

“God’s Sinkhole!”

I. **INTRO:**

- A. **Rose Barnes** - volunteer with an organization called *Bring Me Hope*.
1. She has gone 4 times to China, the last 3 summers she’s worked w/ *Bring Me Hope* & helped put on summer camps for orphans.
- B. **How do you handle criticism?** It seems like someone’s always waiting to criticize!
1. **Like the 2 men** who were standing looking in a window at a taxidermy shop at a bird on a limb. And one man said, “*That’s a poor job of mounting a bird!*” Just then the bird flew down from the perch.
 2. **Let’s see how Moses deals with severe criticism!**

II. **GOD’S SINKHOLE!**

- A. **MINE, MINE MINE!** (1-19) [Seagulls on *Finding Nemo!*]
- B. Paul teaches us “**Godliness with contentment is great gain!**” 1 Tim 6:6
1. When you’re not content with **your gifts**, you really not content with **your calling**; & when you’re not content with **your calling**, you’re really not content with **God’s calling**; & when you’re not content with **God’s calling**, you’re really not content with **God**.
 2. Remember **God** made tabernacle appointments...**not Moses!**
- C. Four men who desire to *promote themselves*.
1. They were not content to **assist**, they wanted to serve as a **priest** as well.
 2. Korah aspired to **priestly privilege** not being content with **sacred duties**.
- D. (1) **Korah** was 1st cousin to Moses & Aaron.
1. He was camped close to **Reuben** & thus their association in this rebellion.
- E. (2) **The opposition was staggering!** 250 men, all united against Moses & Aaron.
1. Most people aren’t content with rebelling **alone!**
 2. **Here we have *Mutiny in the Desert!***
 3. **Yet Moses was not intimidated**; he took the matter to the Lord & let Him be the judge! (4,5) [good advice!]
 4. **God will vindicate His servants better than they can vindicate themselves!**

F. How to deal with Criticism *Practically!*

1. **Expect it** - It came Jesus way. He was lied about, slandered, blasphemed, & openly ridiculed; & it all finally ended w/a cross. **Expect it!**
 - a) Satan will use criticism as a **weapon** to batter us; God will use it as a **tool** to build us.
2. **Evaluate it** - Consider the source. Not all criticism is bad.
 - a) Tozer, "If the critic is **right**, he has helped you. If the critic is **wrong**, you can help him. Either way, someone gets helped."
3. **Watch out for Praise/flattery** - It's a general rule that the person who is *encouraged* by **praise** will be *devastated* by **criticism**.
 - a) "Grant me prudently to avoid him that **flatters me**, and to endure patiently him that **contradicts me**." Thomas `a Kempis
4. **Wait on the Lord** - **Not**, phone a friend; **not**, gather forces.
 - a) Prov.27:6 **Faithful are the wounds of a friend, But the kisses of an enemy are deceitful.**
5. **Look beyond the Critic** - See God on the throne; see the big picture; see how many friends love you; see the purposes God wants to achieve.¹

G. (3) A **successful leader** is often accused of exalting himself, especially by those who are **jealous** of him & **want to take his place!**

H. (4) **Moses fell on his face**, that is, he *stepped aside* so that the rebels should stand **face to face** with God.

1. We need to *act* similarly, when we're *unjustly* attacked.
2. 2 Cor.10:18 **For not he who commends himself is approved, but whom the Lord commends.**

I. (5) **Who is His & who is holy** - It's **true** that all of God's people are *set apart* by Him & **for** Him. But it is also **true** that God calls some of His people to be **leaders** in special places of service. (*W/o leadership = chaos*)

1. Same is true of **the church today**: *all saints* are beloved of God, **but some** have been given **spiritual gifts** & **spiritual offices** for the work of the ministry.
2. We are to **desire spiritual gifts** (1 Cor.14:1), but not to covet another person's *spiritual office*.
 - a) If a believer wants a place of *spiritual leadership*, let him **prove himself worthy** of it by his **character & conduct**. (Warren Wiersbe)

¹ Excerpts from Warren Wiersbe; In Praise of Plodders; pg. 15-19

- J. (5,9,10) It is only **God** who can *draw you near* to Himself.
- K. (12-14) It's easier for rebels to find a **scapegoat** than to **confess their own sins**.
1. Wow, they refer to **Egypt** as *a land flowing w/milk & honey!*
 - a) This statement shows exactly where their **hearts** were at!
- L. (17) **Censer** - fire-pan/incense shovel. (coals from altar, then incense poured upon)
- M. **JUDGEMENT DAY!** (20-40)
- N. What lay behind this revolt?
1. (11) It was, **against the Lord**.
 2. (19) **Korah gathered** all the congregation (stirred up troubled)
 3. (28) **By this you shall know the Lord has sent me**.
 4. (30) **That these men have rejected the Lord**.
 5. Also, to come against the *Aaronic priesthood* was to come against God's way of salvation via blood.
- O. (22) Once again, the **love & intercession** of Moses saved the very people who had created problems for him.
1. Wow, almost sounds like Jesus advice in Mt.5:44 **But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven;** (i.e. chip off the ol' block; be just like dad!)
- P. (24) **Stay clear of the troublemakers if you want to continue living**.
1. Sounds like Rev.18:4,5 **And I heard another voice from heaven saying, Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues. For her sins have reached (have been heaped up) to heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities.**
- Q. (35) **Hey Korah, Congratulations!** you made the NT - **Jude 11**.
1. Reasons not to follow the false teachers – they follow in the footsteps of these 3 amigos:
 - a) **Self-Competent Cain**(offered 1st of their works **instead of** trusting the blood of the Lamb)
 - b) **Buy-me Balaam** (sell their prophecies for profit);
 - c) **Rebellious Korah** (defy the authority of God's chosen vessels of truth)

- R. (32) In **26:11** we learn not all of Korah's family was destroyed (weren't involved) :)
 1. This explains we have Psalms titled "*A Psalm of the sons of Korah*" (Ps.84,85,87,88)
 2. Apparently the *descendants of Korah* were content to be humble ministers & not priests, for they wrote in Ps.84:10 "For a day in Your courts is better than a thousand. I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God Than dwell in the tents of wickedness." [see Numb.16:26 for the tents of wickedness]
- S. (36-40) The censers made into **brass plates** for a *covering for the brazen altar*, would have been a great visual reminder to all worshipers coming to the altar that...**the sin of rebellion** is severely judged by God.
- T. Did the rest of the community **now** believe that Moses & Aaron were God's chosen? **No!**
- U. **A NEW DAY...NOPE!** (41-50)
- V. (41) **Wow**, the very next day!
- W. You 2 have killed the people of the Lord! (the 250)
 1. They blamed *Moses & Aaron* for their failures to enter the land, **when** it was **their own unbelief** that brought this defeat.
 2. **To rebel against Moses** meant rejecting the **Word** of God, for he was God's prophet; **To rebel against Aaron** meant rejecting the **Work** of God on the altar, salvation by blood.
 3. **Only the grace** of God can change the human heart; **no amount of law or judgment** will ever make the heart new! (Wiersbe; Outlines)
- X. (46) Had Moses had a bitter spirit, he would have allowed the plague to destroy the people. **Instead** he commands his brother Aaron to go into the midst of the plague w/his censer to stop it.
 1. **How little** the people realized Moses's **love & sacrifice** for them.
- Y. (48) **What does the service of the priesthood involve by reading vs.48?**
 1. **Aaron** literally becomes their **savior** *standing between* the living & the dead. To stop the plague. [type of Christ]
 2. **His 1 censer** accomplished more than the **250 censers** of the rebels!
- Z. (49,50) Nearly **15,000 people** died because of **four men** who wanted to promote themselves.
- AA. **The story is told of a judge** who had been frequently ridiculed by a **conceited lawyer**. When asked by a friend why he didn't rebuke his assailant, he replied, "In our town lives a widow who has a dog. And whenever the moon shines, it goes outside and barks all night." Having said that, the magistrate shifted the conversation to another subject. Finally someone asked, "But Judge, what about the dog and the moon?" "Oh," he replied, "the moon went on shining—that's all."