

Balaam's Very Special Donkey

by Sandeep Poonen

This sermon emphasizes the power of repentance, faith, and living without condemnation through the cleansing blood of Jesus. It draws insights from the story of Balaam and his donkey in Numbers 22, highlighting the importance of spiritual perception, obedience, and speaking words of respect and grace. The message encourages believers to have their eyes opened to God's presence, control their tongues, and live in a way that honors God even in challenging situations.

Scripture: 1 John 1:9, James 4:8, Numbers 22:31, James 3:8, James 1:26, Proverbs 15:1, Ephesians 4:29, Matthew 12:36, Proverbs 21:23, Colossians 4:6

Topics: "Repentance", "Spiritual Perception"

Description

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Transcript

I hope that every single day we will live without condemnation because we know that the past God has a solution for which is the blood of Jesus can cleanse us, not will, can if we fulfill the requirements. If we confess our sins to him and if we choose to walk in the light, another word for that is repentance and faith, then he will, that's the option available to us and thankfully we can live with that and today can truly be a day of salvation. So that is why we never need to be discouraged or condemned.

I want to speak from Numbers chapter 23, it's the story of Balaam, I'm sorry Numbers chapter 22, Numbers chapter 22 is the story of Balaam, it's one of those interesting stories that even the children will enjoy because it's the story of Balaam and his donkey, if I had more time I would have put some slides up of donkeys but you'll have to imagine this. We know that Balaam was not told by God to go but because he kept pestering God, kept bugging God, God said okay go but God was angry with him and we pick it up in Numbers 22 verse 22 where it says that God was angry because he was going and the angel of the Lord stood as an adversary against him, now he was riding on his donkey, now when the donkey, look at it, he had two servants with him but the only person seeing the angel of the Lord was the donkey, when the donkey saw the angel of the Lord standing in his way with his drawn sword, the donkey turned off the road. What did Balaam respond? He thought the donkey was being evil, the donkey was being stubborn

so he struck the donkey and beat the donkey.

Then the angel of the Lord stood in a narrow path of the vineyard, so the donkey must have gone into a vineyard, the angel went and stood over there, now it was a little bit more tight and now there was a wall on one side and a wall on the other and the donkey saw the angel of the Lord and pressed her to the wall so Balaam's foot was pressed and so Balaam struck her again. Then the angel of the Lord went further and stood in a narrow place where there was no way to turn right or to the left and when the donkey saw that, that he had nowhere to go, he just sat down. So Balaam was angry and struck the donkey again with a stick and before the Lord opened the eyes of the donkey, sorry, he opened the eyes of Balaam, he opens the mouth of the donkey and says to Balaam, what have I done to you that you have struck me three times? Then Balaam said to the donkey, because you have made a mockery of me, if there had been a sword in my hand, I would have killed you by now.

The donkey, imagine a donkey speaking, said, am I not your donkey on which you have ridden all your life to this day? Have I ever been accustomed to do so to you? And he said no. And then it goes on, that passage goes on. I learned some things from the donkey too.

You know that the donkey had a master, but the donkey saw the Lord. The donkey had eyes to see the Lord. And I wondered if I could be so dull, if I could be so blind as a human being, apparently even a prophet, that a donkey can see what I cannot see.

And I asked myself, Lord, is it possible that I'm going down this road and the donkey, the person who I think is only a beast of burden, is of no good except to just to carry me around, can see some spiritual reality that I cannot see. And that is extremely true for us who live in a very intellectual world. We are so enlightened in our mind that at the bottom, at the end of the line is the donkey.

You got all the smart people, then you got all the dumb people, then you got the smart animals like the snake and the eagle maybe, and then at the end of that line is the donkey. How dumb is that donkey, but yet the donkey can see a spiritual reality that I cannot see. It says about the ant, the ant knows that he must work hard.

I don't know if I know I must work hard. And so there are so many things, the birds of the air know that they don't need to be anxious because they have a father in heaven. Meanwhile we, more enlightened, more superior animals or human beings, we struggle with that.

Who's smart and who's dumb, you tell me. Is it better to know that I have a father in heaven? Well maybe then it's better to be a sparrow because he's figured that one out. It's better to be a donkey that sees the Lord than to be the Balaam riding on top of it.

Think about your neighbours who are un-Christian. Think about your co-workers. Think about your boss who's un-Christian.

Think about city officials maybe if you're dealing with them. You may think of them as donkeys, intellectually, spiritually, different ways. You know that they may be able to see the Lord better than I do? Is it possible that they are able to see the Lord that I can't see it? And here's how I also learned from the donkey.

That even when you struck the donkey, the donkey was not going to go and question the angel of the Lord. You can beat me, you can criticize me, you can ridicule me, you can shout at me, you can do

whatever you want in this world, you can take away my bonus, you can do many things, but I see the angel of the Lord standing there. I'm not going to go that way.

When the world comes at me and tells me to compromise a little bit, Balaam didn't see it but the donkey saw the angel of the Lord and said, I'm not going, you can do whatever you want to me. You can beat me up, you can hit me, you can do whatever you want, I'm not moving. Do I see a holy God before me when I'm making all my decisions? Or am I more affected by somebody beating me? If my boss shouts at me, if the culture is telling me it's okay, do I live, do I stand before a holy God and I say, God, I don't care what they do to me, I'm going to turn this way, I'm going to turn that way.

I'm going to use my time, I'm going to use my money, I'm going to raise my children in front of a holy God. Who beats me? I'm going to be like that donkey who sees the angel of the Lord. Dear family of God, can you be like that donkey because the world is going to hit you, the world is going to beat you up.

Religious people, like Balaam was, religious people will beat you up. We have to have our eyes opened to the angel of the Lord standing there, a holy God who has his sword drawn and say, Lord, I will not go that way. Even if the whole world goes that way, I have to go a different way.

I have to watch what my children watch. I have to be careful what I allow my children to do, even at school. I have to be careful because I see before me a holy God.

That's something the donkey saw that the prophet didn't see. You don't have to be that smart to see a holy God. Lord, make me a little bit more like this donkey.

What happens when I'm squeezed, when I'm beat up? Can I tell God, Lord, there's a holy God in front of me? Another thing I noticed about this donkey, you know what happened when the donkey, when the Lord opened up his mouth to speak, her mouth, I'm sorry, it's called a her by the way. The donkey is called a her. Verse 27, for example, when the donkey saw the angel of the Lord, she laid down.

And then it says in verse 28, the Lord opened up the mouth of the donkey. Now listen what this has happened to her, the donkey. The donkey, she has been beat up three times, not once, not twice, not three times.

And God says, the angel of the Lord tells Balaam, if it wasn't for your donkey, you'd have died. So here is Balaam beating up this donkey and this donkey is patiently taking it without the words to say it, didn't throw him off. The donkey could have done a few different things.

Balaam, the donkey didn't. And you see what the donkey says. When the Lord opened up the donkey's mouth, she said, what have I done to you that you have struck me three times? No, you idiot, don't you know how many times you've done this to me? Do you have any idea what is standing in front of me? There's no anger in there.

What have I done to you? In verse 28 and then in verse 30, see the donkey's testimony. Am I not your donkey on which you have ridden all your life to this day? Have I ever done this to you? Have I ever pushed your foot and where you got hurt? Did I ever sit down and not carry you? What an incredible testimony for a donkey to have. Even as this person was beating him and to have a testimony in our lives, throughout our lives, that if words come out of our mouth, it is not words of anger.

It is words of truth. You know, when they slapped Jesus, Jesus also said, look, why are you slapping me? It's okay to say it, but otherwise he kept his mouth shut. I was reminded of the similarity between the donkey and Jesus.

You know, it says that Jesus, when he was slapped and when he was reviled, he committed no sin. He didn't open up his mouth, except one time the Lord said, when they slapped you, the father said, you can ask them why you slapped them. And then he shut up again until he met Pilate.

And I was thinking about myself, Lord, when my bosses, like my masters over me, strike me, how do I respond? If I have purified my heart that I keep quiet and I keep quiet and I keep quiet, that if the Lord gives me permission to send an email, if the Lord does give me permission to send, to respond to my boss, I speak without anger. I speak the truth and I say, how have I treated you, oh boss of mine? When you asked me to do something, I did it. When you asked me to do this, when you asked me to do that, how have I treated you? You know how I have treated you with my other co-workers who are also under you? When they spoke evil about you, you know what I did? I always treated you with respect.

I always spoke about you with respect. That's the testimony of the donkey that I can't say I have. This donkey, what an incredible donkey this donkey was.

She spoke with such respect. When God opens up my mouth to speak, what comes out of it? I was thinking about two things. I have a holy God in front of me.

Can that come out of your mouth? You don't have to feel sorry for me. I want myself and I want our church to see that the sin of feeling sorry for themselves is such an ugly, filthy sin. When I come and I somehow say something to some brother or sister and I want you to feel sorry for me, it is a filthy sin because it is saying I don't have a father.

That's what it is saying. Why should I get you to feel sorry for me when I have a father? I have to have this deep inside of my heart, family of God, we are building a certain culture in this church and the culture that I want to have and the culture that we should have in NCCF is that nobody, no visitor will come and find that anybody is trying to make them feel sorry for the other person. That every member of this church has nothing that they say you need to feel sorry for me about.

It doesn't matter what happens to me in my life, I will not get you to feel sorry for me. I want to set that as a goal for all of us. Can we have that as a goal? Nobody will ever need to feel sorry for me because I have a father.

Because I have a father. You can take away my children, you can take away my family, don't feel sorry for me because if my children and my family left it was because the father allowed it. But you don't need to feel sorry for me.

Women of Jerusalem don't weep for me. I have a holy God I'm working with, I have a holy father that I'm working with. And the other thing that I learned from this donkey is the words that come out of my mouth are so pure, have become purer and purer.

And I want to say this even from the children, children I hope you can listen to me on this. I hope from a young age that you will learn to control your tongue. It's not too early for you to start to learn to control your tongue.

And I will tell you this, the children are learning what the parents are teaching them or what the parents are allowing them to pick up at school or friends. And we have to be really careful what comes out of our mouth. This is what I wrote.

Children who cannot control their tongues are worse than children who can't control their bladders. You know what a bladder is? A bladder is what allows you to go to control it to go to the bathroom. For children, if I see a 15 year old who cannot control their bladder, I'd rather have that than a 15 year old who cannot control his or her tongue.

Parents can we have that? Can we have that as a goal that we will have our children so trained from the potty that comes out of their mouth more than their bladder. I want to ask us to take that diligently. I want to show you children even a verse, James chapter 1 verse 26.

If anyone thinks you're doing a lot of great things, children, this is what James 1 verse 26 says. If you think you're doing a lot of good things, you know you're being obedient to your parents, you're being nice to your brothers and sisters, you're doing all those nice things, but you do not control your tongue. Your religion, your worth before God is nothing.

There's so much riding on your tongue and I'll tell you this, our children are failing because we as adults have failed them. We are not careful what comes out of our mouth when we are in front of our children. We make fun of other people so our children learn that they can make fun of other people.

Our children learn that we can say whatever we want, whatever we think comes out of our mouth so our children think that they can learn, say whatever comes out of their mouth. Our children need to learn to think about the other person before you say something. So children, listen to me.

When you say, I don't want to be friends with you, that's a very evil thing to do. That's a very evil thing to do. When you tell any child, I don't want to be your friend, when you say to another child of yours, I don't like you, that's a very evil thing to do.

Jesus is, God is saying our religion is worthless. Now we as adults, now we as parents, we need to train our children to be really diligent with their mouths. We want our children to grow up where our mouths, good things come out of their mouth and that we are good and consistent, more than anything else, consistent to keep correcting our children when they don't speak properly.

I'm afraid that I will raise children who are well behaved, who do well in studies but don't have control over their tongues. This verse hit me so deeply and I believe that the extent to which I'm able to use my mouth as a witness for God is a direct correlation to how restrained my voice, my mouth is in private settings. So children, please, please be careful.

Please be careful from a young age, Sunday school teachers, I hope we can keep reinforcing them that there is a snake that lives within your tongue. There are snakes that live within your tongue and anytime you say a foolish word, I just saw a snake come out and we're all guilty of it but we need to say, Lord I want to deal with the snakes and the hell, that's James, you know James 3 says there's a hell that's in my tongue. We spoke in the beginning of the year about how we really wanted to make sure our marriages were in order.

One of the big areas where marriages go sideways is because our tongues are not properly restrained and it is a horrible insult to God if in this church there ever happens a divorce but if there happens to be a

divorce, it will be most probably because you didn't control your tongue and if our children go sideways and if our children don't go right, maybe the reason is because we have not been faithful to teach our children to control their tongues. We must take it very seriously. Let me repeat what I said, if children, a 15 year old who wets his pants is better than a 15 year old who cannot control their tongue.

Forget 35 year old, forget a 43 year old like myself. I'm a horrible insult to God if I am still wetting my mouth and all filth is coming out. Dear family of God, we are so worried if our children are five years old and are not potty trained but yet we allow our children to speak all kinds of nonsense.

Yet you have this donkey who God opened up his mouth and he spoke words of respect. He didn't have all kinds of negative things. Husbands and wives, let us be careful in the words that we speak.

Children, be very careful. If you are careful now, it will become a lot easier when you go in many unjust situations. Let us be careful that our words are respectful towards everybody who is older than us.

That we are very diligent to not say mean things. Even if the other person says a mean thing. And I know in children, you have so many children who you go to school with and the tendency is to pick up the things that you are learning from your friends.

And you are going to have to fight it. So let's keep our mouths under control. Let us remember that we live before a holy God.

That God is before us. And that when God opens our mouth to speak, if he does, that we will speak words of grace. Let me end with what I started with.

You don't need to be smart to do this. You can be at the end of the line. You can be worse than the stupidest of humans.

You can be among the stupidest of all animals, the donkey. But the donkey had eyes and a mouth that we can learn from. Help us to see a holy God and may the words that come out of our mouth be holy.

May God help us.

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