

In Rebellion Before the Lord

by Steve Gallagher

This sermon delves into the story of Korah's rebellion against God's designated authority, highlighting the consequences of pride, defiance, and rebellion. It emphasizes the importance of humility, trust in leadership, and the need to heed warnings from God to avoid judgment. The message warns against falling into the trap of being critical, prideful, and untrustworthy, urging listeners to seek repentance and trust in God's guidance.

Scripture: Proverbs 17:11, Proverbs 17:19, Proverbs 17:20, Proverbs 17:21, Proverbs 17:25

Topics: "Pride and Rebellion", "Humility and Trust in Leadership"

Description

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Transcript

Good morning, everyone. You know, we speak once a month, each of us. And so you're always just kind of got your antenna up, just kind of trying to listen for the voice of the Lord.

What would he have me speak on the next time? And this time, it actually kind of happened late. I think it was maybe Wednesday or Thursday even. I don't know.

But the thought came to me pretty strongly. The children of Israel in the wilderness before the Lord, that phrase, before the Lord. And that took me to numbers 16, which is what I'm going to share on this morning out of.

And it's really a story of man's response to God's designated authority. That's what it's really about. That is the underlying storyline and lesson for us today.

But just to bring it into context so we can kind of get it in our minds where this happened at in their time in the wilderness, let me just kind of go over the history of it. Of course, it began. Moses ran for his life and spent 40 years in the wilderness.

And towards the end of that time, the Lord appeared to him at the burning bush and spoke to him and called him and ordained him and appointed him to accomplish a mission. And Moses went back to Egypt

and confronted the Pharaoh. And of course, there were 10 different times that Pharaoh refused to let the people of God go.

And God just rained down his judgment on Egypt until he relented and let the Hebrews leave. And of course, they went through the Red Sea and all of that. And you guys watched the movie last night.

And then there were 10 provocations by the people of Israel. 10 different times they murmured against God's designated authority. And 10 different times they rebelled against the Lord himself.

And it reached its peak, I suppose you could say, when Moses sent the 12 spies, one from every tribe representing the 12 tribes, sent these 12 spies into the land to get a sense of what was there before the nation moved in and took it over, the promised land. And you all know 10 of the spies came back with an evil report. And the people believed the evil report.

They did not believe the Lord. And that all comes to a head in Numbers 14, just trying to get you in your mind where we're at. So this is pretty close on the heels of that experience.

In fact, what's it say here? Really, Moses is pleading with God on behalf of the people. And the Lord pardoned them, 14 verse 20. And he said, but every man above 20 will die in the wilderness except for Joshua and Caleb, because they believed me.

Something like that. So this is coming right on the heels of that. And then not long after this is when the last thing that happened.

See, that's in the end of chapter 19. And then there's a 40-year stretch break between 19 and 20, if I remember right. So this is at the end of that first period of about 18 months.

And then we come to this story in chapter 16. And I'm going to read 35 verses. Wow.

Thank you, Pastor Steve, for being so dedicated. And that doesn't even really encompass the whole story. It's actually a part two to this story afterwards.

I'll probably just mention it in passing somewhere. Let me just go through this. I'll make a couple of comments as I go.

Now Korah, the son of Ishar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi. Let me just stop to say that Korah was a relative of Moses. May have been his cousin.

That's what some say. But he was a Levite. And then with Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab, and On, the son of Peleth, sons of Reuben.

So these guys were Reubenites. Korah is a Levite. And these guys are Reubenites.

And they took action. That's the way the word action is supplied. The King James and some of the others say men took men.

But whatever, it's supplied. And they rose up before Moses. Now that phrase is used throughout scripture.

And it always, no, not always, but it almost always refers to men rising up against God's authority. Or against a godly man. That might be a better way of saying it.

Genesis 4, Cain rose up against Abel, his brother, and killed him. Second Samuel 22, David thanked the Lord for subduing those who had risen up against him. Second Chronicles 13, Jeroboam rose up and rebelled against Solomon.

Acts 5, the high priest rose up against the disciples. Acts 6, some of the Jews rose up against Stephen. Acts 16, the crowd rose up together against Paul and Silas.

And Acts 18, the Jews with one accord rose up against Paul. It's just in the nature of people to rise up against authority and to rise up against godly men. All right, so let's get back on track here.

And they rose up before Moses, together with them some of the sons of Israel, 250 leaders of the congregation, chosen in the assembly, men of renown. They assembled together against Moses and Aaron and said to them, you have gone far enough for all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the Lord is in their midst. So why do you exalt yourselves above the assembly of the Lord? When Moses heard this, he fell on his face.

And I'll just mention in passing that three different times in this chapter, Moses falls on his face before the Lord. And that really says something about this man and the spirit he was in. I don't know how long he was on his face, but when he got up, he had a word from the Lord.

And he spoke to Korah and all his company saying, tomorrow morning, the Lord will show who is his and who is holy. And will bring him near to himself, even the one whom he will choose, he will bring near to himself. And I'll just keep going.

Do this, take censers for yourselves, Korah, and all your company. That was supposed to be just the priests, but this is what the Levites were after. These ones that were with Korah, they were after the priesthood.

That's what this was really all about, is they were usurping the authority over them and they wanted it for themselves. Anyway, and put fire in them and lay incense upon them in the presence of the Lord tomorrow. That word presence is panim in the Hebrew and it is sometimes used before, before the Lord or in the presence of the Lord or even in the face of the Lord.

It's an act of defiance, really, most of the time. They're doing something right before the Lord, right in his face. And the man whom the Lord chooses shall be the one who is holy.

You have gone far enough, you sons of Levi. Then Moses said to Korah, hear now you sons of Levi, is it not enough for you that the God of Israel has separated you from the rest of the congregation of Israel to bring you near to himself, to do the servants of the tabernacle of the Lord and to stand before the congregation to minister to them? In other words, he has honored you before this entire 1 million people. You have been honored to serve the Lord in the tabernacle, but that's not enough.

You want more. And that he has brought you near Korah and all your brothers, sons of Levi with you. And are you seeking for the priesthood also? Therefore you and all your company are gathered together against the Lord.

But as for Aaron, who is he that you grumble against him? Then Moses sent a summons to Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab. But they said, we will not come up. You just feel the defiance in them.

Is it not enough that you have brought us up out of a land flowing with milk and honey? What? You talk about delusion. In their minds, they have so twisted everything that they left a prison house, a concentration camp. But now they're remembering it as being a place of where milk and honey are flowing.

Nor have you given us an inheritance of fields and vineyards. Would you put out the eyes of these men? In other words, are you gonna blind everyone to your true intentions, Moses? We will not come up. Then Moses became very angry and said to the Lord, do not regard their offering.

I have not taken a single donkey from them, nor have I done harm to any of them. Moses said to Korah, you and all your company be present before the Lord tomorrow. There it is again, before the Lord.

And he gives them a day. Back in the day when I used to run the live-in program, I would try to do that. I would always try to give, when a guy in his rebellion got to the point where he just felt like there wasn't anything else to say to him, I would often give them a day, hoping and pleading with God that they would repent and come to their senses.

And that's what Moses, I'm sure that's what was in his heart here. All right, where was I? 16? Yeah, both you and they, along with Aaron. Each of you take this fire pan and put incense in it.

And each of you bring his censer before the Lord. 250 fire pans. Also, wait a minute, what did I say here? Sorry.

Also you and Aaron shall each bring his fire pan. So they each took his own censer and put fire on it, laid incense on it. And they stood at the doorway of the tent of meeting with Moses and Aaron.

I'm telling you, you talk about self-deceived. Standing in the tent of meeting where the glory of God often would show up and speak to Moses face to face. And they are there just in all their haughtiness and arrogance right there before the Lord.

Thus Korah assembled all the congregation against them. Man, Korah must have been a man of great influence. He got all the people behind him at the doorway of the tent of meeting.

And the glory of the Lord appeared to all the congregation. Then the Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron saying, separate yourselves from among this congregation that I may consume them instantly. But they fell on their faces and said, oh God, God of the spirits of all flesh, when one man sins, will you be angry with the entire congregation? Then the Lord spoke to Moses saying, speak to the congregation saying, get back from around the dwellings of Korah, Dathan and Abiram.

Then Moses arose and went to Dathan and Abiram with the elders of Israel, follow him. And he spoke to the congregation saying, depart now from the tents of these wicked men and touch nothing that belongs to them or you will be swept away in all their sin. So they got back from around the dwellings of Korah, Dathan and Abiram.

You know, their hearts are still with these wicked men. That's the truth of it. Their hearts are still with them, but they don't wanna face their judgment.

And they have seen enough by this point to know, I ain't taking any chances. And Dathan and Abiram came out and stood at the doorway of their tents along with their wives and their sons and their little ones.

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

That's what the accusation has been all along. You saw it in the movie last night, right? You came up with all this, Moses. How do we know that you really hear from the Lord? You go up on the mountain, you come back and you tell us supposedly what he said.

That is what the accusation has been all along is that Moses has contrived all of this. He's just a power hungry demagogue. That's what they want to believe about him.

So Moses is responding to that accusation. If these men die the death of all men, or if they suffer the fate of all men, then the Lord has not sent me. But if the Lord brings about an entirely new thing and the ground opens its mouth and swallows them up with all that is theirs and they descend alive into Sheol, then you will understand that these men have spurned the Lord.

As he finished speaking all these words, the ground that was under them split open. Can you imagine? Man, and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up and their households and all the men who belong to Korah with their possessions. So they and all that belong to them went down alive to Sheol and the earth closed over them and they perished from the midst of the assembly.

All Israel who were around them fled at their outcry for they said, the earth may swallow us up. Fire also came forth from the Lord and consumed the 250 men who were offering the incense. That's what you call judgment.

And I just want to bring out a few things that stood out to me about this story and rebellion. I'll start with this. Rebels are usually natural born leaders.

You look at verse two and it says three things about these men. They were leaders, they were chosen by the assembly and they were men of renown. Now that phrase, they're men of renown is interesting because that word is what was used to describe the wicked men during Noah's day.

The famous men, the men known far and wide. They were wicked men before the Lord. And that word is also used to describe what the people in the Tower of Babel, Nimrod and his followers, that was what they wanted.

They wanted to be known as men of renown, men of reputation. And apparently, these men were chosen by the congregation to be the leaders, to be their leaders. 250 of them chosen.

But what comes across to me, especially considering that word, I can't remember what the Hebrew word is for renown, but especially considering that, it seems that their choice is all built around human perspectives, personality, charisma, maybe their size like Saul. Saul was like seven feet tall and he was the one that the people wanted to be their king. Just a superficial, shallow-minded perspective on what is greatness.

But the Lord looks at the heart, doesn't he? He sees something completely different than what man sees. And when we choose for ourselves leaders that kind of go along with the world's mindset of what a leader should be, strong and whatever, whatever it is that is so attractive to people, that's when we get in trouble. These were men of renown, men of acclaim, men of distinction, men of influence.

And you know, this is the sad thing about it, is that Korah probably was a man of tremendous ability. He probably was. I mean, that's probably, these 250, I don't know how they distinguished themselves to the whole congregation, but there was something about these men that real leadership abilities, you know? Just the kind of men that you wanna follow into battle or whatever.

Those kind of guys. And you think of what Korah could have been if he would have done things God's way. He could have easily been another Joshua, but instead, because he was unbroken and full of himself, instead of becoming a Joshua who could one day maybe even lead the nation, maybe he was far more gifted than Joshua as a leader, probably was.

But just like Nate said, you know, he had an unbroken nature. He was, his loyalty was to himself. And that's what the Lord can look at in a man's heart and see.

Sometimes we don't even know ourselves. What Korah could have been, that's the sad thing, you know? But what these men did not understand is the kingdom of God is not the kingdom of this world. The world looks at outward things, but God looks at the heart.

Jesus said, if you wanna be exalted, then humble yourself. He said, I did not come to be served, but to serve. And that is the way the kingdom of God has been established.

It's not the men of great ability. It's not the great preachers of the day or the great authors of the day who God uses. It is the men who have humbled themselves before him, who are meek before him, who walk with him humbly and have a heart after God.

Those are the men and women that God uses. And a lot of times, the people who are the most well-known are the least used. I mean, they may have a big ministry kingdom, but in the eyes of heaven and hell, there's very little respect for them because they just don't have any real influence, spiritually speaking.

Number two, rebels are usually prideful and full of themselves, full of self. When you look at verse 30, you see it. NAS says, these men have spurned the Lord.

And I looked that up in different translations just to give you a more well-rounded sense about the Hebrew word there. These men have provoked the Lord, the King James says. These men have rejected the Lord, the new King James says.

The New Living Translations, these men have shown contempt for the Lord. The ESV despised the Lord. The contemporary English says, these men have turned their backs on the Lord.

You know, however you frame it, it all amounts to the same thing. There is a sense of defiance before the Lord in his presence to his face. You know, these guys are totally focused on Moses.

They're totally focused on him, but they are not seeing the God behind him. There are things that they don't see, but they think in their folly and their foolishness, they think they've got it all figured out. But there's a couple of things that aren't known to them.

They weren't there in the wilderness when God appeared to Moses. I mean, what a thing. You talk about getting a call of God on your life.

And God spoke to Moses and appointed him to do this mission that they take so lightly and treat with disdain. And you know, the funny thing is Moses argued with God. He didn't want anything to do with this.

He was the last person that wanted to be the leader. Maybe that's why God chose him. And they didn't see the heart of Moses.

Well, let me put it this way. They could see things he did, but they were just so out of it spiritually. They had no comprehension for what was going on inside that man's heart.

And as I said, three different times, just in this chapter, he fell on his face. It was only the intercession of Moses that had saved this people time and time again from God's overwhelming wrath. It was only Moses.

They should have been thanking this man instead of rebelling against him. You know, the reality is you can't see beyond your own level. That is the reality.

You can't, I mean, if you have a sincere heart, you can get a sense. Like there was a time when my earlier years of ministry, when I came in contact with some real men of God and I knew, even though I was still pretty much a mess, I knew these men have something I don't have. And I sat at their feet for years and I just absorbed and learned everything I could learn from them.

Kathy was just listening to John MacArthur the other day and he said something to the same effect that, how do you say it, that when he was a young man, there was a man of God and he sat at his feet and got everything he could possibly get from that man. And you see it later in his teachings and his sermons and stuff. You know, so it really depends on your heart because even though you can't see beyond where you are at spiritually, you can't see beyond that, but you can get a sense if you're sincere.

Pope of Cemetery said this, Korah was focused on the honors and privileges of being the leader. Being a self-seeking, self-aggrandizing man, he could see no higher feeling in others. In other words, he just assumed that Moses was in the same spirit he was in.

He wanted to be at the top of the tree himself and seeing Moses and Aaron there, he convinced himself that they got there by audacity and determination. What he was oblivious to was the price that Moses had to pay to lead the people in the right spirit. He was completely oblivious to the burdens he bore, the constant care he had over the people, how difficult it was to lead a multitude of rebels.

The interesting thing is that Moses would have gladly taken Korah's place or even the lowest place in the camp if God had not put him where he was. But of all of this inner life of Moses, Korah knew and cared nothing. He didn't care.

He wasn't interested. He saw things the way he wanted to see them. You know, one of the problems with being in leadership is that you have this constant tension.

You know, as a Christian, you want to be a humble person and you want to interact with others humbly and certainly with the Lord. You want to humble yourself and be that way. But the reality is when you're around prideful people, especially rebels, the more you humble yourself, the more they rise up against you.

That is just a dynamic that's in place. And I know for myself, you know, I don't know where I'm at in all this, but I know for myself when I get out of here and I go and travel elsewhere, I am a completely different person. You guys see me as maybe cold and aloof or whatever.

I don't know what you see, but I can tell you I'm a different person away from here because I don't have to worry about it. I don't have to carry the burden of keeping a rebellion from breaking out. I don't have to worry about that when I go out and preach at some church or something.

It's not my concern. I'm just there to minister and be a servant. And I can be that.

I can just be just a Christian. And it doesn't even matter to me if I speak or whatever. I just do what the people tell me to do.

But it's hard, you know, to keep that balance between humility and strength. It's not an easy path to walk. I can tell you that, especially when you live in community and everyone can see you constantly.

It's not the same as a pastor, you know. They face enough as it is for sure, but they don't have to live with their congregation. All right, number three.

Rebels are usually critical of those who are over them. Korah built his whole case on a half truth, and that is so often the case. And in this situation, it was true that God had said the congregation was sanctified before him.

He had set them apart. That's what the word means. They had been set apart from the other nations and so on unto himself.

And in that sense, it was true that they were sanctified. But to say, to compare them, this bunch of rebels and all the provocations that they had, you know, done, the murmuring, the rebelling against God, to compare Moses with them was absolutely ridiculous. It was a half truth.

But this is so typical of someone with a critical spirit over leadership. They lock in on some perceived fault, and that is what they focus on. And they just play it over and over and over and over again in their minds.

And of course, there's always some rebel spirit more than happy to feed into that line of thinking and just keep re-affirming it or whatever in their minds. The reason why rebels are vulnerable to the enemy's voice in that way is because they're unbroken. You know, when you have been broken by the Lord, you do not see the faults of other people.

You just don't. You are so all aware of your own faults and failures and sin. You can't see past that.

It's just the truth. You can't. Because you live in the awareness of the fact you are the man.

The problem is that people with a critical spirit, people who are in rebellion to authority, they see everything through a skewed lens of self and pride. And they see their leader that way. And they only have a certain part of the picture.

But in their minds, they got all the facts and they're all laid out. And they know everything about that person. And that person is failing in this way and that way and so on.

You know, what's interesting, though, is when rebels look at their own faults, it's all about minimizing and discounting and elaborate explanations as to why they do the things they do or say the things they say or think the way they think or whatever. When they judge themselves, they are very understanding, just full of benevolence when they judge themselves. And they give themselves every benefit of the doubt.

But when they look at their leader, they immediately go to the worst case scenario in their minds. That man is guilty until he's proven innocent. You know, I've been here for 30 years, almost, Kathy and I. And I've been the subject of a lot of criticism in my day.

Some of it warranted. Most of it has usually been just absolutely crazy. You know, I hear someone's been criticizing me.

Honestly, the first thing I do is I start lamenting to God about what faults are in me that people are seeing now. You know, God, please change me. Please set me free of this garbage that apparently keeps showing up.

Help me, Lord, to be more humble, more full of your love. Help me, Lord, to know how to run this place in a more godly fashion. Help me to be more consecrated, whatever it is, you know.

I'm just immediately go to myself and start examining my heart. And there's plenty there. And I can promise you this, no one can be as hard on me as I am on myself.

And I know that's true of Pastor Ed and these others as well. But then I find out what the criticism is. It's just sometimes it is absolutely mind-boggling, just crazy stuff, bizarre stuff.

And it really is a relief when I hear it because it's just so crazy. It's like, you really think that, right? Is that really the truth? You're critical of me because I parked my car a little bit outside the line or whatever, you know. I mean, I can't think of any right now.

It's been a while, but man, it is just amazing. But you know, for a rebel, in his criticism, in his critical thinking, there's only two people in the picture. It's himself looking at that person, that leader.

And that's all he's thinking of. And that's how Korah was, and Dathan, and Abiram, and Ahn. Apparently Ahn repented or did something because he wasn't named as one of those who got judged.

But maybe he repented. But anyway, this is where this phrase, that the Lord impressed on my heart. I'm telling you, this is the way it came to me one day.

It just came to me like this. It's usually just, you know, when the Lord impresses something in your heart, it's usually like just a kind of a thought. It's not even words exactly, you know.

But it was these people were doing all that they were doing, and they were doing it before the Lord. In their minds, the Lord isn't even in the picture. They are so oblivious to God's presence.

All they see is what they are fixated on, which is the faults of this leader. And they're not understanding that their thinking and everything going on in their minds and hearts is being played out on a big screen in heaven, being watched by some very holy beings. Let me read something right, Rex Andrews said about this.

And he's referring to what Jesus spoke about out of Matthew 7. You know, judge not, lest you be judged. For by the same measure you judge, so you will be judged, and so on. He said, all day long you are sitting as judge in the court of your unseen heart.

Unseen, that is, to men. Judging others ceaselessly all day. Day by day, and sometimes by night, you are judging, judging, measuring everyone and everything.

You don't always need full and sufficient evidence because you love yourself. And in that self-love, you think that you know. You judge by whims and feelings and fancies, by what you like and by what you do not like.

You are the center. Your judgment is according to what people do or do not do in your favor. And for your glory and for your satisfaction.

You judge by appearance. And so they judged Jesus and drove him to death, the guiltless one. Number four, rebels are usually warned before God judges.

And, you know, if you go back into the previous chapter in verse 30, well, let me just read it. But the person who does anything defiantly, in other words, in the face of someone, whether he is a native or an alien, that one is blaspheming the Lord. And that person shall be cut off from among his people because he has despised the word of the Lord and has broken his commandment, et cetera.

They had just been warned about this. But you know what? Went right over their heads. This was a warning from the Lord.

But because it came forth from Moses, went right over their heads, never really registered as Nate was saying. What did you say? You said something like that about Judas, right? Judas heard these things, same thing, went right over his head. It went right over their head because in their unbelief, God was very tiny.

That's what unbelief does, it makes you huge and God tiny. And so God's warnings, God's commandments, they all also become very small and your feelings become all encompassing. Your thoughts become all encompassing.

When you start hearing warnings, the wise thing is to find a spot and get on your face before the Lord and start repenting. Even if you don't really understand what's what, it's best to just go get off by yourself and get before the Lord and repent. That's the wisest thing to do.

Now, last Sunday, I came in here. You know, I don't know how much you guys realize that some of this stuff. But I'm pretty oblivious to what goes on here in the live-in program amongst you guys and all that stuff.

I mean, sometimes I get a little tidbit here and there in our morning staff prayer times and stuff. But generally speaking, I don't know what's going on. I really don't.

I mean, I sometimes will pray for guys that are causing problems or struggling, but I don't know your name. So, you know, it doesn't mean anything to me. I mean, I just don't know what's going on.

And I came in last Sunday, and I was really just wanting to be in the presence of the Lord. I just wanted to enjoy the service, enjoy His presence. I was adamant, in my heart anyway, that I was not going to get up and speak.

I just, yeah, I just wanted to be with the Lord and hear Pastor Ed's message and stuff. And I sat down and, you know, I was praying for a while. And then I opened my Bible and I just was reading and I opened up to 2 Corinthians 10.

You remember that? And man, it just came over me. I don't know how to explain what it's like, but when God comes over you in this place, up here especially, there is no sitting down and just staying seated. I don't think I want to share that, Lord.

I think I would rather just, yeah, just take it easy today. I think I'll take this morning off, if you don't mind. No, it ain't like that.

And the more you try to resist, the more you start shaking and trembling inside. You just get forced up here. So I was completely oblivious to what was going on here.

Honestly, I was. I just read that passage in 2 Corinthians 10 and it went into me like a rocket, you know? And I just, all I could see, the interesting thing, I took a look at it this morning. It uses that same phrase, rising up.

Speculations that are rising up against God. Wow. And Pastor Ed told me on Wednesday, he said, I know you didn't know what was going on, but I had three guys that were sitting at work, sitting together every day before they went to work, and just ripping on this place, criticizing whatever.

And I don't know who you guys are. And I heard that you guys repented. I hope it's true.

I really do. I hope it's true for your sake. I hope it's true.

But he said, you couldn't have been more exactly right on what you shared, you know? And if you guys remember, I don't know how much I remember, actually, because it was like a whirlwind, you know? I wasn't thinking anything. I wasn't sitting there trying to come up with something. I just got up here and it just flowed through me.

But it was a warning about something. About rising up inside against leadership and against what God is doing and, you know, allowing that prideful thinking. And apparently it didn't do the trick because the Lord put this message on my heart this morning to once again come back in here and bring another warning.

So anyway, these rebels there with Moses were warned and it went right over their head and they just plunged ahead like fools always do. Number five, rebels are usually judged by giving them over. You know, now back in that day, the Lord, this was a theocracy.

The Lord was, this was his nation. He was over it. It was a God-ordained government and these people were going to face physical judgment.

But in the New Testament times, that has largely changed as we all know, you know? And now the Lord handles things differently. But I did find a couple of things in the Old Testament that were interesting to me. Solomon said, evil people are eager for rebellion but they will be severely punished.

And this was an interesting verse in Proverbs 17, a rebellious man seeks only evil so a cruel messenger will be sent against him. And the Septuagint says, the Lord will send a pitiless angel against him. A pitiless angel, no pity.

And I thought about that a little bit, you know? And I remembered, yeah, you know, that's what the Lord did with Saul. He sent an angel to torment him, right? And that's what happened with Ahab. Remember, Micaiah told him that he saw all this stuff going on in the throne room of God and God sent a lying spirit.

Now I'm gonna tell you, I'm telling myself here. Back when I first came to the Lord, came back to the Lord, I should say, in 1982. And the Lord called me into ministry and Kathy and I moved back from Los Angeles and, you know, I was a cop down there and we moved back to Sacramento and I entered Bible school, she worked.

And while I was in Bible school, you know, the truth is that I had years of deep rebellion. I mean, I had been a rebel all my life. I was the kid that was always in trouble and it just got worse and worse and worse and, you know, that followed me through for many years.

So there was a lot of rebellion in me that needed to be dealt with. But when I got in Bible school, I went through a semester and I remember this one teacher, Ms. Kimmel. Ms. Kimmel was probably, you know, I was, what, 29 or 30 then or something, but Ms. Kimmel was probably about my age or something, I don't know.

I just remember she was kind of a droner when she spoke and, you know, I was always, I just always had, how do I say it? Academics were always easy for me. I just, you know, for some people it's just extra hard and for some people it's a little easier. I was one of those people.

I could take tests. I just had a sense about, yeah, I could just get by. And getting A's was never a lot of trouble for me.

So in my arrogance, I thought I was really pretty godly. Yeah. And I would sit in class, in Ms. Kimmel's class, and I would just shred her in my mind.

She's an old fuddy dud. She don't know nothing, you know. And man, get someone in here that knows what they're doing.

And, you know, I just, man, over and over I would say things to others, especially this one other guy who's in the same spirit as me. We just kind of, that's what always happens. Two people in the same spirit always find each other.

And anyway, the end of that semester, I mean within a week of that semester, I was totally backslidden. This is what happened. I didn't know, and it took years before I put the two together, that I was attacking the Lord's servant.

I was attacking, I was pitting myself against God. I was being a mouthpiece of Satan, the accuser, against this woman, this godly woman. And little did I realize what I was, the judgment I was bringing on myself.

And I went for nine months of hell. It was horrible. And I despaired that I would ever find my way back to the Lord.

And even when I did come back, it was a long process of a lot of severe discipline because I foolishly attacked the Lord's anointed. And I paid a price for it. And I don't want to see you guys pay a price.

All right, I'm going to wrap up now. You know, earlier I said that usually rebels are leaders by nature. But that's not really the whole truth of the matter because those 250 men weren't the only rebels here in this story.

Actually, the people had been rebels from the beginning. And they were only too ready to believe the worst about Moses and Aaron. They were too ready to believe the worst.

And they were too ready to be led into rebellion. In fact, as I said, as the chapter goes on, after these men were exterminated by God, even after that, they had the audacity to come together and accuse Moses of causing the death of those men. Just incredible.

Sometime back, Pastor Ed mentioned in one of the senior leader meetings, we meet every Wednesday morning and pray about things and make decisions for the ministry and stuff. I don't know, it was about a month or two ago, he mentioned this. And I can't remember why or what the context was.

But he said that there was a guy who sat across his desk and made this statement. He said, I don't trust anything you or you people say to me. There is nothing you can say that I will trust.

Now, I don't know if that guy is still here or not. I hope so. I hope you have repented and humbled yourself since then.

I really do. But if you haven't, this is what I will say to you. If you don't feel like you can trust us, and I'll say this to all of you, if you don't feel like you can trust the leadership of this ministry, then I really encourage you to go find another ministry where you can trust the leadership.

Really, that's the right thing to do. If you don't trust us for whatever the reason, then this isn't the place for you. It'd be better for you to go somewhere where you trust people.

But the truth is, at least for this guy, I don't think he's ever trusted anyone other than himself. That's what I think the truth is. And it doesn't matter how we live our lives, how much we may sacrifice, how much we may humble ourselves or show the love of God or whatever, it is never going to be good enough.

And it's really not us. It's the Lord that you don't trust. Pulpit commentary.

There is a sort of person who suspects everybody. And the better someone seems, the more for that very reason they are to be suspected. Thus, Jesus is called a gluttonous man and a winebibber, one casting out demons by the prince of the demons.

Paul is called a deceiver. The defiled minds of such people pull down everyone else to their own level. There's no arguing with the man who believes that every face is nothing but a mask.

Lord, as you know, your people are under attack. At a level never seen before in the history of mankind. They're constantly confronted by a kingdom that is intrinsically evil.

The reality behind that syrupy smile is something very evil and vicious. Once we look behind the facade of Satan's presentation that seems so appealing, I pray, Lord, that you will give us eyes to see what the enemy is doing. The American church has been infiltrated and compromised.

When you become a man who will not compromise, you become fearless. So the day that we found out the devastating news, something inside of me just said, our only way to get through this is to praise Jesus every day, every day. No matter what our eyes see, our hearts are going to praise the Lord through this.

The reason why the dominant spirit in the culture is Luster Minkovitch is because that is the mindset that the devil is giving. If you want to be a Christian, an overcoming Christian, this is the spirit that we must overcome. You know, anyone can say they're living for Jesus.

When you examine your life, the question is, is that really the true passion of your life? Or are those just words that you're saying because you know it's the right thing to say as a Christian?

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/he7O2o-0GJw.mp4>

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