

A Parable of Security, Stagnation, Seduction, Survival - Part 2

by Denny Kenaston

Denny Kenaston's sermon emphasizes the importance of being dependable to God and spiritually perceptive, using the story of Balaam as a cautionary tale against materialism and spiritual blindness.

Duration: 1:46:17

Scripture: Numbers 22:12-38

Topics: "Parable"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker reflects on the messages he has preached in the United States, mostly from the New Testament. However, he feels led to speak from the book of Numbers and explores the story of the people of Israel, King Balak, and the prophet Balaam. The sermon is titled 'A parable of security, stagnation, seduction, and survival' and the speaker delves into each of these stages in Israel's history. The speaker emphasizes the importance of being brave and true in order to make a difference in the world.

Transcript

Hello, this is Brother Denny. Welcome to Charity Ministries. Our desire is that your life would be blessed and changed by this message.

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May the Lord be able to depend on us. We shall not, at the same time we cannot, too much hinges on our not failing. We shall not fail.

God promises us that. That's His responsibility. But we cannot fail.

And that's our responsibility. Too much hinges. Oh, may the Lord be able to depend on you and I. Depend on you and I to lift up His name and do our part in this generation.

May He be able to depend on us. To know that we will do what is right, no matter the cost. To be dependable.

That God can know, I can count on this generation of young people. I can depend on them to be faithful. I can depend on them to lift up my name.

I can depend on them to make the right choices. I can depend on them to be one of those who raises up a standard against the incoming floods of worldliness and materialism and all the things that seek to obliterate God's testimony in this world. May God be able to say, I can depend on these young people.

There's a lot of you here. I can hardly see your faces all the way there to the back. And if God could find us sitting in this building to be true.

If He could depend on us. If He could find us to be the brave and true ones. There would be a difference in this world.

Oh, that God could find us brave and true. That sounds like a Christian marching song to me. Well, we want to thank the Lord this morning for the opportunity to be here.

Thank you for giving us this opportunity to share with you this morning. It's fast, I have to say. It's too fast.

We didn't know a week ago that we would be coming back. And a week later, we're here and in the midst of such a large group of people and asked to share here. And I'm overwhelmed.

And yes, I have to admit, it seems I'm nervous. It seems like a huge group of people to try to address compared to my normal circle of 30 people under a tree somewhere. And yet, this is what God has asked us to do.

And we're grateful to be here with you. We want to look together at what God wants to say to us. I want to thank all of you for giving us the chance to come back.

To do what we feel is right and necessary for my wife's health. And I thank you for helping us in bringing us back so that we can meet those medical needs here. And God has a purpose in it.

We're not exactly sure what all those purposes are. But I'm very sure that this morning is part of those purposes. And we want to discover those purposes together.

Let's bow our heads. Father, thank You this Sunday morning for the opportunity that we have to sit and sing with hundreds and hundreds of fellow believers. People who know You.

People who've been washed in the blood of Jesus. People whose lives have been changed by Your power. People who desire with us to lift up and exalt Your name.

It's a wonderful thing, Father, for our own voice to be lost in the swell of hundreds of other voices. Over a thousand voices lifting up their voices to praise Your name. It's wonderful to be lost in that swell.

We thank You for that this morning. We know, God, that heaven will be so many multiple times more than what we could know this morning. And Lord, we do look forward with longing, at the same time with

comfort towards that day.

When we'll be with You in heaven, surrounded by hundreds of thousands and millions of millions of people. All wanting to lift You up. Thank You for that comfort.

But Lord, we're not in heaven yet. We're here on this earth. We call this the Sunday of Bible School.

You know, Lord, there's a song service this afternoon and there's singing tonight. And yet, Lord, we know that this morning, You have a plan. We know, Lord, that this morning, there are still challenges that You want to give us from Your Word.

We know, God, that there are still sins that You want to point out in our lives. There are still young people in whom Your purposes for this week have not been fulfilled. And Lord, it's right for us to rejoice this morning.

But it's also right for us to plead with You and plead with them. Yet one more time. God, fulfill Your destiny in the lives of each person that sits in this room this morning.

You have a reason why we are here. Yes, it's Sunday morning, it's church day, Father. But we are here not of our own choice.

We are here because You have something You want to do in our lives. Father, please do it. We open our hearts before You, individually and corporately, Lord.

We open our hearts that You will speak to us. Now, Lord, please do speak to us. We are many here.

May we not be lost in the crowd when You come to speak to us today. But speak individually into our hearts by Your Spirit what we need to hear. If encouragement, encouragement.

If warning, warning. If correction, then correction, Lord. Give us what we need and help us to obey You today.

May no one be left out, Father, from receiving from You this week. We thank You in Jesus' name. Amen.

It's a little difficult to know, as Brother Mo said, what do you preach. And I don't have the benefit of having heard all that you've heard. So I don't even know exactly what has been spoken to you this week.

But it's challenging when you're at the very end of a week to know what to say. Because, in some ways, everything has been said. But in other ways, you still desire to touch all the points all over again.

Because you want to encourage those who are not yet encouraged. And there are some here who still have yet to say yes. Yes, Lord, in whatever area it is that God brought you here to this Bible school for.

God wanted to achieve something in your lives. And some of you are still waiting. God is still waiting for some of you.

Some of you are still holding out. And so when you get before the Lord on a morning like this, and you say, Lord, what do we say to these young people? So many emotions go through my heart. Because some of you have gotten right with God this week.

Some of you have been born again this week. Some of you have just had your heart strengthened and encouraged this week. And to you, we want to bless you.

We want to encourage you. We want to build you up. We want to prepare you to go home and live it in the more difficult environment of your home.

Bible school is wonderful, but it's not your home. None of you held a job this week. None of you had any family conflicts this week.

You were here singing, praying, hearing sermons. And that's wonderful. But you have to go home.

So to some of you this morning, we want to encourage you. We desire more than anything else that you go home with what you need to live out what God has done in your hearts this week. At the same time, as I already said, some of you still need to be warned.

Some of you, there's still a flippancy in your heart relating to God and what He wanted to do in your life this week. And when we meditate upon that, the emotion overwhelms us with a desire to warn you, with a desire to yet plead with you to take seriously this week and all the things that God has tried to say into your life. You are responsible.

Whether you like it or not, you are responsible. God has made you responsible. The wonderful Bible teaching and preaching that you have heard makes you responsible.

So I desire to plead and warn some of you this morning. And then there are some of you who have not only not taken it seriously, but there are some who have, at the peril of your own soul, at the peril of your own soul, have resisted God's Spirit speaking into your life. And I desire to give some words to you also.

There's a lot of us here. So I'm praying that God will direct the part of the message which is for you to your heart. That God will speak exactly what you need into your heart.

And if you don't need a particular part of the message, then you can pray for those who do. But I do believe that the verses and Scriptures that God has given to me can challenge some of you, can bless others and encourage others, and still, if possible, throw out the net for one more draw. We do desire to do that this morning.

You have an opportunity at the end of this message to respond to God's Spirit speaking into your life yet one more time. You have the opportunity, if you've been holding out, to finally lay down your guns and surrender. You have the opportunity, if you've been resisting God's Spirit, to join those who have been submitting to God's Spirit.

If you're still holding nothing to take home from this Bible school, you have the opportunity to take something home at the end of this message. So I pray that God will speak exactly into your life what you need. Let's turn to the book of Numbers.

The book of Numbers, chapter 22. I was realizing this morning that almost all of the messages that I've preached here in the States, which is not all that many, but the messages that I've preached here in the States, almost all of them have come from the New Testament. And I think there's good reason for that.

But at the same time, I think the Lord would like to speak to our hearts this morning from the book of Numbers. And I'm trusting that as we open His Word, He will meet our needs. If I was to give a title to this

this morning, it's a little long, but this is the title I would give.

A parable of security, stagnation, seduction, and survival. I'll repeat those. Those words are a little long.

A parable of security, stagnation, seduction, and survival. We would like to look this morning at the story of the people of Israel, the king of Moab, Balak, and Balaam, and all the things that surround this period in Israel's history on their way into the Promised Land. A parable of security, stagnation, seduction, and survival.

We'd like to look at all four of these stages this morning as we look at the people of Israel and this time period in their history. I'm going to read rather rapidly chapter 22 of Numbers. Please bear with me on this.

I think it is important. And then we'll skip around a little bit more for the rest of the story. Numbers chapter 22.

And the children of Israel set forward and pitched in the plains of Moab on this side Jordan by Jericho. And Balak the son of Zippor saw all that Israel had done to the Amorites. And Moab was sore afraid of the people because they were many.

And Moab was distressed because of the children of Israel. And Moab said unto the elders of Midian, Now shall this company lick up all that are around about us, as the ox licketh up the grass of the field. And Balak the son of Zippor was king of the Moabites at that time.

He sent messengers therefore unto Balak the son of Beor to Pithor, which is by the river of the land of the children of his people, to call him, saying, Behold, there is a people come out from Egypt. Behold, they cover the face of the earth, and they abide over against me. Come now, therefore, I pray thee, curse me this people, for they are too mighty for me.

Peradventure, I shall prevail that we may smite them and that I may drive them out of the land. For I know that he whom thou blessest is blessed, and he whom thou cursest is cursed. And the elders of Moab and the elders of Midian departed with the rewards of divination in their hands.

And they came unto Balaam and spake unto him the words of Balak. And he said unto them, Lodge here this night, and I will bring you word again as the Lord shall speak unto me. And the princes of Moab abode with Balaam.

And God came unto Balaam and said, What men are these with thee? And Balaam said unto God, Balak the son of Zippor, king of Moab, hath sent unto me, saying, Behold, there is a people come out of Egypt which covereth the face of the earth. Come now, curse me them. Peradventure, I shall be able to overcome them and drive them out.

And God said unto Balaam, Thou shalt not go with them. Thou shalt not curse the people, for they are blessed. Thou shalt not curse the people, for they are blessed.

And Balaam rose up in the morning and said unto the princes of Balak, Get ye into your land, for the Lord refuseth to give me leave to go with you. The princes of Moab rose up and they went unto Balak and said, Balaam refuses to come with us. And Balak sent yet again princes more and more honorable than they.

And they came to Balaam and said unto him, Thus saith Balak, the son of Zippor, Let nothing, I pray thee, hinder thee from coming unto me, for I will promote thee unto very great honor. And I will do whatsoever

thou sayest unto me. Come thou therefore, I pray thee, curse me this people.

And Balaam answered and said unto the servants of Balak, If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the word of the Lord my God to do less or more. Now therefore, I pray you, tarry ye also here this night, that I may know what the Lord will say unto me more. And God came unto Balaam at night and said unto him, If the men come to call thee, rise up and go with them.

But yet the word which I shall say unto thee, that shalt thou do. And Balaam rose up in the morning and saddled his ass and went with the princes of Moab. And God's anger was kindled because he went.

I think it's pretty clear from looking at this story that it was not God's will for Balaam to go. But because God knew that Balaam was going to go. Balaam wanted to go.

The rest of the story bears it out that Balaam actually, though he said he wasn't interested in the riches of the king, he was. He really wanted to go. It's kind of like a child.

Can I please? Can I please? Okay, have it. And God finally said, go. But don't say anything that I tell you not to say.

So he gets up to obey God. Not really obeying God, but going because God knew he was going to go. And God said, okay, go, but don't say anything that I don't tell you to say.

But God's anger is kindled. Verse 22, And God's anger was kindled because he went. And the angel of the Lord stood in the way for an adversary against him.

Now he was riding upon his ass and two servants were with him. And the ass saw the angel of the Lord standing in the way and his sword drawn in his hand. And the ass turned aside out of the way and went into the field.

And Balaam smote the ass to turn her into the way. But the angel of the Lord stood in a path of the vineyards, a wall being on this side and a wall being on that side. And when the ass saw the angel of the Lord, she thrust herself onto the wall and crushed Balaam's foot against the wall.

And he smote her again. There are very, very few things which can color the eyes of one of God's servants so with such definitiveness as money can. Here's the servant of God somehow, a man who was known to be able to know the future, a man who was supposedly able to contact God by some means and know what was going to happen.

And yet, something had colored his eyes. Something had clouded his vision. Something had produced such cobwebs in his perception that a donkey was more perceptive than he was.

Yes? Something had colored his perceptions until a donkey was more spiritually perceptive than he was. Balaam's just riding along on the donkey. The donkey says, there's an angel in the way with a drawn sword and he turns aside.

Balaam hits the donkey and says, what are you doing? He gets back up on the path. Balaam doesn't see anything. He's colored by money.

Few things can color the eyes of God's servant like money can. So he's beating the donkey. Verse 26, And the angel of the Lord went further and stood in a narrow place where there was no way to turn either

to the right or to the left.

When the ass saw the angel of the Lord, she fell down under Balaam. And Balaam's anger was kindled and he smote the ass with a staff. And the Lord opened the mouth of the ass.

May God keep us all from being in such a place of spiritual mist over our eyes that we're less perceptive than a donkey. And not only that, but God has to speak through an animal to communicate something to us. And God opened the mouth of the ass and she said unto Balaam, what have I done unto thee that thou hast smitten me these three times? And Balaam said unto the ass, be careful of being in a place where God has to speak to you through an animal and you feel the need to respond back to the animal.

I'm not sure what is a more stranger. The fact that he didn't see the angel or the fact that the donkey saw the angel or the fact that the donkey spoke or the fact that Balaam decided to argue with the donkey. He sort of fell off the donkey with the shock that God had opened the mouth of an animal to get through to his servant who wouldn't listen to him.

I'm not sure what's more strange. Here's Balaam arguing with the donkey like as if it's normal. And Balaam, verse 29, and Balaam said unto the ass, because thou hast mocked me, I would there were a sword in my hand, for now would I kill thee.

And the ass said unto Balaam, am not I thine ass upon which thou hast ridden ever since I was thine unto this day? Was I ever wont to do so unto thee? And he said, nay. Then the Lord opened the eyes. Then the Lord opened the eyes of Balaam, and he saw the angel of the Lord standing in the way, and his sword drawn in his hand.

And he bowed down his head and fell flat on his face. And the angel of the Lord said unto him, wherefore hast thou smitten thine ass these three times? Behold, I went out to withstand thee, because thy way is perverse before me. And the ass saw me and turned away from me these three times.

Unless she had turned away, unless she had turned from me, surely now also I had slain thee and saved her alive. Again, I feel like I have to point out the irony of these things. This is not really the thrust of the message, but the irony that God, when God is choosing which of His servants to keep alive, He would kill His servant and let the animal alive.

That's what He said. You are so spiritually blind, Balaam, that I would have killed you and let the donkey live, because the donkey I'm able to use, but you I'm not able to use. Verse 34, And Balaam said unto the angel of the Lord, I have sinned, for I knew not that thou stoodest in the way against me.

Now therefore, if it displeased thee, I will get me back again. Not. He said those words, but he didn't really mean them.

And the angel of the Lord said unto Balaam, Go with the men, but only the word that I shall speak unto thee, that thou shalt speak. So Balaam went with the princes of Balak. And when Balaak heard that Balaam was come, he went out to meet him unto a city of Moab, which is in the border of Arnon, which is in the utmost coast.

And Balaak said unto Balaam, Did I not earnestly send unto thee to call thee? Wherefore, camest thou not unto me? Am I not able indeed to promote thee to honor? And Balaam said unto Balaak, Lo, I am come unto thee. Have I now any power at all to say anything? The word that God putteth in my mouth, that shall

I speak. And Balaam went with Balaak, and they came unto Kirjath-Huzath.

And Balaak offered oxen and sheep, and sent to Balaam and to the princes that were with him. And it came to pass on the morrow that Balaak told Balaam and brought him up into the high places of Baal, that thence he might see the utmost part of the people. Not a very good place to see spiritual things in the high places of Baal, but that's where Balaak brought Balaam.

I said we want to look at a parable with four main points. Security, stagnation, seduction, and survival. I would like us to look first at security.

And I want us to call Balaam this morning the honest witch doctor. The honest witch doctor. You may have a problem with me using the word witch doctor to apply to someone who God has said is His servant, and He has said that He'll say only the words of God, and He goes on to do what Balaak did not want him to do.

But I do believe that the term applies. I do not believe that Balaam was honestly a true servant of God. Later on in the New Testament, it refers to him as a soothsayer, and that's very, very related to a witch doctor.

But Balaam was, though he was a witch doctor, he was an honest witch doctor. Most witch doctors are not honest. I live in a land with witch doctors.

I have many of them in every village that I minister in. Most witch doctors are not honest. They are in a league with the devil, but they're also in a league with money.

And so they say what you want them to say. Or they say something that will influence you to bring a sheep or a goat or a chicken or a cow even, to give to them to solve the problem for you. So Balaam was a witch doctor.

But he was an honest witch doctor. He actually spoke what he saw in the spirit world. A witch doctor is someone who connects with the spirit world.

And we always view it in a negative sense, because it's going through satanic powers. But here was a man who had powers to see the future. And yet, though influenced by money, he did say what he saw.

He was an honest witch doctor. We know the story. We're not going to read the next two chapters as they go through their sacrifices, but on three occasions, the next three days, it sounds like Balaam gets up in the morning and finds Balaam and brings him up to the top of a mountain somewhere and shows him Israel, camps, like grasshoppers in the valley.

Balaam says to Balaam, I'm sorry, Balaam says to Balaam, I'm going to confuse these, I'm sorry, but if I do, just know which one I mean. Balaam says to Balaam, curse these people. They eat up everything in front of them.

They've been victorious time after time after time. The chapters before talk about the exploits of the children of Israel. Balaam says to Balaam, curse these people for me, because I know that the people that you curse, they're cursed.

And the people that you bless are blessed. And it's interesting that Balaam would use those words because he was not the first one to use those words. That's not an original proverb with King Balaam.

God has been using that all the way back into the book of Genesis. Those whom you bless will be blessed. Those whom you curse will be cursed.

And God had made that promise down through history to His people. And now Balaam takes that proverb and uses it to Balaam and says, I know, the person that you curse will be cursed. The people that you bless will be blessed.

Now, curse these people. You see them? Just filling the valley. Just crawling and everything they walk over top of, they eat.

Curse them here for me. And Balaam, three times in a row, asked Balaam to make sacrifices. And they built altars and they slaughtered six cows and six sheep.

Each altar. One cow, one sheep. Seven altars.

And at the end of that, Balaam went to go and hear the voice of God. And we don't really need to determine whether this was God's voice or Satan's voice or whatever, because when we understand what is happening in the spirit world, it really doesn't matter. It's just the fact that Balaam was honest enough to say what was really happening in the spirit world.

So whether he actually was really in contact with God through the right means or not, that's not the point this morning. The point is that he saw the future. And he said honestly what he saw.

I would like us to read the blessing slash curses that Balaam pronounced on the children of Israel. The first one is in chapter 23, verse 7-10. The sacrifices have been made.

Seven cows, seven sheep. Balaam stands there wringing his hands, waiting, wondering what is Balaam going to come back and say. And Balaam's standing over there looking out over the children of Israel and praying or whatever he was doing, thinking.

And Balaam is there waiting, wondering what kind of a curse Balaam is going to pronounce upon the children of Israel. And you can imagine he was on edge. And, verse 7, and he took up his parable and said, Balak, the king of Moab, hath brought me from Aram out of the mountains of the east saying, Come, curse me Jacob, and come defy Israel.

How shall I curse whom God hath not cursed? How shall I curse whom God hath not cursed? And how shall I defy whom the Lord hath not defied? For from the tops of the rocks I see him, and from the hills I behold him. Lo, the people shall dwell alone and shall not be reckoned among the nations. Who can count the dust of Jacob and the number of the fourth part of Israel? Let me die the death of the righteous and let my last end be like his.

We'll stop reading there. We'll jump right to the next one. The same thing happens over again.

They make seven more altars and sacrifices. And in verse 18, Balaam continues. Chapter 23 verse 18.

And he took up his parable and said, Rise up, Balak, and hear. Harken unto me, thou son of Zippor. God is not a man that he should lie, neither the son of man that he should repent.

Hath he said, and shall he not do it? Or hath he spoken and shall he not make it good? Behold, I have received commandment to bless. And he hath blessed. And I cannot reverse it.

He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob. Neither hath he seen perverseness in Israel. The Lord his God is with him.

And the shout of a king is among them. God brought them out of Egypt. He hath, as it were, the strength of an unicorn.

Surely, there is no enchantment against Jacob. Surely, there is no enchantment against Jacob. Neither is there any divination against Israel.

According to this time, it shall be said of Jacob and of Israel, what hath God wrought? Behold, the people shall rise up as a great lion and lift up himself as a young lion. He shall not lie down until he eat of the prey and drink the blood of the slain. One more.

Turn over to chapter 24 and verse 3. Balak is getting desperate. He takes him to different places. He says, well, maybe if I take you over to this mountain, God will give you the authority to curse these people.

Or maybe I'm allowing you to see too many of them and you're afraid because you're seeing millions of people spread out in the valley and you're afraid to curse them. Well, let me take you over here to this mountain where you can see just a portion of them. It seems that Balak had forgotten that God said you can't even number a quarter of them.

But he took him to a place where he wouldn't be able to see the whole size of their numbers. This is the last words of his curses slash blessings on the children of Israel. Verse 3 of chapter 24.

And he took up his parable and said, Balaam, the son of Beor hath said, and the man whose eyes are open hath said, he hath said which heard the words of God, which saw the vision of the Almighty falling into a trance, but having his eyes open. How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles, O Israel, as the valleys are they spread forth, as gardens by the riverside, as the trees of lign aloes, which the Lord hath planted, and as cedar trees beside the waters. He shall pour the water out of his buckets, and his seed shall be in many waters, and his king shall be higher than Agag, and his kingdom shall be exalted.

God brought him forth out of Egypt. He hath, as it were, the strength of a unicorn. He shall eat up the nations his enemies, and he shall break their bones and pierce them through with his arrows.

He couched. He lay down as a lion, and as a great lion. Who shall stir him up? Blessed is he that blessed thee, and cursed is he that curseth thee.

Those are the three blessings. The curses that Balak sought turned into blessings. And those are the three blessings that Balaam pronounced upon the people of Israel from high up in the mountains, looking over their great encampment.

And let's see Balak's response, because Balak is the one asking for the curses here. Chapter 23, verse 10. And Balak said unto Balaam, What hast thou done unto me? What hast thou done unto me? I took thee to curse mine enemies, and behold, thou hast blessed them altogether.

What have you done to me? You just imagine the frustration of Balak. What have you done to me? I called you to curse these people. He hung on through the whole blessing, thinking maybe at the very end, Balaam would say something terrible.

And it's all blessing. He says, I called you to curse these people, and you've just pronounced blessings, altogether blessings, upon them. The next one.

Chapter 23, verse 25. And Balak said unto Balaam, Neither curse them at all, nor bless them at all. If you can't curse them, please don't bless them.

I'm already afraid of them. They're already too great for me. They're already a formidable enemy.

Please, if you're not going to curse them, just be quiet. Please don't bless them. And the last one.

Chapter 24, verse 10 and 11. And Balak's anger was kindled against Balaam, and he smote his hands together. And Balak said unto Balaam, I called thee to curse mine enemies, and behold, thou hast altogether blessed them these three times.

Therefore now flee thou to thy place. I thought to promote thee unto great honor, but lo, the Lord hath kept thee back from honor. Security.

The first look at the first point of our parable here. The security of God's blessing. I think it's pretty clear to you if you think through this at all, that Balak is a type of Satan desiring to curse God's people.

And let's look at what was happening here. The whole reason why Balak asked for Balaam to come and curse the people of Israel, is that the people of Israel traveled to the plains of Moab. Okay? They've been slaughtering kings, one after another.

The kings of the Canaanites were falling in front of them like dominoes. The last one was Og, king of Bashan. Sihon, king of the Amorites.

God's people were making advances into the territory that God had promised to them. God's people were making advances into the land of Canaan. Getting closer and closer and closer.

So God's people were making an advance and it was that advance which threatened Balak. It was the advance of God's people which threatened Balak. This morning, if you are advancing, you are a threat to Satan.

If you have made an advance this week, you are a new threat to Satan. If you have gone through your life and maybe some area of sin in your life or an area in which you were not being honest with God and by God's grace you have dealt with that issue and you have taken a step forward, you are a threat to Satan. Just like Israel was a threat to Balak.

Here are these people and they came into this valley. He's up in the mountains and they came into this valley and just filled it up. An advancing army.

Satan will always consider the advance of God's people to be a threat. If you are advancing this week, you are a threat to Satan. Maybe that doesn't sound too good to you.

Maybe you are not sure you want to threaten Satan. But I hope as we go on with this parable, you will see that being a threat to Satan is not necessarily the same as being threatened by Satan. But you are a threat to Satan.

If you have advanced this week in any area of your life into the land that God promised to you, and I hope you have. I hope all of you have moved into Canaan. I hope all of you have taken and staked out some new territory and said, I want this mountain and I will have it, as Caleb said.

But if you've moved forward in your life this week, know that Balak is up in the mountains watching. Know that Satan is up in the mountains watching with horror. Oh no! She's taken this area of her life, which has always been one of my dwelling places.

This area of weakness where I've always known I can get her here. She's coming in and staking that place for God. Horrors! You can know if you've advanced in any area this week that Balak, the old devil, is up there in the mountains and he's watching.

Oh no! He's going to take over that land? He's planning to claim that land for God? This is a threat! What do I do? If you are advancing with a free and open and clear heart before God, you are not only a threat, you are a formidable enemy. Because if your heart is clear this morning, if you've had everything in your life cleaned this week, if you came clean, wonderful, if you didn't, if you cleaned up everything in your life this week and you have an open clear heaven over your life and you're advancing into new territory, you are a formidable enemy. You threaten Satan.

You do. You! You are a threat to Satan and his kingdom. And he watches in the mountains with horror the people of Israel were advancing.

If they hadn't been advancing, if they'd have stopped and just capitalized on Sihon, king of Heshbon's land, the king of Moab would have probably let them be. But they didn't. They kept on moving forward and it was that desire to advance that so threatened the king of Moab.

Are you a threat to the king of Moab this morning? Do you have such a desire to advance that your every footstep strikes terror into the king of Moab's heart? If you have a desire to advance this morning, know that you're a threat to Satan. And knowing that you're a threat to Satan should put joy in your hearts. Knowing that you are standing against the archenemy of your God and the Lord Jesus Christ, that should put joy in your hearts.

And you can know, if you have a clear and open heaven, and you have a desire to advance, Satan equates before you. He's up in the mountains shaking this morning. Because some of you have got your lives totally cleaned up.

Some of you have staked a new territory this week and Satan is afraid. But you can know that he notices. You can know that he observes.

You can know that he's not blind to what you're doing. But don't fear. The first point is security.

The security of God's blessing. I hope you have God's blessing on your life this morning. I hope that your life is an open book before God.

If it is, you have God's blessing. If your life is open, clean, and pure, and you're not holding back anything from God this morning, you can know that you have God's blessing. And you can know that God's blessing is secure in your life.

Balaam, the honest witch doctor. Balaam was called by the king of Moab to come and curse this people for me. I know King Balak said that the people that you curse are cursed.

And the people that you bless, they're blessed. So come and curse this enemy for me. Because they're too big for me.

I can't stand against them. But maybe if you curse them, maybe if you remove God's blessing from their life, maybe then I'll be able to stand up against them. But right now, they're too big for me.

I can know, sitting up here in my mountain strongholds, that this enemy advancing with the immediate memory of past victories is a formidable foe. And I will not be able to overcome them. So come and curse this people for me.

And I know, I know that for hundreds of you this morning, this kind of conversation, these kind of thoughts go through the old king of Moab. Satan himself. These thoughts go through his heart.

They have gone through his heart all week long watching as different ones of you made advances in your Christian life. Dealt with sins, dealt with hidden sins, dealt with past things, repented. He's been sitting there and exactly what happened to the children of Israel is happening to you.

The security of God's blessing. You know, the average witch doctor, a witch doctor that's not honest, will never tell you 100% bad. Because that's bad for his business.

A witch doctor is someone who is in league with evil spirits. But he's also in league with money. And if you come to a soothsayer or a fortune teller or a witch doctor and ask him to foretell your future and all he tells you is bad, you're not likely to leave a tip.

You're not likely to be very happy with that witch doctor. So most witch doctors tell something bad only to get you to bring a larger sacrifice so that then they can tell you something good. In Africa, where soothsayers are common, it would be a rare day that you could go and sit down with a soothsayer and he wouldn't tell you something bad.

But it would be a rare day that you wouldn't also have that same soothsayer telling you something good. If only you'll bring a goat. If only you'll bring a sheep.

If only you'll bring two chickens by next week Friday, this good thing will happen to you. This curse on your life will be undone. But Balaam, for all his failings, and he had a lot of them, down a couple chapters later, the children of Israel fought against the Moabites and they killed Balaam.

For all of his failings, he was an honest witch doctor. He said what he saw. And when he looked into the spirit realm, he said the truth.

He said what he saw. This morning, if you're walking with God and your life is a threat to Satan's kingdom, you can know that he is working. He is trying.

He is planning. He is scheming. He is divining everything possible that he can against you.

You can know that. Just take that fact and stand on it and know, I am a threat to Satan because my life is pure this morning. I am a threat to Satan because I have taken new territory in my Christian life.

And then take as the other fact that Satan is working against me. Satan is working against me. It's rare for us to get, to see with such physical eyes what's happening spiritually.

But Balaam saw what was happening spiritually and he came and he walked away after the sacrifices and looked out over the people of Israel and he looked into the spirit world of what's happening with these people. And he came back to the king of Moab. He said, Balaam, what do I say? These people are blessed when I look at their life no matter how hard I try and I think he really wanted to curse them.

That money was in his eyes the whole while. He wanted to curse them. He couldn't because he was honest.

At least he was honest. And as he looked out into the spirit world and he looked over the children of Israel, he could not find anything to curse. He could not find the powers to truly curse these people.

Why? Because God had blessed them. And this morning, God's blessing is on your life. And if God's blessing is on your life, Satan is fighting against you.

But if God's blessing is on your life, Satan cannot do anything to you. Satan cannot do anything to you. I love the verses which say chapter 23, verse 23, Surely there is no enchantment against Jacob, neither is there any divination against Israel.

You have to understand that in Africa, because witchcraft is so real, one of the great spiritual battlegrounds for our churches and our people there are fear. The fear of witchcraft. The fear of someone cursing you.

The fear that maybe this sickness is because someone threw a curse on me. They really fear those things. It's real to them.

But I know that even as you sit here, there is an uncomfortableness in our heart when we realize that our new spiritual advance has put us out there as a sitting duck, so to speak, with Satan's gun trained on our head. That's uncomfortable for us. We don't like that thought.

As much as we want to go up against Satan, it's a fearful thing because Satan has a lot of power. I think of one of my church leaders there in the Bumbun area. A couple times a year, the chief of the village will go around and tell the village people, it's time to make a sacrifice for the village.

It's time to make a sacrifice so that the spirits will bless our village, so that our crops will grow well, so that the animals won't die, so that our children will be healthy. So every head of household needs to contribute money so that we corporately buy an animal and we corporately agree to the spirits that we are giving you this animal so that you will bless our entire village. It's not like a tax, but it's somewhat like a tax except for the fact that giving money towards that sacrifice is your hand on the sacrifice.

It shows that you are making the sacrifice. It shows that you are asking the spirit world to bless your life. So, it happens often.

This is not the first time, but this brother, in this particular brother's life, the chief called a meeting, went around, they go around and bang these little bells, they call them gong gongs, and call everyone to a meeting at the chief's palace. And he called our brother along with the other heads of household and said, everybody needs to pay up by three days from now. Each man needs to contribute a certain amount of

money towards the sheep.

The brother went home to his house. The three days passed. He didn't contribute the money.

The chief came to see him. The chief himself is not a super feared authority, but the spirits are feared. The chief came to our dear church leader and said, you haven't paid.

We're ready to buy the sheep. You need to pay your contribution. And this dear brother said, Chief, if you want to drill a well for this village, I will do my part.

I'll even do twice. When you need somebody to weed your farm, I will weed your farm. When you want somebody to come and make blocks so that we can build a better school for our village, I will be there.

But to put my hand, as they say, to put my hand inside this sacrifice, I will not do it. Period. I will not put my hand inside this sacrifice.

And the chief said, and you have to understand the way they say these things, but the chief said, you will see. You don't threaten me. And you don't threaten the spirits.

You will see. The chief went back to his house and this brother just committed it to the Lord. But he was a little shaky because these things are fearful and you and I say, well, what could a chief really do? But he knows what a chief can really do and he knows what the spirits can actually do.

The next morning he went out to his farm and on the way to his farm he met a snake. Now we have a lot of snakes in the African bush and almost all of them are highly poisonous. But he met the snake and he killed it.

That's not all that unusual. These farmers kill snakes often. Continued to his farm and started weeding.

And he was weeding rows of corn, I believe it was, and in a length of three corn rows that morning our brother killed six snakes. Happenstance? Never. One snake in a farm? Possibly.

Maybe two. Maybe even three. But he killed seven snakes that morning.

Seven snakes. And you know he called the name of Jesus over every one of them as he smashed them to pieces. There was no doubt in his mind what was happening.

There was no doubt at all that Satan was trying to make him afraid by sending these snakes. Seven snakes in one morning. And as he took his hoe and just beat the brains out of him, he called the name of Jesus.

Called on God for protection. But as he killed them, his confidence started growing. You know, the first one, whoa, his heart was beating and he killed that snake and started farming and killed another one.

But as he realized that there was a lot of snakes and yet none of them were biting him and God was showing him those snakes and he was killing every one of them, he started rejoicing. There is no enchantment against Judah. There is no divination against Israel.

And you are Judah and you are Israel this morning. If you're walking with God, there is no enchantment against you. Though the chief, though the evil spirits, though Satan himself, though the king of Moab, go and mobilize all kinds of curses against you.

There's no enchantment. There's no divination. There's nothing that can happen to you because of Satan's plan outside of it going through the hand of God.

And I understand that God does allow bad things to happen in our lives. The book of Job is in the Bible. But that does not mean that you need to be afraid of Satan and his devices.

If you should see from your camp, your new camp, that you staked out for God in your life, if you should see from your camp up there on the mountain side, the king of Moab himself and Balaam standing beside him trying to curse your life, don't be afraid. If you should meet seven snakes in one morning, don't be afraid. If Satan sets himself against you because you have set yourself to follow God, know in your heart there is security in God's blessing on your life.

There is no enchantment that can do anything against you. There is no divination, no juju powers, no witchcraft that can have any power over you because God has blessed you. Balaam came back to Balak and said, how do I curse a people that the God of heaven has blessed? I look out over their encampment and all I see is blessing.

Blessing! Blessing! Blessing! How can I curse those people? What Balak did not understand is that though the people that Balaam blessed were blessed and the people that he cursed were cursed, he could only curse those that God curses. And those who God blesses, he couldn't do anything. Though he really, really wanted some of that house full of gold and silver, he couldn't curse the people that God had blessed.

And God's blessing is on your life this morning. If your heart is clear and pure, God's blessing is on your life. And there's nothing that Satan can do about it.

Isn't that a wonderful truth? Isn't that exciting? As you stand on that new territory that you've staked out for God this week in your life to know that Satan and his minions cannot do anything against you. Nothing. Security.

This is a wonderful truth. This is for you this morning. If your heart is right with God.

This is for you this morning. If your life is pure. This is for you this morning.

If you're preparing to go home with a desire to live out what God has done in your life and continue advancing in your spiritual walk with God, this section is for you. Security. Know it.

Claim it. Stand on it. And know that while the king of Moab stands there on top of the mountain overlooking your life, while Satan plans and schemes against you, nothing that he can do can undo God's blessing on your life.

You can stand in that. And that can give you the energy that you need to step forward into new territory. That can give you the confidence that you need to have in your heart as you go home to live out the new things that God has taught you this week.

The knowledge that Satan cannot do anything against me. In the African English we say, Satan cannot do you anything. Satan cannot do you anything.

Nothing that he can plan against you will have any power. And though you may not be going home to meet seven snakes on Tuesday morning when you get up in the morning, I doubt you will. But you will

meet seven snakes.

Satan will work against you in this next week. But it has no power over you. His enchantments, His divinations, they have already, even before they are made, they have already been cancelled by God's blessing in your life.

Stand on that confidence. Believe in it. And make your advances knowing that as you advance, you are a threat to Satan.

He will work against you. And you are secure. Incredibly secure.

In the blessing of God upon your life. He cannot do anything against you. That's security.

Balaam, the honest witch doctor, who was honest enough to say, King Balak, I really wish I could. I want your money really bad. I can't say anything against these people.

God has blessed them. What can I do? I can't do anything against these people. God has blessed them.

The honest witch doctor. I'd like us to look at the next section. Stagnation.

Security and then stagnation. We're kind of taking an abrupt shift here because we've been looking from the top of the mountain as Satan tried to curse God's people. As the king of Moab tried to do away with the children of Israel.

And we have been recognizing that God's blessing spoken over the children of Israel had more power than anything that Satan could do. And that's wonderful. But we need to take a turn here because it's not only up on the mountain where spiritual battles will be fought in your life.

It's not only on the mountain where spiritual battles will be fought. You will fight your spiritual battles in your camp. Where you are camping.

Down where Israel was staying in the valleys is where the spiritual battle was taking place. Another spiritual battle. Yes, Satan could not do anything to undo the blessing of God.

But it was possible and it is possible for God's people to be tripped up. And God's blessing to be removed. It is an incredibly sobering thing to recognize how quickly the story changes from three chapters of Satan endeavoring to curse God's people and God's people instead being blessed and blessed and blessed to the story that we're just about to read here.

Security and Stagnation. Chapter 25 of the book of Numbers. And Israel abode in Shittim.

And Israel abode in Shittim. We'll stop reading there. That's all we need for this point of stagnation.

Security, stagnation, seduction and survival. Stagnation. And Israel abode in Shittim.

I wrote here beside this point. Israel abode. It's almost written like an epitaph across the top of a gravestone.

Israel abode. If you were to read the previous ten chapters, you would see that in Israel's history at this point, they were not doing a lot of abiding. They were on the move.

These were God's people moving forward to conquer the territory that He had promised to them and to their grandfathers. Moving forward. Here's a king.

Take him out. Here's another kingdom. Claim that territory.

Here's another kingdom that resists us. Take it out and make it part of our inheritance. That has been the history of Israel over the last several chapters.

And now we have just these few words at the beginning of Numbers chapter 25. And Israel abode. Israel abode.

You know, when we go camping, we camp. We live in our homes. But we don't live in tents.

When we are in our houses, we say, I'm living in my house. This is my abode. This is where I abide.

This is where I dwell. All of those words give the feeling of settledness. Being in one place.

Not moving. And they're different from camping, trekking, marching, on the trail, fighting. There's a tremendous difference between those words and dwelling, abiding, sitting.

And Israel abode in Shittim. Beware, my dear brothers and sisters, of abiding in anything except Christ. We are not called to abide in the spiritual lesson where I am today.

We are not called to abide in the glory of this moment. We are not called to abide spiritually in the friends that God has given us this week. We are called only to abide in Christ.

And any other abode is dangerous. We are called to abide in Christ. And any other stopping place is the enchanted ground to use Pilgrim's Progress.

Any other abode, any other beautiful arbor with a bench where we can sit down and enjoy wonderful fruits is dangerous. Israel abode. They put down their roots.

Go ahead and pound those tent pegs all the way in. We're going to be here a while. Let's live here.

This is our abode. And Israel abode in Shittim. You and I are called, brothers and sisters, to a Christian life that is active.

We are called to a Christian life that is moving forward. That is the rule of life. That is the rule of spiritual vitality, is to be advancing, learning, moving forward always in our Christian walk with God.

And to put up a house spiritually, where God doesn't want you to put up a house is dangerous. Brother Moses preached about heaven. That is where we are going to have our abode.

Jesus is already preparing your place there. Spiritually, we are called to be camping. We are called to be pilgrims.

We are called to be tenting. We are called to be trekking. We are called to be fighting.

We are not called to be abiding. We are not called to be putting down roots. We are not called to be spiritually immobile.

We are asked to be moving forward. It is the rule of spiritual vitality. But know, in chapter 25 verse 1, Israel is abiding.

They abode. I don't know how long they stayed. The Bible doesn't tell us.

But it was longer than in many of the other places. There weren't any kings in the valley to take out. There wasn't any immediate threat to them.

So they abode. But far rather, brothers and sisters, to be Israel on the move with an enemy behind them and a river in front of them. Far rather to be Israel in a place of spiritual desperation than to be Israel abiding in the valley.

Breathing the dangerous air of the Moabite valley. Far rather to live your spiritual life, brothers and sisters, hanging on tenaciously to God's grace and putting forth all your spiritual energies to conquer new territory and hold on to what God has given you. Far rather be that than to put down your roots in a place where God doesn't want you to put down your roots.

It's not resting time yet. Have you arrived this week? There is a threat. It's not the threat of the king of Moab on the hill above you.

There's no divination that can have any power over you. But there is a threat. There's a tremendous threat this morning, my dear brothers and sisters, that you feel that you have arrived.

Especially if you've taken new territory this week. There is a danger that you feel like, yes, finally, a young man came up to me and said, this week, I'm right with God for the first time in like six or seven years, I think he said. I'm right with God for the first time.

There were tears in his eyes and a smile on his face. That is wonderful. But brothers and sisters, that is the baseline.

That is not the top of the mountain. That is where we begin from. And we are thrilled that you're there.

We are excited that you've gotten there. God wanted you to get there. But it's not the top of the mountain.

It is not the top of the mountain. My dear young people, it is the beginning. It is from there that we walk.

From there that we move forward. From there that we finally are able to do something for God. You haven't arrived.

And if you think that you've arrived, dangerous. I want to tell you, if you think you've arrived, you are breathing enchanted air. You are breathing an air that can put you to sleep into some kind of a spiritual drowsiness in which Satan can so easily trick you.

As they did the children of Israel. You have not arrived. I have not arrived.

The place of our arrival will be heaven. And until we arrive in heaven, we are on the move. We are mobile.

We are moving forward. We are advancing. We are taking new territory.

We are defensive and offensive and we have an enemy and we're moving forward and we're watching and we're careful. But it's human nature to want to abide. To put in roots.

Let's make this position a little easier to defend. Then I'll just stand here. Everything is just right.

I'll just stand here and I'll just be right here because I'm finally right with God and I'm just going to stand right here. No. Never.

You won't. You will not stand in the place where you are this morning if you set yourself that you've arrived. You will not be here one year from now at this same place in your life.

If you say, let's just stand right here. I don't want to move. I'm in the right place.

Finally, thank God that you're in the right place. But if you try to stand still spiritually, you will be. You will be caught by Satan.

Satan will be able to trick you. You will backslide if you think that you've arrived. If you try to stand still.

If you try to build three tabernacles real quickly to encapsulate this wonderful moment. I want to say to you with excitement, there are more wonderful moments ahead. Peter, you wanted to build a tabernacle, but what if Peter had built those tabernacles? What if those three had been able to build a tabernacle and sit there, yes, with Jesus, yes, the Son of God, but no sacrifice for sin, no glorified body, no resurrection, and those two prophets.

It would have been wonderful, but it would have been nothing compared to what you and I know. And I want to say to you this morning that what you know this morning is nothing. What I know this morning is nothing compared to what we can know if we keep moving forward.

America is a land built on a pioneer spirit. Americans just kept going west. They kept going west until they met the ocean, and they had to stop then.

Because they always wondered, is there something better beyond? And many times there was. There's something more wonderful. There's something better beyond you.

There are spiritual heights that you can yet achieve that you don't know anything about yet. There are things that God wants to show to you and to me, and we will only know them if we keep moving forward. If this platform was bigger, or if this was in Africa, I would have brought a bicycle here this morning.

I want you to think with me the challenges of balancing a bicycle that is not moving. Why do bicycles have kickstands? To hold them up. A bicycle that is not moving cannot stand.

Simple. Even if there's no wind, even if the ground is perfectly level, even if the conditions are just right, a bicycle that is not moving cannot stand by itself. So they have kickstands.

I tried to look this morning. I couldn't find it, but there is a world record for sitting on a bicycle without moving and balancing it. I don't know what it is, but the very fact that there's a world record for it shows that it's a difficult thing.

And if I could have a bicycle up here this morning, you would see that I'm not the world record holder. Sitting on a bicycle without moving. Very, very, very difficult.

Sometimes there in Ghana we have to carry people on the back of the bicycle. One of my church leaders is crippled. He can't ride a bicycle, so when we're going to meetings together, we have to pick him.

We have like a rack on the back of the bicycle. And to carry myself and my bags and the gifts that the village has given me, and my dear brother David on the back of the bicycle is a heavy load. And when you're getting started, you're barely moving.

You're just, you know, cranking it out one at a time. Very hard to balance. Because you're not moving.

But the faster you go, once you're up to a good speed, you don't even think about balancing. Because the forward movement balances the bicycle. It's a rule.

It's physics. It's just the way it is. If the bicycle is moving, it stands up by itself.

As soon as it stops, you have to do all kinds of things to keep it balanced. If I was to sit here this morning, you would see me moving back and forth and balancing and turning the steering wheel and I wouldn't make it one minute. But during that minute, you would see an incredible amount of effort.

Trying to turn the steering wheel and twist the bicycle and wish it my way and slide forward and slide backward. Because it's very, very, very hard to balance a bicycle that is not moving. And spiritually, I hope you get the point.

Spiritually, if you're not moving, it is going to be impossible for you to keep your life on track and upright. It is going to be impossible for you to stay right with God if you stay in one position. It's an incredible effort and it's an effort that God never intended for you to make.

The Christian life doesn't work that way. There are rules and it's the rule of the Christian life that we have to be moving forward. And then when we're moving forward, the Christian life balances itself.

It's very, very hard to balance a bicycle that's not moving. Think of the challenge of keeping stagnant water fresh. This second point was called stagnation.

Stagnation is the absence of motion or agitation. And if you have in your life an absence of motion or agitation spiritually, you are stagnant. Stagnant water is very difficult to keep fresh.

I think of my father's pond and over the years during the summer months, it is an incredible challenge to keep that sitting water fresh. We put dye into the water so that the sunlight doesn't get down and the seaweed doesn't grow and we put chemicals into the water and we try to make sure there's some fresh water flowing in and we do all kinds of things because sitting water doesn't stay fresh by itself. But you know, if you took that same water and made it a flowing stream, you would not have to do anything.

It would take care of itself. It would stay fresh. The oxygen would stay in the water.

The pH would stay balanced. The fish would be able to live and all of those things simply because that water is moving. The science of that water moving takes care of all those other things.

But if that water is stagnant, you're going to have to be out there with your test kit. You're going to have to be balancing it, put a little of this, add a little of this, spread this out, mix this up because you can't keep stagnant water fresh. And you can't keep your spiritual life fresh and vital and real with God if you're not having inflow and outflow, if you're not doing anything, if you're not moving forward into new territories and new ministries and new sacrifices.

Here, my brothers and sisters, is where the real threat lies for most of you. A real threat. It's not the king of Moab on the hill.

It's spiritual inactivity. It's the feeling that I've arrived. It's the feeling that, okay, this is wonderful.

This is the best it's ever gotten. And I'm so thrilled that it is. It's the feeling that we've got to build a tabernacle right here to protect what we have.

Otherwise, we might lose it. You will not lose it if you move forward. But if you sit here trying to defend it, trying to make sure you don't lose it, trying to build a tabernacle there, you will lose it.

Security and stagnation. We have not arrived, brothers and sisters. Even if this week has been the best week of your life, even if spiritually you are closer to God than you have ever been, you and I always are just at the beginning.

Because there's always something in front of us. There's always something true from God's blessed Word that we have yet to know in our lives. There are still passages in this Word that when I read them, I say, God, I don't know that in my life.

God, that verse makes me feel uncomfortable. That tells me there's something beyond me. That tells me that God has more that He wants me to know.

There is a blessedness that I still don't know. And there's a blessedness that you still don't know. How are we going to get there? Certainly not by building a house right here.

Let's move on. Mobility. Forward movement.

Far rather to be fighting with your enemies than to be abiding in a place where God doesn't want you to abide. Don't put down roots here, brothers and sisters. You serve a real God.

He will go with you where you go. He will help you in your needs. And if you have a desire to follow Him, you will continue to grow.

And a year from now, you will see not only the wonderful things that happened in this Bible school, but all the growth that has come out of them. May God help you, dear young people, to capitalize on what you've learned without making it the only thing you've ever known and sitting here on this enchanted ground. The third point.

Seduction. Chapter 25. And Israel abode in Shittim.

And the people began to commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab. Moab. Yes.

The same Moabites. The servants of the king of Moab. The one who had worked so hard to curse the children of Israel.

If you read the New Testament verses and all that's said about Balaam in the Bible, you will see that though Balaam was not willing to curse the children of Israel, he was so desirous of Balak's money, that when it was all said and done, the Bible doesn't say how it happened, but it says that he did it. When it was all said and done, Balak said, go, flee back to your home country. I wanted to give you money, but you're not going to get anything now.

But somewhere between that mountaintop and Balaam going to his house, Balaam said to Balak, well, you know, it seems like the power of these people lies in their relationship to their God. I don't know what he said, but he said something to King Balak that encouraged him to try to use whatever means necessary to trip up the children of Israel in their spiritual lives. The Bible says that Balaam taught Israel to sin.

The counsel of Balaam to Balak was, you can't do anything against these people. No divination, no spiritual power, no curses will have anything to do with, will have any power over these people, like water off a duck's back. But you know, there is something you could do.

If you can infiltrate them, if you can infiltrate the daughters of Israel, the children of Israel, with the daughters of Moab, you may be able to get them to sin. And if you can get them to sin, you will have struck a blow at the center lifeline that makes these people such a formidable foe against you, Balak. Are you hearing me? If you can find a way to infiltrate them with some physical desire that they have, or some passion that they have, and you can get them to compromise with the daughters of Moab, in some way, God will remove His blessing, and then it will be easy for you.

Because if God removes His blessing, you can win over these people. The only thing that makes them unusual is that God has blessed them. And I can't remove God's blessing off their life, King Balak.

But, we may be able to use a more subtle means. We don't need 21 sacrificed cows on the mountains. We don't need 21 altars.

We don't need powerful incantations against these people. But, the daughters of Moab might be able to accomplish, if we plan this well. The Bible holds this out.

I'm not making this up. Balaam gave counsel to Balak. And while Israel abode in Shittim, and the people were there in that rooted down, semi-settled place, the people began to commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab.

And they called the people unto the sacrifices of their gods. There was a hook. The hook was the daughters of Moab.

The daughters of Moab was a sin. God did not want His people mixing with the Canaanites, and the Moabites, and the Midianites, and all those people they were called to exterminate. He didn't want them mixing with them.

But that sin was actually relatively of a small nature. I think that there would have been a way to go and make a blood sacrifice and be forgiven for having fallen into sin with a Moabite woman. But these Moabite women started inviting their friends to the sacrifices of their gods.

You know, we're having a party, and we're going to have a lot of cattle. We're going to kill a couple cows, and a couple sheep, and we are going to have us a feast tomorrow night. Will you come? And one by one, the children of Israel, the men of Israel started going to these idol sacrifice celebrations with their Moabite girlfriends.

And the people did eat and bowed down to their gods. Oh well, I'm here as a friend of this young lady, and I ate of the meat, and all I have to do is go down now, and just out of respect to these people, and what they're doing, I'll just go down and bow down in front of their idol three times, and there won't be any problem between us. I want my friendship to continue with this Moabite woman, and these people have

been so friendly, and they shared all of their meat with me, and I think I'll just go down and bow down to Baal three or four times.

The people did eat and bowed down to their gods. And Israel joined himself unto Baal Peor. And the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel.

It is a wonderful thing, my dear brothers and sisters, when the blessing of God is written across your life in an ink that can never be erased. Indelible ink. Blessings! And it is written across your life in an ink that can never be erased.

And I mean that. As long as you walk with God, God's blessing across your life is there. Just written across your life.

Blessed! It's a wonderful thing when the God of Heaven blesses you. But it is an awful thing when you, through your choices, with your friendship with the world, and if you're a young lady here, we're not talking about just going out and fornicating with a worldly young lady. That's not the point here.

We're spiritualizing this. This is a parable. If you are in some way befriending the world, if there is some area of your life through which Satan is putting a hook into you and drawing you to where you are willing to bow down to Baal three or four times, it's an awful thing for that God who has been blessing you to now turn and let His anger be kindled against you.

Awful! Dreadful! We live in the New Testament and we live in an era of grace. But it sometimes is very healthy for us to see God's judgment in the Old Testament because that God is still the same God. His hands may be withheld by His mercy and His grace and His redemptive desires towards you, but God still feels the same way.

God still feels the same way towards sin. What sacrifices and curses could not do a couple of Moabite women did. A single carnal desire opened the door to a horde of evils.

A single carnal desire, and I'm warning you young people, some of you, I'm warning you because you're going to still meet this carnal desire. Maybe you're walking with God now, but you may meet it down the road. And some of you, I'm warning you because you're holding that carnal desire in your heart and in your hands this morning.

A single carnal desire opened the door to a horde of evil and to a tidal wave of God's judgment against the people of Israel. I don't think that Balaam's curses could have been any worse. If he had stood on that mountain and pronounced curses upon Israel, it would have been better than what happened.

Than a single carnal desire that you are harboring in your heart and you know what it is. Whatever it is. It is that thing that hooks you.

It is that thing that is most that has the greatest possibility of drawing you away from God and into the world. It is that thing which threatens your spiritual life. If you were to stand up here and say it this morning, somebody might say oh that doesn't seem that bad.

It doesn't matter. If it is the thing that threatens your spiritual life. If it is the thing that could pull you into the world.

If it is the thing that could remove you from God's blessing on your life. You joke with that thing at your mortal danger my friend. Whatever it is.

No matter how small it is. If it is the thing that Satan can use to draw you into the world. You not dealing with it.

It is dangerous. Very dangerous. What is your one thing? What is your one thing that you still haven't dealt with this week? What is that one thing that you are just keeping thinking this is not really anything that bad.

What is that one thing? Because I promise you Satan will use that one thing. No. He can't curse you.

But he will use that one thing. You can plan on it. The daughters of Moab will find their way into your camp.

And behold. I'm sorry. Verse 4. And the Lord said unto Moses, take all the heads of the people and hang them up before the Lord against the sun.

That the fierce anger of the Lord may be turned away from Israel. And Moses said unto the judges of Israel, slay ye everyone, his men, that were joined unto Baal Peor. And behold, one of the children of Israel came and brought unto his brethren a Midianitish woman in the sight of Moses and in the sight of all the congregation of the children of Israel who were weeping before the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.

And when Phinehas, the son of Eliezer, the son of Aaron, the priest, saw it, he rose up from among the congregation and took a javelin in his hand. And he went after the man of Israel into the tent and thrust both of them through, the man of Israel and the woman through her belly. So the plague was stayed from the children of Israel.

And those that died in the plague were twenty and four thousand. Twenty four thousand! The curses couldn't do it. The sacrifices couldn't do it.

But a few Moabite women, infiltrating the camp of God's people with their enticements, were able to do it. Twenty four thousand people dead! Don't you think Balaam would have been thrilled if Balaam had said, okay, all I can do, I can't kill them all, but I can kill twenty four thousand of them. Don't you think he would have been happy? He would have been thrilled! Spiritually, if you are toying with the flesh, if you are toying with the flesh in some area of your life, if you are toying with the world, you are in the same mortal danger as the children of Israel were.

And the stakes are no less high. Twenty four thousand dead! I don't know what it is. You know what it is.

You know whether it's your carnal drives, whether it's music, whether it's your car, or whether it's your dress, or whether it's a friend that you have, or maybe a girlfriend that you have, or whatever it is. You know what it is that has the best chance of hooking you for Satan. You must deal with that today.

You must. My brothers and sisters, you must deal with that one thing. Otherwise, those Satan's curses against you mean nothing.

You will fail. You must deal with it. I beg you to deal with it.

On the authority of God's word, I beg you to deal with that one thing. Otherwise, all that you've done this whole week is meaningless. Security of God's blessing.

Stagnation. And then seduction. God's people couldn't be cursed, but they could be seduced.

The last one. Survival. And we've already touched on this quite a bit in stagnation, so I'm just going to touch on it lightly.

Survival. Verse seven. No, verse six.

We're going to read them again. And behold, one of the children of Israel came and brought unto his brethren a Midianitish woman in the sight of Moses, in the sight of all the congregation of the children of Israel who were weeping before the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. And when Phinehas, the son of Eliezer, the son of Aaron the priest, saw it, he rose up from among the congregation and took a javelin in his hand.

Survival. We see that God's blessing cannot be changed over our lives. We see that the curse of Satan means nothing.

We see that stagnation is dangerous for us. Immobility makes us vulnerable. We see that.

We see that our danger is not from Satan's curses, but from the seduction of the enemy finding ways to pull us. So how do we survive? What is the law of survival? Since Satan can't curse us, but yet, Moabitish women can seduce us. What is the law of survival? Survival demands action.

The law of survival is to be zealous for God's sake. If you were to continue reading on, God blesses Phinehas and says, I give unto him a covenant of peace. Why? Because he was zealous for my name's sake.

He saw sin happening and he was zealous to go and put an end to it. The law of survival is to be zealous for God's sake. And anything less than a zealous response to the sin in your life and my life cannot guarantee our survival.

The only one who can be zealous for God about the sin in your life this morning is you. Others have been zealous for God about the sin in their lives and they've even been zealous for God about the sin in your life. People have been praying for these meetings for weeks.

People have been crying out to God every morning. When that altar call is going on each day, there are people across this auditorium who are praying for you. They are being zealous for God about the sin in your life.

But this morning, the only person who can pick up that dagger, who can pick up that javelin and end that stronghold of sin in your life is you. And your spiritual survival depends on it. Your revival does too.

That's the word that almost came out. Your spiritual survival depends on you being zealous for God and picking up that dagger and saying, I will not let this go on any longer. And God bless Phinehas for his zealous nature.

And God will bless you. That is the law of survival. The only one that can cast that dagger is you.

The only one who can put an end to the anger of God over the sin in your life is you. I'm appealing to you. To use Ghanaian English, I'm begging you this morning.

I am begging you this morning, my dear brothers and sisters, to stand up with the zeal of Phinehas, watching what's been happening. It says God's people were standing in the door of the tabernacle weeping. And there's been a lot of people standing in the door of the tabernacle this week.

There's been a lot of people gotten right with God. There's been a lot of weeping this morning. And God's people right now are standing in the door of the tabernacle weeping.

And if there's still sin in your life, you are just as bold. You are just as blatant as that man who in front of thousands and hundreds of thousands of God's people walked with a Midianitish woman on his arm. The audacity of it.

And may I say to you, the audacity of what you are doing, if you could sit through this entire week with that sin in your life, and walk in front of all God's people weeping in front of the tabernacle with your sin on your arm, and walk into your tent. No wonder Phinehas jumped up with such zeal. But this morning, nobody's wanting to put a dagger through you.

We live in an era of grace. And you can be thankful for that. And I can be thankful for that.

But we must jump up with the zeal of Phinehas and put the dagger through whatever carnal thing it is in our life that threatens us spiritually. That is the law of survival. 24,000 had died in a matter of a couple of minutes.

If they hadn't dealt with that sin, they would have been wiped out. Spiritually, your survival depends on being zealous for God. Being zealous to get rid of the sin in your life.

Being zealous about following God. Being real before God. It's the law of life.

We've looked today at a spiritual life cycle. Security. Stagnation.

Or a death life cycle, I should call it. Security. Stagnation.

Seduction. There is a way to survive. And the law of survival is zealous action for God.

And I may say, if zealous action for God is in place, this life cycle does not need to occur. Stagnation and seduction. Stagnation and seduction and death.

Survival. The law of being zealous for God is the law of survival. A parable of security.

Stagnation. Seduction. And survival.

This morning, if you're right with God, may God bless you. May He give you the confidence of knowing that Satan cannot form any weapon against you. There is no divination against Israel.

There is nothing that Satan can do to unseat you supernaturally from the place where you stand today if you're walking with God. Take courage in that. Take confidence in that.

But beware of stagnation as you go home. Beware of stagnation. Beware of sitting still.

If you are still sitting still, I think you need to repent of sitting still. Because your stagnation is putting you right in the path of danger. Seduction.

There are still some here who have been seduced by Satan. And you haven't yet dealt with that thing in your life which threatens you mortally. Which threatens your very soul.

You have yet to deal with it. I'm begging you this morning, we're going to give you the chance to deal with it. We're going to give you the chance for your own spiritual survival to be able to jump up with the dagger.

And go and put that dagger with all the might and power of God through that sin in your life. And stay the plague of God's judgment upon your life. A single carnal desire opened the door to a horde of evil.

What is your single carnal desire? What is that one thing that you haven't dealt with yet? It's still in there. It's something you kind of cover and kind of hold. And yet, its very existence threatens your survival.

We're going to sing an invitation song. And give you the opportunity to respond. If God has spoken to you this morning.

If you want to survive spiritually and you know that you're in danger. If you know that you're still stagnant and sitting when you should be moving. If you know that there's still that hook of a carnal desire.

Something sinful in your life which is holding you. I'm begging you to jump up this morning. And put this javelin through that sin by coming forward and going down to a prayer room and repenting.

And putting the dagger through that for good. Let's do that this morning. There's still chance.

There's still blessings ahead of you. If only you're willing to do it. Number 190.

... .. We thank you, God, for your Word to our hearts this morning. Thank you for this parable from the Old Testament which is for our learning. Thank you, Lord, for speaking to our hearts, showing us the security of your blessing on our lives, and yet challenging us, Lord, to deal with whatever it is, whatever Moabite woman we have in our life, whatever thing it is, that though it may not be so sinful in and of itself, is Satan's hook in our life.

Even though it may not seem so threatening, its existence allows a hoard of other evils into our lives. God, call every young person that you desire to call, and may all of us, Father, be willing to stand up and throw the javelin through, with the energy of the Holy Spirit, through the sin that is in our lives, God. Bless these young people and help them to walk with you, Father.

Do meet every one of these that has responded with your Holy Spirit. Meet them, God, and give them the unction and the energy that they need to do, what they need to do with the sin or whatever area it is of their life that you are speaking to them. We thank you for speaking to us, Lord.

We love hearing your voice. In Jesus' name, amen.

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