

Balaam-Choosing God's Side

Background:

- The Moabites and their king, Balak, are afraid of the Israelites (defeated Egyptians and recently the Amorites)
- Balak sends messengers to Balaam, a renowned soothsayer/diviner, to have him put a curse on the Israelites

Numbers 22:7-14 (reader)

- Balaam chose to entertain the guests and to think about their decision. His first reaction was to have them "spend the night here."
- In so many cases, our sin and times where we go against what God wants start with entertaining a tiny, "harmless" thought.
 - **What are some examples of how a small thought or desire can turn into something bigger like sin or disobedience to God?**
- Instead of entertaining those unrighteous thoughts, we need to throw them out immediately. Balaam should have just said "No!" and left it at that.
 - **What are some practical ways to get rid of those thoughts once they come up?**
 - Are you quick to throw away unrighteous thoughts, or do you let them linger and build into disobedience or sin?

Numbers 22:15-21 (reader)

- Sometimes we can be quick to question God's Word and want to go another way.
 - **Why is that so easy for us to do-question God?**
- The prospect of getting rich made Balaam question God's first command. Also, after Balaam sets off on his journey, God is furious with him because he has decided to go for the riches rather than God.
 - **What are some things that Satan can use to get us to question God?**
 - Everyone is different-what is it for you specifically?
- Once we know what those things are that make us question Him, we can guard ourselves when Satan attacks us with those arrows.

Numbers 22:22-27

- Even though we may let those small thoughts become greater even give into Satan's schemes in making us question God, God still offers us ways back to Him.
- Look more closely at where the angel of the Lord appeared...
 - First he appears in the road, with plenty of room to turn around. The donkey turns off the road, but Balaam continues down the wrong road.
 - Second, he appears in a narrow path with walls on both sides but with still room to turn. Balaam continues, but is injured.
 - Lastly, he appears in a narrow place where there was nowhere to turn. Balaam finally sees the angel of the Lord here.
- God gives us opportunities to turn back to Him, but when we don't listen He narrows the path and we get injured, until finally we end up in a place where there's nowhere else to turn, and we have to accept the truth of where we've come to.
 - **How have you seen this sequence played out?**
 - **What are some ways God tries to direct us back to following Him?**
 - Are you letting God guide you to where He wants you to be? Or are you fighting Him and continuing on the path that away from Him?

Numbers 22:28-34

- Balaam was spiritually blind the whole time! He never thought about God's commands, he only thought about himself and how the situation could benefit him. Even when the donkey was turning every way and began to SPEAK, Balaam was still blind to what was really going on?
 - **In what ways can we be spiritually blind?**
 - **What can be the result of continuing to be blind spiritually?**
- Vs 31-"the Lord opened Balaam's eyes"
 - In what ways can we alleviate the blindness? How does God "open our eyes?"
 - Do you need your eyes opened?

Conclusion: In order to not stray from following God, we need to seriously deal with our thoughts and not entertain them. Second, you need to be aware of what things Satan uses to make you turn away from or question God. Third, when God is calling us and giving us ways out of temptation, we need to listen and turn away from the unrighteous path. Finally, we need to have our eyes opened and remove the spiritual blindness that can stop us from following God.