

## JUDE: The gainsaying of Core

*JUDE, The Call to Stand*

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**Bible Text:** Jude 11; Numbers 16:1-26  
**Preached On:** Sunday, February 23 , 2014

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I want to encourage you this morning to open your Bibles to two very specific places. First and foremost the book of Jude, the second to the last book of your Bible and if you are a first time guest or visitor or maybe you have not been with us in some time, we have been going through this somewhat small as far as quantity is concerned, book of the Bible, just 25 simple verses. Yet one of the things that we have discovered, is that almost every phrase and every word just begs to call our attention to something else in the word of God and today we're going to see the same thing. Today, we're going to be in the book of Jude verse 11 and we're also going to be in the book of Numbers in the Old Testament, chapter 16.

As you're turning to Jude 11 and Numbers 16, let me refresh some of our memories or for those who are first time guests, let me allow you to understand where we are. We are studying the book of Jude to understand this simple concept: that you and I as believers in Jesus Christ have been called to stand for the faith that was once delivered to the saints. In verse 3 it says that we are to contend, we are to battle. Why? Because there are certain ones who have crept in unawares and they have very stealthily slipped into our culture, our communities, yes, even our churches and our homes and as we saw a couple of weeks ago in verses 8-10 it is nothing less and nothing more than a simple ploy of the devil himself.

And today we continue in verse 11 and if I were to be honest with you, verse 11 is almost a sermon series inside of a sermon series because here in one very simple verse, it begins with, "Woe unto them." Now, please understand, if God ever says "woe" then something has got to go. He says, "Woe unto them," and there are three distinct things that are mentioned. All three of these items are rooted in very detailed stories in the Old Testament. It's almost as if the Lord is telling us that people have made these mistakes in the past, please do not repeat them in the present and in the future.

Now, what's one of the problems that humanity has with history? We never seem to learn from it and there in Jude verse 11, it states, "Woe unto them for they have gone the way of Cain." We addressed back in Genesis 4, that first what we know as public worship service that the Lord revealed his will to Cain and Abel's life and they have the opportunity to respond either appropriately or inappropriately. The Bible is warning us,

“Woe unto them who go the way of Cain.” Woe unto them who think that their resources, their time and their treasures and their talents are theirs. Why? Because God gave them and he expects us to respond back to him with them. That's the way of Cain.

The error of Balaam. We addressed it last week that the enemy, Satan himself, he cannot change the facts, he cannot alter the faith but what he has very stealthily done is he has slipped into the homes and into the marriages, into the children of our lives and he has taken the most important, distinct item. In fact, the first institution that God established was the home and the family and the error of Balaam was that this Old Testament prophet somehow, some way got the gumption to say, “If we destroy the home, then ultimately we will destroy the faith.” And we said, “Woe unto them who would allow the devil to wreck their home.

So, we've dealt with the worship of Cain, we've dealt with the home of Balaam and today we come to the last statement in verse 11 and it mentions an individual that you may or may not be familiar with. It says, “Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward,” and here's the last statement, “and perished in the gainsaying of Core.” Now, some of your Bibles may say, “The gainsaying of Korah.” This is where we're going to spend our time in the book of Numbers 16. As you're turning to the book of Numbers 16, I want to continue with a word that we've used the last couple of weeks and the word is “potential.” Now, I defined this a couple of weeks ago according to an old baseball coach of mine who said that potential means you ain't done it yet. What we're addressing in Jude verse 11 are some items that the Christian community, Christian families and Christians as individuals struggle with and if we can overcome, the potential that lays within our lives and our homes and even our church for God to move in and through and among us, if these areas will not be found in our life, the way of Cain, the error of Balaam and today in Numbers 16, the gainsaying of Core.

As you turn to Numbers 16, allow me to just kind of give you a little bit of a historical setting: the Israelites have come out of Egypt, 400 years of bondage has come to a close. The ten plagues have come and gone. The Red Sea has parted, it has swallowed up the Egyptians. On the other side, when an area of what we know as the wilderness, the Israelites are waiting for the Promised Land, they're waiting to get to the land of Canaan. They are waiting for the reward that God is going to provide for them. In the midst of the waiting, in the midst of the patience, there is a man who God has chosen to be a spokesman. His name is Moses. There is a man whom the Lord will give his words in what we know, in the form of the Ten Commandments. This man is the leader. This man is the one whom God is speaking through, has been speaking through and in the book of Numbers, will continue to speak through. The problem is, there's a man by the name of Korah who rises up and decides to have somewhat of a battle against Moses and what we're going to see today is a battle for the ages. There's going to be two different competing philosophies, two different ways of looking at the world and one group is going to be swallowed alive in the earth. I'll let you guess which one that's going to be.

Numbers 16, beginning in verse 1,

“1 Now Korah, the son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, and Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab, and On, the son of Peleth, sons of Reuben, took men: 2 And they rose up before Moses, with certain of the children of Israel, two hundred and fifty princes of the assembly, famous in the congregation, men of renown: 3 And they gathered themselves together against Moses and against Aaron, and said unto them, Ye take too much upon you, seeing all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the LORD is among them: wherefore then lift ye up yourselves above the congregation of the LORD? 4 And when Moses heard it, he fell upon his face: 5 And he spake unto Korah and unto all his company, saying, Even to morrow the LORD will shew who are his, and who is holy; and will cause him to come near unto him: even him whom he hath chosen will he cause to come near unto him. 6 This do; Take you censers, Korah, and all his company; 7 And put fire therein, and put incense in them before the LORD to morrow: and it shall be that the man whom the LORD doth choose, he shall be holy: ye take too much upon you, ye sons of Levi.”

Do you feel like you're at the OK Corral here and the guns have been pulled out of the holsters? I mean, you can almost hear the whistling in the background. Verse 9,

“9 Seemeth it but a small thing unto you, that the God of Israel hath separated you from the congregation of Israel, to bring you near to himself to do the service of the tabernacle of the LORD, and to stand before the congregation to minister unto them? 10 And he hath brought thee near to him, and all thy brethren the sons of Levi with thee: and seek ye the priesthood also? 11 For which cause both thou and all thy company are gathered together against the LORD: and what is Aaron, that ye murmur against him? 12 And Moses sent to call Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab: which said, We will not come up: 13 Is it a small thing that thou hast brought us up out of a land that floweth with milk and honey, to kill us in the wilderness, except thou make thyself altogether a prince over us? 14 Moreover thou hast not brought us into a land that floweth with milk and honey, or given us inheritance of fields and vineyards: wilt thou put out the eyes of these men? we will not come up.”

The battle lines have been drawn. In fact, this story has an eerie similarity to another battle in the Bible where there is a prophet by the name of Elijah. You remember the story: Elijah is a prophet of God and there are over 900 false prophets, 900 prophets who claim the name of Baal. This is the famous story where you've got Jezebel and all that stuff happening. They go up on a mountain and there they're going to ask fire to draw from heaven. They're going to prepare the sacrifice, they're going to prepare the altar, they're going to prepare the moat and it's one Elijah and 900 false prophets. Who wins that battle? The Lord does. You notice the difference in this one? These aren't Baal worshippers. These aren't the heathens. These aren't the pagans. These are the ones who

came through the Red Sea. These are the Israelites, these are the ones who are supposed to be on the same team. And what happens here? They rise up against Moses and they say, "Who do you think you are?" And what I want to share with you: when the book of Jude says that we should not go the gainsaying of Core, what is the Bible teaching us about Numbers 16? What should we learn from this? How can this impact us? More importantly, what is the potential that God is showing us in our life if we do not go the way that Core led.

The first thing I want you to notice in this passage is this: this is a full-blown attack that is happening. There is a group of people led by Korah, there are 250 princes and mighty men and we'll discuss that in a moment. Eventually we're going to see later, 14,700 people find themselves at the bottom of this pit, thrown in alive. But yet there were hundreds of thousands of Israelites, this was a small percentage, that's important to notice in just a moment. But a full-fledged attack is happening. What is the attack based on? Two things: first and foremost it is an attack on authority. What Korah is doing is saying, "I don't like who is in charge. I don't like what is in charge. I want to be the one in charge." You do understand that that's a pretty good definition of sin. You know, when we talk about sin we say, "Oh, it means to trespass. It means to transgress. It means to have iniquity in your heart." It does. Let me give you a very practical definition of sin: I don't like it the way God's doing it, I'd rather have it mine.

That's what sin is and when Korah rises up against the authority of Moses, what he is saying is, "I don't like how God's been working. I don't like how he is working. And I prefer if he would change the rules." You see, the question we have to ask ourselves today is this: who is our authority? Now, we use a lot of pretty church language but we're going to dissect that in a moment because when it comes to authority, the question we have to ask is this: who is our final absolute authority?

You know, a couple of years ago, my wife and I found ourselves in a situation where we were remodeling a home and any time you remodel a home, guys I don't know if you've ever gone through this process but every now and then they just decide to change their minds: in the colors they thought they wanted, they change to other colors. Ultimately it always ends up for the best. Always, absolutely. But in the process of doing that, you acquire and you buy different items to decorate the home with. Well, this happened in our life some years ago and we had purchased these items from a very large major company here. So, we had purchased them and we decided together that they needed to be different. It just wasn't going to work and so we went back to the store to exchange them. Now, we were not going to get a refund, we didn't want money, we just wanted to right color, the right item, whatever it was. There was only one problem: the receipts that we had in our hands they gave a term limit. In other words, after this time period, there are no exchanges. I am not kidding you when I tell you we were literally past the deadline by just a few hours. Technically it was the day after but when you looked at the clock, it hadn't even been 24 hours.

So we said, "Hey, let's give a shot. What can it hurt?" You know, you catch them better with honey than you do vinegar so let's go for it. So, we went into the store, walked up to

the service counter, pleaded my case. I said, "Ma'am, please, please understand what's going on here. All we want to do is exchange. We don't want any money, we just want a different color." She replied, "I understand. I'm not authorized to change it." I said, "Is there somebody who is?" She said, "Let me give you an 800 number, call them and talk to them." I'm like, "Ah-ha, here we go. We're gonna do it." So I make the phone call and I begin to plead my case and time after time and time again, I don't know what it was that the grace of God just came down, I was winning favor with these people on the line. All I wanted was a simple exchange until the last person I spoke with. I spoke to this individual, I pleaded my case. She was very matter of fact, there was not a whole lot of grace, there was not a whole lot of mercy. She just simply said, "The time has expired. I'm sorry."

So, I've learned throughout the years that my old friend Dave Ramsey is right, never take no from somebody who can't say no so surely, there's got to be somebody else. So, I said, "Ma'am," because I'd done this for 6-7 stages, I said, "Ma'am, is there anybody above you that I could talk to and just speak with them for a moment?" To which she very adamantly said, "No, there is not." Now, you need to understand occasionally I have the spiritual gift of sarcasm and it came out that day and I said, "Oh my, Ma'am, I want to apologize to you for all this." She said, "Why are you apologizing?" I said, "I did not know I was speaking to the CEO." She said, "What are you talking about?" I said, "You said there is nobody above you. I did not realize I was speaking to the Chief Executive Officer." She hung up on me. We didn't get the exchange.

I share that story because unlike exchanging curtain rods, when it comes to life one of the things we have to discern is this: who or what is the final absolute authority and I can promise you it's not you. There is a God and it is not you. So, what is the absolute final authority in this situation in Numbers 16? The Lord was speaking through Moses what he wanted to reveal and they had the opportunity to respond. But how does that apply in our life? What is the absolute final authority that we're finding under attack in our culture today?

Now, I'm going to share with you what it is not and some of you may be a little bit surprised. The absolute final authority for your life should not be a church. You say, "What do you mean it shouldn't be a church? Church is good, right?" Oh, church is great but it shouldn't be your absolute final authority. Let me share with you why: churches come, churches go. You don't believe me, read Revelation 2-3. Look at those churches and then go to the country of Turkey and see how many of them are doing well today. If you make a local congregation your absolute final authority let me tell you what's going to happen: you're going to be sorely disappointed at some point in your life. Some of you think, "Okay, let's work up the scale. Maybe not a church, maybe a religion, a denomination, a group of churches." Let me go ahead and save you the pain: over the course of life, no matter who you find yourself in allegiance with, the Baptists are going to disappoint you, the Methodists are going to disappoint you, the Presbyterians are going to disappoint you, the Catholics are going to disappoint you. Everybody at some level is going to disappoint you. Your final absolute authority should not be a church or a group of churches and some of you are going to panic with what I'm about to say. Are you

read? Some of you are going to go, “That is self-defeating.” Are you ready? Your absolute final authority is not me. It's not me. You say, “Why not?” Ask Tracy, she'll give you a dozen reasons why it shouldn't be me. I'm joking.

Let me be serious for a moment, here's why: people will fail, they will fall, they will disappoint. Your absolute final authority for decisions in your life, I hope you're faithful to a church, I hope your allegiance is bigger than that and I appreciate the camaraderie and the family we have together, I appreciate the respect as a church body you do have for me but the absolute final authority in your life is not a person or a group of people or a building or an institution, according to Psalm 138:2, the Lord himself says, “I have exalted my word above my name.” And what's happening today is this: are we seeing an attack in our culture on Christians? Yes. Are we seeing an attack on churches? Yes. Are we seeing an attack on pastors? Yes. But it's deeper than that for they represent the word of God. This is what is being attacked. Why? Numbers 16 or the 21<sup>st</sup> century, what humanity despises more than anything is being told what to do, how to believe and what to think and that's exactly what the word of God says. And what happens in Numbers 16 is the Korah and his group rises up and say, “We don't like the way God is doing it,” and that is what is happening in our culture today. People are rising up and saying, “We don't like the way God wrote it. We want to write our own instruction manual.” It is an attack on the very final authority of our lives.

Listen, I don't care who the man is, what the church is or who the group is, if they are against the things that are in the word of God they are wrong, God is right. Case settled. You say, “How do you know the case is settled?” Look at who ends up at the bottom of the pit at the end of this story. But the attack isn't just authority, it's also on the issue of accuracy. I want you to notice verse 13, “Is it a small thing that thou hast brought us up out of a land that floweth with milk and honey, to kill us in the wilderness, except thou make thyself altogether a prince over us?” Now, I'm just going to be real nice: Korah has lost every marble that he had at this point. You understand that the Israelites had spent 400 years in slavery, they had been in the land of Egypt, the same land that they worked from dawn until dusk, the same Pharaoh that when Moses began with the plagues, didn't just work them a full day, said, “Hey, go get your own straw to make your own brick.” The same Egypt and this is eerily parallel to today, who said if the baby is born a boy, remove him, midwives, before they breathe their first breath. That's the land flowing with milk and honey? Do you know they had not been removed even a year and what happened? They started changing the facts and what happens then in our world and our culture is this: that when it comes to the authority of the word of God in our lives, how quick we are to change the facts of what really is true and what really is not true.

I can't tell you how many times somebody has come up to me and said, “Pastor, you know, that Bible is full of mistakes and errors.” I say, “Show me one.” “Umm.” See, I'm going to give you something you need to understand, these are words of wisdom that will take you far and wide: numbers never lie but liars use numbers. You can make statistics say anything. You can make numbers say anything. And what has happened in our culture today is we've decided to change the facts. We've decided to change the history. We've decided to change what really happened and make it what we wanted to happen so

that we can do what we really want to do and that's what Korah did. He said, "Oh, Egypt wasn't bad. It was great!" That's just like today, they say, "All those guys that started our country, they were horrible mean people." No they weren't. You see, we've changed the facts so that we can change our today. Do you understand the same thing happened then and it's happening now. And God warned us in Jude 11, he said, "Whoa, whoa, don't go the way of Korah. He fought against authority and he changed the accuracy of the facts that was involved."

The next thing we've got to deal with is this: how does this happen? How does an individual, how does a family, how does an entire culture find themselves in this position? Our culture has found itself in this position, how has this happened? It happens through simple arrogance. That's what happened: arrogance. This mentality that, "I know best. I know better how to do things." And the arrogance that is in Korah's life, the arrogance that we find in our culture's life today exalts itself or exhibits itself in two very distinct ways. The first way is this: it is arrogant by assuming that they or you know better than God does. Look in verse 2 here, it says he gathers a group of people together, the whole congregation. Verse 3, right in the middle, you take too much upon you. Do you know what Korah is doing there? He is presuming and assuming that he knows better how to do things than even God does.

Do you realize the arrogance there? When the word of God says something and we say, "Oh, but that's not for me," that is an incredibly arrogant statement. Why? Because you're saying, "Oh, I'm smarter than God. I'm wiser than God. I know better than God does." Let me show you the track record that humanity has in this area. Let's go to just the third chapter of the Bible. Everything seems to be going well, Adam and Eve, they're hanging out in the Garden, everybody is naked and nobody is upset. Life is good. Then all of a sudden, with the temptation of the serpent, Adam and Eve decide God didn't know what he was doing, we really know what tree we should be eating from. How did that one work out for them? They ended up getting banished from the Garden.

That's chapter 3. Three more chapters, chapter 6, God comes and says, "You know what? What's happening here is not good. I am going to destroy the earth with water in 120 years. My servant, Noah, is going to build a big boat. Anybody who wants to, get on. You'll be fine." What did the people do in those days? They laughed. They mocked. They harassed him and when the rains came down, they found themselves drowning in the water. They believed they knew best, guess what, they were wrong.

We get to chapter 11 and we get off the boat. God says, "Okay, guy, everybody needs to split up and go your own different ways." They said, "No, no, no, God, you don't know what you're doing. We want to all come together and sing Kumbayah and build a big tower and it'll be great." God says, "No, I don't think so." He comes down and he confounds their language, he splits them apart. I know what you're thinking, "That's the first 11 chapters. It was a bad, rough start." I could go through every single chapter of the Bible.

Let's go to the next one. Abraham comes in. This is a great guy. Don't worry, we will be out by 8 o'clock tonight. Don't worry, I'm going to go through the whole thing. Abraham shows up and God says, "Okay Abraham, here's the deal: I want you to take your wife, I want you to take your no good for nothing nephew and I want you to go down to a land you know not of. I want you to start all over. By the way, you're old, she's old and I know you don't think you can have kids. How about you have so many that the stars in the sky cannot compare to their number?" Abraham says, "That's great. Let's do it. No problem." They go to the land. A few chapters later, he and his wife are having a conversation. She says, "I'm old but you're older. This isn't going to work." He said, "You're absolutely right. Ah-ha! We know how better to do this than God. How about Hagar? She's young, she's energetic. Ah, that's what we need to do." Let me tell you how well that worked out for us: go home and watch the news today and Hagar's kids and her kids are still fighting today.

Folks, we could go all throughout the Bible. King David, who in the days in which the kings went out to war said, "Oh, no, no, no. I know better than God does. I'm going to stay right here." How did that Bathsheba thing work out for him? It didn't work, did it? You get to the prophets of the Old Testament, prophet after prophet after prophet comes to the Northern Kingdom and says, "If you do not get your act together, God is going to come and mess you up." They said, "Oh no, he won't. We know what we're doing." 722 BC, the Assyrians come in. They ransack them all in one big swipe and then for 150 years prophet after prophet goes to the Southern Kingdom and says, "Hey, if you don't believe me, look at what happened to your cousins. It's going to happen to you." "No, we know best how to do this." Do you see the cycle? Over and over and over again.

Folks, that's the world we're living in today. We've got people that are making decisions and standing up for things that all they are doing is repeating the mistakes of the past and do you know what, God? I know what your word says about me, I know what it says about what I should do but I really do know best. Why? Because we're smarter than we used to be. We're wiser than we used to be and I think we all know the product of our culture today. You see, the arrogance that produces this mentality is the assumption that we know better than God does.

But it's not just this arrogant assumption, it's also this concept of accolades, this idea of people patting us on the back and telling us, "Atta boy, go get 'em!" Look back in verse 2 of this chapter. I want you to notice what it says, "And they rose up before Moses, with certain of the children of Israel, two hundred and fifty princes of the assembly, famous in the congregation, men of renown." Some of your Bibles will say "celebrities." Wow! Does this not sound like our culture today? If we want something pushed and promoted, get somebody who is famous for no good reason and get them to sponsor it, get them to speak on it. It just blows my mind when I look up at the television set and see "movie stars" testifying in front of Congress. What do they know? They know how to read a script. That's what they know and yet all of a sudden because somebody famous says it, oh, we ought to all pay attention to it. Folks, Jesus was right: we're sheep. Baa, boom, right off the cliff. That's where we go. And that is exactly what is happening.



But let's make this a little more serious. We can pick at the celebrities and the famous people and the idea of that but we live in a world today and this is a hypothetical but based on real experience time and time again: you've got a school district that's a happy school district. Let's just for the sake, say there's about 1,500 students. You've got happy students, happy parents, happy teachers, happy community. Life is good and all of a sudden, somebody moves into this community. They move into the community and it's a little different than what they're used to and so they decide to become acclimated and on a Friday night they do what we do here in the South, they go to a football game and at the beginning of the football game, somebody stands up somewhere and they say a prayer that ends with the name Jesus Christ and they just flip out over it. They say, "Whoa, whoa, what was that?" And they kind of have their heads spinning and then in the next couple of months, what we know as Christmas comes around. They go visit little Johnny in the school and there is a little Christmas play and they sing "Silent Night, Holy Night" and "O Little Town of Bethlehem" and the next thing you know, they call a bunch of lawyers, they bring them in and they shut it all down because one person didn't like it. One. Forget the 1,500 who were just as happy as they could be.

What is happening in Numbers 16 is that Korah and 250 very influential people say, "It doesn't matter if there's hundreds of thousands of people out there who agree with you, Moses, you need to pay attention to us. We're the ones who know what we're talking about. We're the ones who know what we're doing." Let me show you the futility of this thought: about ten years ago there was an individual. He wrote a book. Now, he wrote the book after he retired. He's a former media executive and he wrote a book exposing the bias, the slantedness of what we know as the mainstream media. As he gave example after example of how what is fed to us is not necessarily the belief of all but the belief of these 250 that Numbers 16 talks about, he gives an illustration from 1972. In 1972, the individual who won the election as President of the United States was Richard Nixon. Now, we do know that in his term things didn't go well for him and obviously he resigned his position. That little thing called Watergate kind of got in the way. So, it didn't end real well but on that night of his election, 48 out of 50 states went his way. Now, I don't know about where you come from, that's pretty much called a landslide where I come from. 48 out of 50 states. You say, "Why is that so significant?" In this book he quotes a young news reporter up in the northeast who made this ridiculous statement, "How on earth did Richard Nixon win. I don't know anybody who voted for him."

Do you see what is happening? It's the same thing that occurred in Numbers 16, that we live in a world and a society today that says, "It doesn't matter what the masses think. It doesn't matter what God has said. I want what I want and you must change to fit I." Wow. Does this not sound like the morning news? And yet it happened in Numbers 16 and in Jude verse 11, what does God warn us? He says, "Don't go in that direction." So, here's the question: what do we need to do? What is the action that you and I need to take? How do we respond to this world that sounds eerily like Numbers 16? Go to verse 20 of Numbers 16 and I want to read what Moses says to the Israelites. What does he say to those people who are not in Korah's camp? This is the message for you. You say, "You know what? I'm a believer in Jesus Christ, I'm not going the way of the world. How do I respond to this world?" It says,

“20 And the LORD spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying, 21 Separate yourselves from among this congregation, that I may consume them in a moment. 22 And they fell upon their faces, and said, O God, the God of the spirits of all flesh, shall one man sin, and wilt thou be wroth with all the congregation? 23 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 24 Speak unto the congregation, saying, Get you up from about the tabernacle of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. 25 And Moses rose up and went unto Dathan and Abiram; and the elders of Israel followed him. 26 And he spake unto the congregation, saying, Depart, I pray you, from the tents of these wicked men, and touch nothing of theirs, lest ye be consumed in all their sins.”

Now, there are two things that you and I as believers in Jesus Christ in order to stand against the gainsaying of Korah in our culture. Thing #1 or item #1 that we need to do is this: we need to present and we need to live an authentic faith. You say, “What do you mean by authentic faith?” An authentic faith is not changed just because somebody you love disagrees with the word of God. An authentic faith does not change just because somebody who is a celebrity or who is in power, who has a lot of authority, says that their way should reign supreme. You see, an authentic faith stays strong even in the midst of nobody else standing with them. Listen to what Jesus said. Jesus said, “I did not come to send peace but a sword. I will separate the woman from her daughter-in-law and the man from his son.” Jesus made it very clear that there are times in life where there are people that we know, there are people that we love, there are people that we respect, there are people that we admire who all of a sudden you discover, their life or their belief or their philosophy is contrary to the word of God and you've got to go, “Whoa. How do I respond? What did Moses say?” He said, “Separate.”

Now, let me give you an illustration about separation: it's called oil and water. You take a container that's got oil in it and you throw water in it, the water does not throw the oil out of the container and the oil does not spew the water out of the container for they exist within the container separate from one another. What did Jesus say? “You are the light among other lights”? No, he said, “You're the light in the darkness.” He said, “You're the salt among other salty foods”? No, he said, “You're the salt in the midst of blandness.” You see, Jesus did not say that separation was absolute removal from but he said that you cannot go with them, you cannot agree with them. If you side with them, you're going to find yourself in a pit. 250 people come against Moses, 14,700 people end up falling into the pit. Why? Because I believe there were some, maybe it was sympathy, maybe it was emotion, “But I really like this guy.” And what happened? They ended up going down with the ship.

The first thing is an authentic faith but the second thing is probably the most critical as we come to the close of this message: is a faith that has an allegiance to the authority that I've been speaking of, an allegiance to the word of God. Christians, let me be very frank with you for a moment: we've gotten really bad about championing and speaking and protesting and doing all kinds of things about a very few select sins. I mean, there are

some out there that we say, "It's a case closed." You've got to fight that. You've got to speak against that. There is no way, the Bible condemns it. That is wrong. Let me be honest with you: when I speak about allegiance, you cannot protest, you cannot banter, you cannot speak against sin A and continue to gossip on Facebook. Let me repeat myself: take the obvious "sins" that the Christian community is so rightfully and blatantly against and we say, "Oh, it's great to be against that, but you know what? It's okay if I share a little information. It's okay if I share something that's a little disconcerting." In fact, do you know how sophisticated we've gotten? We gossip in the form of a prayer request. "I want you to pray for my neighbor. Their marriage is doing good." You're not concerned about your neighbor, you want somebody to know that you know something that they don't know. That's called gossip.

There's an old joke about Baptists. Folks, I am one so I can make fun of us. There is a progression of thought: it's the telegraph, telephone, tell a Baptist. If you want it said, tell somebody. Now with the invention of Facebook, it's called viral. I use that example because, folks, we cannot protest the abortion clinics while we are gossiping on Facebook while standing in line. What that says is that we are not sharing allegiance to all of the authority but the authority that we find convenient or the authority that can rouse support.

I want to leave you with an illustration of history. One of the worst "individuals" who's probably set foot in this country is a man whom we know by Al Capone. Al Capone was a ruthless gangster of the Prohibition days. Let me share with you what he was guilty of. What took Al Capone and his empire down? It wasn't murder. It wasn't rape. It wasn't extortion and it wasn't fraud. It was tax evasion. Folks, let me tell you something: our culture is not going to continue the way it is as we're protesting and speaking out against these blatant sins. Let me tell you what's going to take us out with the gainsaying of Korah: is if we continue to gossip. If we continue to defraud. If we continue to lie. You say, "Well, it's no big deal. It's not as important as this is." Listen, it's all important and the gainsaying of Korah isn't just the big open ones, it's all of them. That's why James 2:10 says, "If you've broken one of the laws, it's as if you've broken all of them." That's why 1 Thessalonians 5 says, "Keep away from all appearances of evil."

Let me tell you what we're doing, church, and I mean this as a whole to the church, not just this local one: we're shooting ourselves in the foot because the world out there, who we're going to see in a couple of weeks, we're supposed to be winning sees us as a hypocrite and it sees us as two-faced and it sees us as unauthentic and only loyal to what we want to be loyal about. And at this time of our invitation, may we make the declaration, we're not going to just stand for the easy stuff, we're not just going to stand on stuff we like but we're willing to say, "You know what? Unlike those in Korah's day, we're going to stand on all of it."

Let's pray with our heads bowed and our eyes closed as we prepare for our time of invitation, as Brother Jeremy comes to lead us. Maybe you're here today, maybe in person by way of tv or the internet and you're here this morning or maybe it's the evening for you and you've realized in all of the discussion, Numbers 16, Korah, all the stuff in our culture and maybe you've realized today that when you boil it all down, the thing

that's missing in your life is you do not have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. There has never come a point where you've asked Jesus to save you. There's never been a point where you've even confessed that you are a sinner headed the wrong direction of life. Maybe this time and this moment would be the opportunity that you would take advantage of the grace and the mercy of God. No matter your age, no matter your background, your gender, no matter the baggage that you may have brought with you this day. Would this be the day where wherever you are, you would just pause for a moment, have a conversation with God, technically we call I praying. Maybe it would go a little something like this. You say, "Lord, I recognize today that I've done everything possible except the way you've asked me to. I understand today that I'm the one who has messed up, I'm the sinner and I believe that Jesus wants to be my Savior. And so today I just stop, I confess the obvious and I ask you to forgive me of my sins. Save me not because I am good, not because I happen to be in church but because Jesus went to the cross and three days later rose again so I could be forgiven and saved. God, I recognize today that I don't know everything but I know that I'm the problem and you're the answer and in the best way I know how, I want to turn my life over to you."

In just a few moments, I'm going to pray over us and maybe you're here this morning, maybe you're a young child, maybe you're a full-grown adult, maybe you've had great experiences in life, poor experiences in life, it doesn't matter. You're here this morning and in just a moment when we have our time of invitation after I pray, if today's the day that you say, "I need Jesus as my Savior," let me encourage you to step out and step forward. We've got people here to talk with you.

But maybe you're that believer, maybe you're that Christian that you realize today that you've walked the way of Korah and you didn't even realize it, that life has been about how you can please yourself or please somebody else but it hasn't been how you can please God. May this be the day that you repent and start walking with the Lord.

*Father, as we come to this time of invitation, that's we recognize it as, it's an opportunity. As you have revealed something to us for us to respond to you. Whether it is in salvation or some other decision, would you not only as you have spoken to us, would you guide us this moment in how to respond back to you? It is in the name of Jesus Christ we pray.*