

Sincerely Wrong

Numbers 16-18

Introduction

If you want to read a story of political intrigue, power lust, judgment, and ultimate death, you do not have to look very far. You do not have to read *Time* magazine to find a story of someone who is struggling for power that does not belong to them. You can, in fact, find it in scripture. Unfortunately, we have such a story before us today. Turn to Numbers, chapter 16, in your Bible, please.

Our story stands, both then and now, as an illustration that there are wrong, unacceptable ways to approach God and that there is only one right, acceptable way. Does that sound dogmatic? We are going to discover, from Numbers, chapter 16, that dogmatism is biblically based. So open your Bible and let us look at the sad story of a man name Korah.

The Defiance of Korah

Look at verse 1 of Numbers, chapter 16.

Now Korah the son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, with Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab, and On the son of Peleth, sons of Reuben, took action,

What are they going to do? Continue to verse 2.

and they rose up before Moses, together with some of the sons of Israel, two hundred and fifty leaders of the congregation, chosen in the assembly, men of renown.

This is a reference to the princes of Israel.

Now look at verse 3. Notice the smokescreen that Korah and those with him use.

They assembled together against Moses and Aaron, and said to them, "You have gone far enough, for all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the Lord is in their midst; so why do you exalt yourselves above the assembly of the Lord?"

In other words, two hundred fifty princes and this son of Levi, who is actually one of the priests, come as a group to Moses and Aaron. Remember, by the way, that God has given the priestly function of offering incense on the altar of incense to Aaron and his sons. Korah and company say, in effect, "The

people have rights too. Why is it that you, Aaron, are the only one inside the holy of holies, or the most holy place? Why is it that you and your sons alone are able to go in and offer incense? Why is it that just you get to go into the holy place and see the table of shewbread?"

Now, we read in the first verse of Numbers, chapter 16, that Korah was the son of Kohath; that is, in his genealogy, he was one of the Kohathites. Numbers, chapter 4, verses 1 through 20, reference the job of the Kohathites. The Kohathites had a specific responsibility as priests. They were to carry the sacred objects that belonged in the holy place. When the children of Israel would move about, they were given specific instructions as to the way in which they were to carry the objects. The priests were to cover the table of shewbread and the altar of incense and the candelabra, which held seven lamps. Then, after they had been completely covered, the Kohathites would come in and carefully carry the sacred objects to the next destination.

Korah and the others are now saying, and this is the smokescreen, that *all* of the congregation should have the ability to go into the holy place. In other words, "Are not *all* of the congregation holy people, every one of them?"

On the surface, this sounds wonderful. This man is speaking for the rights of the people. He is saying to Moses and Aaron, "You guys are hungering after power. It isn't just for you. Why, we're all holy. We should all be able to take turns and go into the holy place."

This was so deceptive. Moses, in a moment, will take the mask off this man, but notice Moses' response. We are given his first response in verse 4.

When Moses heard this, he fell on his face;

This reaction, by the way, is about the only thing you can do when someone accuses you of doing something that you are really not guilty of doing. Moses could have immediately given five quick reasons as to why he was not guilty. He could have said something like, "Did you forget the Red Sea? Did you forget that God called me?"

His first response, however, was to fall on his face, which was an act of worship in the Old Testament.

We can apply that sliver of a thought to us today. If you are accused by someone who has great sounding words, but you know in your heart that you are right before God, the best place to start is with God. Try falling on your face first, and that may help you know what to say next.

Verse 5 tells us what Moses says next.

and he spoke to Korah and all his company, saying, "Tomorrow morning the Lord will show who is His, and who is holy, and will bring him near to Himself; even the one whom He will choose, He will bring near to Himself."

Understand that the word "holy" means, "separated unto God for a specific service". Continue to verses 6 and 7.

Do this: take censers for yourselves, Korah and all your company, and put fire in them, and lay incense upon them in the presence of the Lord tomorrow; and the man whom the Lord chooses shall be the one who is holy. . .

Note, in verse 7, they were to take a censer for themselves. This was a tool that was used in the holy place. They did not have censers for themselves; they did not have censers with their initials monogrammed on it. This was something that belonged to Aaron and the sons of Aaron, but they were going to take one for themselves. They were then going to go through the ritual of offering before the Lord. God would, at that time, reveal whether or not they were true priests.

The Delusion of Korah and His Followers

Now, Korah's delusion, in verse 3, was two-fold. This is where it gets rather frightening and this is the reason why God's judgment fell. The same thing is happening today, by the way. Let me give two areas of Korah's delusion.

1. First, Korah was saying, "There is no need for a mediator."

In other words, *all* of the people can come into the holy sanctuary of God, without need of a mediator; without need of Aaron. Who was Aaron, by the way? The high priest.

This is rather dangerous. Now do not think in terms of the New Testament. I will get to this more in a moment.

2. The second part of Korah's delusion was that God will accept self-styled worship.

In other words, "Since we're part of God's people, let's just worship Him any way we want, apart from revelation [which had declared that only Aaron and Aaron's sons were the one's for that job]. Let's self-style our approach to God."

Have you noticed that in our country, people are constantly styling the worship of God according to the god that they want to know and understand, apart from revelation?

That was the two-fold delusion that Korah had within his heart. In a moment, we will look at a passage in the New Testament book of Jude that expands this thought.

Look at Numbers, chapter 16, verses 8 through 10a. Moses sees through Korah's smokescreen and exposes the real issues. Note this because this is what Jude will talk about.

Then Moses said to Korah, "Hear now, you sons of Levi, is it not enough for you that the God of Israel has separated you from the rest of the congregation of Israel, to bring you near to Himself, to do the service of the tabernacle of the Lord, and to stand before the congregation to minister to them; and that He has brought you near, Korah, and all your brothers, sons of Levi, with you? . . ."

In other words, "God has given you a special ministry in the tabernacle. Being a Kohathite means that you would serve the congregation by carrying the sacred vessels. Is that not enough?"

Moses then says, in verse 10b,

". . . And are you seeking for the priesthood also?"

It is implied that Korah is seeking the high priesthood.

In other words, "Do you take that ministry for granted and now want to go into the holy place and into the holy of holies?"

Moses is saying, "You are seeking something that does not belong to you, and you are seeking it out of jealous ambition. The people's rights have nothing to do with this. You don't care that the congregation is

holy. That isn't the issue. You could care less about the people. *You* want to be in the place of Aaron. Your selfish ambition has brought theological error; that is, we need no mediator; anyone can walk into God's presence."

The warning of Jude

Now turn to the book of Jude. Notice that Jude is writing to oppose specific kinds of error.

Look at verse 11a. In this verse, he refers to three men.

Woe to them [the men]! For they have gone the way of Cain, . . .

What did Cain do? Cain outwardly worshiped God by bringing fruit, but inwardly, he was rebelling against the revelation of God. His brother brought a blood sacrifice, but Cain did not. Cain came with his self-styled worship; he was going to approach God any way he wanted to. So, in a sense, he matches Korah.

Look at the next thing that Jude mentions in verse 11b.

. . . and for pay they have rushed headlong into the error of Balaam . . .

Balaam, as you may remember, was an Old Testament prophet who was a prophet with a price tag. For pay, he was willing to prophesy anything – "You want me to ask it to rain? Good. Pay me and I'll ask it to rain." That was his lot.

Then note the last part of verse 11.

. . . and [they] perished in the rebellion of Korah.

In other words, they were outwardly concerned with people and outwardly concerned with worshiping God, "Let's everyone get together and let's all worship God. We are all holy. We need no mediator." However, inwardly, they were rebelling against the authority of God that had given the high priesthood to someone else, namely Aaron.

Now Jude, the apostle, gives for us today, five characteristics of false leaders. These are leaders who sound *so* good. They are people who sound like they are so concerned about God's people and the worship of God, but are inwardly rebelling against the authority of God's Word and really want a position and a place for themselves. Note, in fact, verse 16.

These are grumblers, finding fault, following after their own lusts; they speak arrogantly, flattering people for the sake of gaining an advantage.

What are they doing this for? "For the sake of gaining an advantage."

Now what are the five characteristics that Jude gives us? We will note them in verses 12 and 13.

1. The first characteristic is that they are hidden rocks – their presence is dangerous.

Look at verse 12a.

These are the men who are hidden reefs [rocks] in your love feasts when they feast with you without fear, caring for themselves;

. . .

Their presence, Jude says, is dangerous.

Now in the New Testament day, they had developed what they called the Agape feast, or the love feast. This is the time when the entire congregation would get together and literally, have a feast. It was a church pot-luck. At the end of that feast, they would set apart some bread and juice and would celebrate and remember Jesus Christ and His death. That is what we call communion. We do not necessarily have the love feast, but we follow the ordinance of communion.

These men, according to Jude, were wealthy men. The wealthy were supposed to take care of the poor. The poor frequently came to the agape feast without any food. So the wealthy in the church were to bring additional foods to provide for the poor. However, Jude says, in this verse,

. . . [they eat] in your love feasts when they feast with you without fear, caring for themselves; . . .

So, even though they are part of the body; even though they worship; even though they eat with you; even though they fellowship with you, the bottom line is, they are there for what they can get; they are there for their own concerns. These people care nothing about others.

It is the same way with leadership – leadership that, as a believer, may be in any kind of ministry. After spending a short amount of time with them, you might at least begin to question, "Are they really concerned about someone else's benefit or just for themselves?"

You can turn on the television at any time in the evening to see classic illustrations of this.

2. There is a second characteristic that Jude tells us of these people. Look at the next part of verse 12.

These are the men who are . . . clouds without water, carried along by winds; . .

So, their ministry is, ultimately, discouraging.

There is the promise of rain and we desperately need water. “Oh, here comes the cloud! It looks deep and dark and it’s going to definitely just drown us with water.”

However, the cloud passes over without shedding one drop of nourishment.

These are the leaders who follow after the way of Cain, Balaam, and Korah. They promise so much, but ultimately, they are so discouraging.

In our day and time, I think perhaps, the best and most classic example of this are those who teach the health, wealth, and prosperity gospel. They will tell us that if we do certain things, God will multiply us and will bless us; He will make us wealthy, and healthy, and give us lives of unending joys with no troubles, and all of that. I am sure you have heard them.

The only problem is, you have to send a seed gift to them – whatever that is. “But, I don’t have any seeds. Well, let me check, do I have any seeds? I don’t have any seeds, but I have a ten dollar bill. Oh, that counts? Okay, that’s good, that’s a seed.”

You give them seeds and God will bless. You send them money and it is funny that when you send them money, God will bless.

What are these leaders? They are clouds without water.

In fact, in our day, something very interesting is happening. There is a backwash of people leaving these types of movements and coming out seeking the truth. Do you know why? It is because they did the formulas; they invested in the ministry; they gave money away; they said the prayers, and their child still got sick; their family member still got a terminal illness; there were still troubles. As a result, these leaders; these men and women became to them, like clouds without water.

Jude says, in effect, “Beware.”

3. The third characteristic that Jude gives us is that they are trees without fruit; that is, their appearance of life is, in reality, death.

Look at the next phrase in verse 12.

These are the men who are . . . autumn trees without fruit, doubly dead, uprooted;

Their presence is dangerous, their ministry is discouragement, and in reality, they are dead.

Let us read the first five verses of Deuteronomy, chapter 13. Note this carefully. I think it is self-explanatory. Begin with verses 1 through 2a.

If a prophet or a dreamer of dreams arises among you and gives you a sign or a wonder, and the sign or the wonder comes true, . . .

Did you catch that? It actually happens. They say something is going to happen and almost instantly, it happens! So what do we normally do? We say, “Wow, they’re from God!”

However, we are then told, in verse 2b, that if that person tells us, as an end result, to,

. . . go after other gods (whom you have not known) and let us serve them,

Our reaction should be, according to verse 3a, ***you shall not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams, . . .***

Do you know what a god is? A god is anything that shields our focus and attention from the glory and the majesty of God.

Do you know that health can be a god? There are people pursuing it with everything they have. Do you know that wealth can be a god? There are people pursuing that with their very being.

If the end result of this vision; this miracle; this wonder; this sign, is to place a focus on what God can give; what I can receive in the way of health and wealth and all of that, guess what I am doing? I am following other gods.

Look at verse 3 of Deuteronomy, chapter 13. Note this carefully.

you shall not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams; for the Lord your God is testing you to find out if you love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul.

Isn't that fascinating? Who do we love? Skip to verse 5.

But that prophet or that dreamer of dreams shall be put to death, because he has counseled rebellion against the Lord your God . . . to seduce you from the way in which the Lord your God commanded you to walk.

...

These are strong words.

In Matthew, chapter 7, verse 22, we are told that there will be people standing at the judgment who will say,

. . . "Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, . . . and in Your name perform many miracles?"

This means their prophecies came true. They will say, "We performed signs and wonders," which means they happened.

Jesus Christ, however, will say, according to verse 23,

. . . "I never knew you . . ."

This type of leader lived in the day of Korah; they lived in the day of Israel, and they live in this day in America. They are seducing people to follow after things, rather than loving God completely and without the thought, "I love Him because of 'A,' 'B,' 'C'."

4. Fourthly, Jude also says they are foaming waves and the point is, their lives are devious.

Look at verse 13.

[These are the men who are] wild waves of the sea, casting up their own shame like foam; . . .

On the surface, they are holy and righteous and all of that language. Behind closed doors, they are devious.

In fact, I think Jude is getting this from Isaiah, chapter 57, verses 20 and 21, which says, in the reference to the sea,

But the wicked are like the tossing sea, for it cannot be quiet [rest], and its waters toss up refuse and mud. "There is no peace," says my God, "for the wicked."

5. Jude then gives a fifth characteristic of these leaders. He says, they are wandering stars.

Look at verse 13b.

[These are the men who are] . . . wandering stars, for whom the black darkness has been reserved forever.

Their presence is dangerous, their ministry is discouraging, their appearance, in reality, is death, their lives are devious, and their future is damned.

The words of Solomon, in Proverbs, chapter 14, verse 12, ring true,

There is a way which seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death.

Anyone who will say today, like Korah, "There is no need of a mediator," which was the fundamental theological error, is headed for darkness apart from God forever.

Let me illustrate what is happening today, in light of Korah. We have made reference already, but the theological error of Korah was, "I can worship God any way I want. Any way I want to go to God, I can go. In fact, we need no mediator."

Now, who is the anti-type of Aaron in the New Testament? Jesus Christ. So the Korah in our day, is the person who says, "We do not need Jesus Christ only."

Paul writes, in I Timothy, chapter 2, verse 5,

For there is . . . one mediator . . . between God and men, the man Christ Jesus,

Jesus Christ, Himself, said, as recorded in John, chapter 14, verse 6,

. . . "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me."

In other words, Jesus said, "I'm it now."

In the Old Testament day, in the tabernacle age, the people approached God through the work and the atoning sacrifices made by the high priest on the annual day of atonement. Today, how do we go to God? Do we go to Him any way we want? Absolutely not. We go to God on the merit and the work of the ultimate sacrifice, our mediator today, Jesus Christ.

I was talking on the telephone to an individual last night, and was sharing the gospel with him. I asked a question of him that you have probably heard, and that is, "If you stood before God and God were to say, 'Why should I let you into heaven?', what would you say?"

His answer was, “Well, I’m a devout church-goer and I’m a pretty good person.”

As graciously as I could, I shared with him that that was the wrong answer, according to revelation. We do not go to God by works, church membership, baptism, and other such things that we do. If we believe we can approach God apart from the mediating work of Jesus Christ, then we, as many in our day, fall into the same error as Korah. Though it seems right to this man on the phone and to others, Proverbs, chapter 14, verse 23, says,

. . . its end is the way of death.

The Decision of God Against Korah

Now in Old Testament times, God often judged sin immediately. Today, in our age, He waits until the judgment or the great white throne. Let us turn to Numbers, chapter 16, and see the judgment of God.

God gives what we will call, “the censer test”. Look at verses 16 through 18 of Numbers, chapter 16. Remember that Korah and his company have censers for themselves.

Moses said to Korah, “You and all your company be present before the Lord tomorrow, both you and they along with Aaron. Each of you take his firepan and put incense on it, and each of you bring his censer before the Lord, two hundred and fifty firepans; also you and Aaron shall each bring his firepan.” So they each took his own censer and put fire on it, and laid incense on it; and they stood at the doorway of the tent of meeting, with Moses and Aaron.

Now, if you did not hear our previous discussion on this a few weeks ago, let me refresh your memory. What happens with the incense? In the holy place, there were three objects. One object was the altar of incense which represented communion with God. They would offer incense upon it as a fragrant aroma. It was the symbol of communion with a holy God.

Now, in these verses, Moses is, in effect, giving them a test and saying, “Okay, let’s see if, apart from a mediator, you can have communion with God. So, you get a little censer and you get a firepan and you get some incense and you get this thing all ready. Then, come to the tent of the meeting tomorrow.”

Look at verse 19.

Thus Korah assembled all the congregation against them at the doorway of the tent of meeting [tabernacle]. And the glory of the Lord appeared to all the congregation.

Imagine two hundred fifty men plus Korah, as well as Moses and Aaron, gathered at the doorway of the tabernacle. Korah and his company are going to prove, once and for all, “We can go to God any way we want. We don’t need Aaron and his sons.”

Then, we read these ominous words, in verse 19b,
. . . And the glory of the Lord appeared . . .

I would be backing up at that point. In fact, verses 20 and 21 tell us,

Then the Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying, “Separate yourselves from among this congregation, that I may consume them instantly.”

Skip to verse 24 and we will read to verse 38. This is a showdown.

“Speak to the congregation, saying, ‘Get back from around the dwellings of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram.’”

Then Moses arose and went to Dathan and Abiram, with the elders of Israel following him,

and he spoke to the congregation, saying, “Depart now from the tents of these wicked men, and touch nothing that belongs to them, or you will be swept away in all their sin.”

So they got back from around the dwellings of Korah, Dathan and Abiram; and Dathan and Abiram came out and stood at the doorway of their tents, along with their wives and their sons and their little ones.

Moses said, “By this you shall know that the Lord has sent me to do all these deeds; for this is not my doing.

“If these men die the death of all men or if they suffer the fate of all men, then the Lord has not sent me.

“But if the Lord brings about an entirely new thing and the ground opens its mouth and swallows them up with all that is theirs, and they descend alive into Sheol, then you will understand that these men have spurned the Lord.”

As he finished speaking all these words, the ground that was under them split open;

and the earth opened its mouth [a chasm] and swallowed them up, and their households, and all the men who belonged to Korah with their possessions.

Skip to verse 34.

All Israel who were around them fled at their outcry, for they said, "The earth may swallow us up!"

Skip to verses 36 and 37.

Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying,

"Say to Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, that he shall take up the censers out of the midst of the blaze, for they are holy; and you scatter the burning coals abroad."

Note verse 38.

"As for the censers of these men who have sinned at the cost of their lives, let them be made into hammered sheets for a plating of the altar, since they did present them before the Lord and they are holy; and they shall be for a sign to the sons of Israel."

In other words, prior to this point in time, the altar of incense was open, but now, God will give a visual illustration that this altar is not open to anyone. The people will take the censers of these rebellious men and will make a plated covering for the altar. It will serve as an illustration that God can be approached only by ways that He has revealed, through Aaron and his sons.

Now, He gives, what we could call, "the true censer test". We will only look at this briefly, but I want you to see several verses. Look at verses 46 through 48.

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, 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.

Aaron, at this point, is a classic illustration that a mediator is essential. The mediator was Aaron, the high priest who stood between the living and the dead, and those who would live would, in a sense, follow him.

Jesus Christ, as the anti-type of Aaron, also stands between the living and the dead, and those who will live must come to God through Him.

This is a great illustration of New Testament truth.

The Direction of God For Israel And the World

Let me give two thoughts, as we apply this.

1. First, as I have already said, God is approached by divinely ordained methods.

His method for today is through the blood of Jesus Christ – Jesus is the mediator. To love Him, is to receive life; to spurn Him, as these men spurned Aaron, is to receive the penalty of death.

I recently read of Julian the Apostate. He was an interesting character in the fourth century after Christ. He was the Roman emperor for two brief years. He was so wicked and hated Jesus Christ so much that he was termed, "Julian the Apostate". He hated Jesus Christ so much that he would never refer to Him with that title, but would refer to Him as, "the Galilean". He would refer to Christians with hatred, and again, would not use Christ's name, so he referred to them as, "the Galileans".

It is Julian the Apostate who is credited for exiling Athanasius. Athanasius was probably the greatest theologian after the apostle Paul. He pastored a large assembly and declared truth. Athanasius was exiled to Egypt and on the day of his exile by Julian's own hand, he told his congregation, "Be of good cheer, for Julian is but a cloud that passes away."

In a matter of time, Athanasius' prophecy for Julian would, in a sense, come true. Julian was on the battleground against the Persians and was mortally wounded with a spear. The historians record that he dipped his own hand in his blood, raised it with bitter anger toward the heavens, and said, "Oh Galilean, Thou hast finally conquered," and he died.

On the other hand, I think of William Carey, who loved the mediator, Jesus Christ. Considered to be, "The Father of Modern Missions," Carey served Jesus Christ for decades. On his deathbed, his daughter was

standing nearby and recorded his last words as being, “When William Carey is gone, speak nothing of William Carey, but speak much about William Carey’s Savior.”

That is God’s ordained method of approaching Him today – through the mediator, Jesus Christ.

2. Secondly, note this, God is served by divinely ordained ministers, which, by the way, you are one.

Who is the ultimate creator of ministry? Look at Numbers, chapter 18, verses 6 and 7. God is speaking.

Behold, I Myself have taken your fellow Levites from among the sons of Israel; they are a gift to you, dedicated to the Lord, to perform the service for the tent of meeting. But you and your sons with you shall attend to your priesthood for everything concerning the altar and inside the veil, and you are to perform service. I am giving you the priesthood as a bestowed [gifted] service, but the outsider who comes near shall be put to death.

In other words, the creator of ministries, then and now, is God Himself.

Then what is the focus of those of us who have received Jesus Christ and received gifts to be used in the church and for the fellowship? The focus is also God. Look at verse 8.

Then the Lord spoke to Aaron, “Now behold, I Myself have given you charge of My offerings, even all the holy gifts of the sons of Israel I have given them to you as a portion, and to your sons as a perpetual allotment.

In other words, as we serve as priests – and the New Testament makes it clear that those who have trusted the High Priest become fellow priests – our focus is not on ourselves; is not on, as it was with Korah, what we can receive; is not with a price tag. As we serve as priests, our focus is according to revelation and is on *Him*.

Application

As priests – our ministry in the world

God is the creator of our ministries. I Corinthians, chapter 12, makes it very clear that those of us who have received Christ have received a gift.

In fact, turn to I Peter, please. As priests, what is our mission? It is the world. Note verse 9 of chapter 2, which says,

But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God’s own possession, so . . .

So . . . we can strut around because we are priests? So . . . we can go to heaven as priests? No.

. . . that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; for you once were not a people, but now you are the people of God; you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

What is our commission as gifted priests? Our mission is the world. We share with those in the world that we were formerly walking in darkness, but now, by Christ our mediator, we are walking in light.

As priests – our ministry in the church

What do we do within the church; within the fellowship? Turn to chapter 4 of I Peter. As priests, we have a function to people and represent God to people, and we bring, through intercession, people to God. But what about the church, what does a priest do? Look at verses 7 through 10 of chapter 4.

The end of all things is near; therefore, be of sound judgment and sober spirit for the purpose of prayer. Above all, keep fervent in your love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins. Be hospitable to one another without complaint. As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.

Let us go back to Korah as our illustration of how not to do things. He had been gifted, in a sense, with a particular function in the tabernacle. It was his duty; it was his privilege to carry the sacred objects as the people of Israel moved from place to place. That was Korah’s special gift. God has gifted each one of us in differing areas. It may be the gift of helps; it may be the gift of serving; it may be the gift of faith; it may be the gift of giving – there are twelve or fourteen different specific gifts. Within these categorical headings of gifts, I think, branch out numerous gifts that we have. So what is the point? The point is that I have a gift and I am not supposed to go after your gift – it is yours.

Now there are responsibilities of every believer that are referenced in gifts, but if I have a gift, then if I am going to fit into the body and if we together, are going to be a functioning group, then we exercise our specific gifts. So the question is, what is the gift that God has given you? That should be number one on your prayer list.

Secondly, how do you fit in, in this organism; this living body that serves God? If it is hidden, it is hidden. Praise God for that. I am up in front speaking and all that you can see of me is my hands and from the neck up. But would it not be foolish of me to say that my arm is not really all that important, since you cannot see it? If you took away my arm, what use would my hand be?

It is the same way in the body of Christ. There are many parts that are hidden and will never be seen – like Korah. Korah was not out front. He did duties after the tabernacle was taken down; he moved things; he helped. Korah made it possible for the tabernacle to be erected, which allowed people to be able to worship and the priest to be able to commune. However, he felt that was not important enough and pursued the office that was Aaron's alone.

Men and women, this is probably a series of sermons in itself, but let me introduce you to yourself in a different way; a way to consider carefully. You, being in Christ, are a priest, and there are similarities to the Old Testament priests.

- They represented God to the people, and you, as a believer, represent God to the people who have never heard.
- They brought people into communion with God, and you, through your prayer for people and witness to people, can bring people into communion with God.
- You, as a gifted priest, have a function within the body.

I trust that we all take our priestly occupation seriously and graciously to the glory of God alone and for His purpose.