.

I – Impossible

(Matt 19:26) But Jesus looked at them and said, “With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.”

(Lk 1:37) For nothing will be impossible with God

- There is nothing too hard for God because He is all-powerful. Throughout the Bible, many miracles were performed either by Jesus, His apostles, or through God's appointed leaders. For Example:
 - Water into wine (Jn 2:1-11)
 - Woman with the issue of bleeding (Matt 9:20-22)
 - Raise Lazarus (Jn 11:1-45)
 - Woman crippled for 18 years (Lk 13:10-17)
 - Catch of fish (Lk 5:1-11)
 - Heals two blinded men (Matt 9:27-31)
 - Feeds 5000 thousand men plus women and children (Matt 14:13-21)
 - Moses's rod turned into a serpent (Ex 4:2-3).
 - Moses's water from the rock (Ex 17:1-7)
 - Moses and the different plagues (river into blood, frogs, locust, boils, lice, flies, darkness, hail and fire (Ex 7-10)
 - Peter walked on water (Matthew 14:28-31)
 - Philip cast out demons and healed the lame (Acts 8:7; 8:13)
 - Stephen performed amazing miracles and signs (Acts 6:8)
 - Paul & Silas cast a demon out of a fortune-telling slave girl (Acts 16:16-18)
 - Moses parting of the Red Sea (Ex 14:16)
 - Elijah restore life to widow woman in Zarephath (1Ki 17:19-24)
 - Joshua and the Sun (Josh 9-10)
- God does impossible things in the middle of challenging circumstances in our eyes, but He cannot do them for those who do not believe He can.
- All of us agree that nothing is impossible for God. However, when facing difficult situations, conditions, surroundings, environments, and scenarios, we soon forget that He is God almighty, God the Creator, God our Provider, God our Healer, and God all Knowing.
- We can intellectualize it, but in the heart is where the action must manifest. Your mind can be easily swayed and lose focus on God's promises, but once it gets in the heart, you hold tight without a timetable because you understand it is according to His will and time.

T – Trust

(Prov 3:5-6) Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.

(Ps 37:3) Trust in the Lord, and do good; Dwell in the land, and feed on His faithfulness.

- According to Webster's 1828 dictionary, trust is defined as: *1. Confidence; a reliance or resting of the mind on the integrity, veracity, justice, friendship or other sound principle of another person.*
- In the world, trust is something a person has to earn and is based on the criteria of the individual seeking it. In other words, a fallen, indecisive, sinful person is setting the bar for trust.
- The Bible does not mention putting any trust in man. So why do we put so much trust in him?

(Ps 62:8) Put not your trust in princes, in a son of man, in whom there is no salvation.

(Jer 17:5) Thus says the Lord: "Cursed is the man who trusts in man and makes flesh his strength, whose heart turns away from the Lord."

- Trusting in God does not mean you will get what you want when you want it. Trust does not mean God is going to explain everything that is going on in your life. Trust does not mean you will not have issues.
- Trust in God does mean He alone is trustworthy in the good and bad times (look at Job). Trust does mean God is sovereign. Trust does mean you do not have to worry. Trust does mean God will always keep His promises. Trust does mean you can believe in His Word. Trust does mean you can lean on His strength.
- Trust is an action word, and it entails some action. Sometimes God allows problems to come our way to build our trust and dependence on Him. Every situation is an opportunity to see that God is all-powerful, all-knowing, and omnipresent. Many times we miss this because we are caught in the situation rather than the Savior. Just a tweak in this mindset could easily increase your trust in God. *(Jer 29:11 For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope).*

Y – Yield

(Jn 3:30) He must increase, but I must decrease

- We must be willing to lay down all our biases, ideas, concepts, and plans to God. Yielding is not normally associated with positive actions. It is usually associated with giving up control of something we think we are in control of.
- One of the biggest problems with yielding is that we like control and do not want anyone else to control our money, family, career, relationships, health plan, or us.
- This is exactly what God wants. He wants you to yield or surrender all to Him. When you recognize this, your victory is on the way. Until then, you may find little or no help while trying to get out of the ditch.

Nowhere in the Bible has the proud been honored.

It is the humble that has always found favor in God's eyes. If we grow in humility, it will allow us to see people, situations, and challenges through Jesus lens, not our lens. Our lens is often full of smudges, which give you very little visibility, which causes ditch-like consequences. Therefore, let humility lead you in the good, bad, and ugly times. Remember, *God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble (Jam 4:6)*. Humility signifies He is, and I am not.

(Phil 3:12-14) Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.