

A Message to the Church

(Numbers 16)

- Introduction:
1. I want to share a short message with you today.
 2. This message is shared in the spirit of what Benjamin Franklin said, more than 250 years ago.
 3. He said, "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure."

I. A Present Predicament

- A. I think everyone has been exhausted or at least exasperated with the events of 2020.
- B. We want so badly to "get back to normal," but we don't see signs of that happening any time soon.
- C. So as a people, we're already tired of the changes we've been forced to make to our daily routines, and now with a renewed spike in Covid-19 cases and the probability of even more cases following the holiday season, it's easy to be frustrated.
- D. Presently, I know of a number of churches that are making some changes due to the worsening conditions, and I have spoken with a number of elders from several congregations who have expressed concern as to how those changes will be received.
 1. While many of us have had struggles during this year due to the pandemic, our church elders/overseers/pastors have had an especially difficult year.
 2. It could have been an easy year if everyone would have adopted a "Survival of the Fittest" approach in which we continue as "normal" and the weak are simply weeded out.
 3. However, and thankfully so, this is not the approach most church leaders have taken.
 4. They have sought to be faithful to God's word and shepherd God's flock, while taking advantage of mediums unknown to other generations.
 5. They have had to make judgment calls that would not find universal agreement.
 - a. Do we proceed as normal – or make changes?
 - b. Do we continue with in-person Bible classes or do we shut down in-person Bible classes.
 - c. Do we have two Sunday services – or one?
 - d. Do we require masks – or make them optional?
 - e. Do we assemble in person – or online?
 - f. And, if changes are made, how long do we maintain those changes?
- E. All of these decisions must be made, and none of them will be met with universal agreement among the members of the congregation.

- F. I'll speak for myself – the older I get, the more I dislike change.
 - 1. I like my ruts.
 - 2. It has been said that the only people that welcome change are babies in diapers.
- G. Because of these changes, we find ourselves in disagreement with leadership decisions that have been made.
- H. This is where the “once of prevention is worth a pound of cure” principle comes in. I want to remind you of an Old Testament story.

II. A Past Problem

- A. (Numbers 16:1-40).
- B. There was an uprising against Moses and Aaron (Numbers 16:2).
 - 1. This was an uprising consisting, not of fringe, nominal people, but more than 250 leaders, men of renown (Numbers 16:2).
 - 2. Sometimes, it's easier to dismiss the complaints of the former, but not so easily the latter.
- C. These protestors accused Moses and Aaron of...
 - 1. “Taking too much upon themselves” (Numbers 16:3).
 - 2. Failing to acknowledge the worth of all of God's people (Numbers 16:3).
 - 3. And accusing them of making bad decisions (Numbers 16:13-14).
- D. God intervened to settle the dispute (Numbers 16:16-33).

III. A Perpetual Principle

- A. The problem is not in the untruthfulness of their assertion that all of God's people are holy.
- B. Their problem is that they failed to recognize the God-ordained authority that resided in Moses and Aaron.
 - 1. Rebelling against their leadership was tantamount to rebelling against the authority of God.
 - 2. And the same remains true today (Hebrews 13:7, 17).
- C. Are your church leaders making decisions with which you disagree? If so, join the club of everyone who has ever been a member of the body of Christ.

- Conclusion:
- 1. Remember, obedience and submission is not measured by how well you follow, but by how well you follow when you don't agree.
 - 2. As I scan the horizon, I think that a lot of churches are going to be making some difficult choices that some people will not like and would not have made if they were leaders.
 - 3. Our church leaders need men and women who will hold their hands up, even when we don't agree, rather than second-guessing every decision they make.
 - 4. I hope you'll find this lesson to be true, and worthy of your acceptance.