

Friday, April 27, 2018

## Offerings

Numbers 28-29

*The LORD said to Moses, "Give this command to the Israelites and say to them: 'See that you present to me at the appointed time the food for my offerings made by fire, as an aroma pleasing to me.'"*  
Numbers 28:1-2

As I read these two chapters today, I cannot help but see that God is looking for offerings to Him to be the rhythm of life for the Israelites. It starts with the daily offering on the altar—required and voluntary—and then moves to the weekly, the monthly, and the annual. Each of these would be a constant reminder of the need to regularly and continually bring offerings to the LORD. I would imagine there was a constant aroma on earth as these fires burned the animals sacrificed each day. It would cause one to realize the importance of a constant aroma of offering being brought before the LORD. The aroma that the LORD found so sweet was not the smell of burning flesh, but of the hearts that were given over in continual praise, prayer, and devotion to Him. The offerings were designed to be an outward reflection of the heart—every day of the year. I need to be considering this. How is my daily offering to the LORD an aroma that is sweet before Him? Am I continually giving my heart over to Him as an offering? Am I participating in the daily, weekly, monthly, and annual gatherings at the church? Am I giving generously in all ways from a heart of devotion to my LORD?

*Dear LORD, please, let me see the ways that these offerings allowed Your people to be reminded of Your presence. Have my offerings be generous, from a pure heart. Amen.*

Saturday, April 28, 2018

## Vows and Vengeance

Numbers 30-31

*The LORD said to Moses, "Take vengeance on the Midianites for the Israelites. After that, you will be gathered to your people."*  
Numbers 31:1-2

It is time for Moses' last battle. In this verse, I see that God is true to His word. His holiness requires justice. He told Moses, in 25:17, that the Midianites would need to be killed for their part in the seduction of Israel away from God. It can be hard to understand the apparent slaughter and see that as coming from the hand of God, and yet, we see that that is exactly what it is. I hold on to the fact that God is loving, but I must remember that He is holy and just. He will not be mocked. The account of Balaam's death in this chapter makes that very clear. God also reminds Moses that he will soon be done on this earth because of disobedience. Again, the holiness of God will not allow him to remain. As I read this account, it causes me to be burdened for all the "Midianites" I see each day. Every person I see who does not know God is destined for judgment that is even more severe than what we see in this passage. I can forget that God must judge sin. He judged sin as Christ hung on the cross, bearing the awesome weight of sin. But that is only effective for those who are true followers of Jesus. Everyone else will face the vengeance of God. His wrath will be poured out on them. That is what this account makes very clear for me. How can God use me to tell His story?

*Dear Lord, Your word stands and Your justice stands. Help me see Your holiness as I read these passages and then use them in my life to draw me more to You. Amen.*

April 23 - 28, 2018



by Senior Pastor Chuck Cervenka  
a daily devotional of Calvary Community Church

Monday, April 23, 2018

## Whenever

Numbers 20-21

*And we detest this miserable food!... Then when anyone was bitten by a snake and looked at the bronze snake, he lived.* Numbers 21:5b & 9b

Once again the grumbling comes. Each of the complaints seems to have the same theme. Captivity in Egypt under an oppressive ruler was better than freedom under the providing, protective and loving hand of God. Psalm 78:25 tells me that they were eating angel food! It was the bread of angels they were eating and they called the provision of God detestable. Yet again, judgement comes, and once again the grace of God is seen. Moses is told of a way to provide the opportunity for salvation from physical pain and death. If they looked to the bronze snake that had been lifted up they would live. If they chose not to look to God's provision of salvation, they would die. I remember that Jesus told Nicodemus in John 3 that the Son of Man must also be lifted up. How many of the provisions of God to me have I considered detestable, longing for what I thought was better? The great rejection of God's provision in my life has brought me under His wrath and judgment, but praise God, He has provided for my salvation by His grace. It is found in Jesus. As I look to Jesus, I can find forgiveness and life. I am so grateful that God's grace is greater than my sin and that Jesus has rescued me once and for all from my deserved judgment.

*Dear Lord, please forgive me for seeing Your provisions as detestable. I grieve the times I have done that. Thank You for lifting Jesus up and causing me to look on Him. Amen.*

Tuesday, April 24, 2018

## Answered

Numbers 22-23

*Balaam answered the donkey, "You have made a fool of me! If I had a sword in my hand, I would kill you right now."* Numbers 22:29

Okay. Really? There is no way to read this account without smiling just a little. The donkey talks! I love it. God speaks through what is considered one of the dumbest animals at the time. But Balaam answers! Hello! I can't stop thinking about it. If I was walking along, and my donkey laid down and then spoke to me, I am not sure that I would answer. But Balaam did. Balaam was used to getting oracles from different gods. He would communicate regularly with the spirit world, and for him, the one true God was just one among many gods. So as he set out, he had more than likely connived in his heart to make out pretty good on this endeavor. But God is not to be mocked. Balaam needed to learn that he should say only what God was directing him to say. So God used the donkey to slow Balaam down enough to stop and see the real picture. Ironic that the angel of the LORD has a sword and Balaam is looking for one. A wise donkey knows who to fear—just as the Moabites did (22:2). The difference is that God revealed Himself to the donkey, just as He was about to reveal Himself in power to the Moabites. So, in what ways do I miss the Lord because I am focused on some mission I have determined would be good for me? Do I get wrapped up attacking and talking to the "donkey" who is trying to help and miss God in the process?

*Dear God, thank You for using the simple things of the world to confound the wise. Help me remember often to watch for You and stay on the course You have for me. Amen.*

Wednesday, April 25, 2018

## Zealous

Numbers 24-25

*The LORD said to Moses. "Phinehas, son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron, the priest, has turned my anger away from the Israelites; for he was as zealous as I am for my honor among them, so that in my zeal I did not put an end to them."* Numbers 25:10-11

God commends the zealousness of Phinehas. But what is fascinating is that Phinehas was zealous as God is zealous (in some translations jealous). He was zealous for the Lord's honor. That is what the Lord is zealous for as well. This nation bears His name. His honor is at stake when His people dishonor Him. When there is blatant disregard for the holiness of God, when the people of God worship other gods, his honor is defamed. There was a blatant sin happening in the midst of mourning over sin! It was a sin of idolatry and immorality and Phinehas dealt with it quickly and completely. It was dealt with publicly, because it was a public sin. I must make no mistake. God is zealous for His honor—especially among those who claim His name. In what ways do I (as a Christian) participate with those of this world in sacrificing to other gods? What draws my attention? In what ways do I act immorally? As one called out to be set apart for God, do I have a zeal for holiness? I fear that the Church has given itself over to chasing temporary, false gods and has become apathetic to the honor of God's name instead of zealous for His honor. This is to our shame—and His.

*Dear God, help me be zealous for Your honor in all that I do. Help me have the same zeal for Your name as You do. Wake Your Church to love You and You alone. Amen. Help me, please! Amen.*

Thursday, April 26, 2018

## Worship

Numbers 26-27

*These are the ones counted by Moses and Eleazar the priest when they counted the Israelites on the plains of Moab by the Jordan across from Jericho.* Numbers 26:63

A new census is being taken because all of those who were told they would not enter the land have died. Caleb and Joshua are the only ones who remain, aside from Moses. The plagues and judgments, along with longevity, have eliminated those who had defiantly refused to obey God. They did not worship Him. They opposed and rejected Him, and now the next generation will have their chance. How will they respond? There are just about the same number of people in both censuses. What is it that this generation has learned from the previous generation? Egypt is a distant memory for them. It is possible that some can barely remember at all. What they do know and can remember is that God has been in their midst and He has shown Himself in power and love. They know the promise. He will give them the land He has promised to them—if they obey. They have not seen an example to follow in the generation that went before them. What legacy am I leaving? How will people know God by my life? Have I been a worshiper of God? Have I cherished Him well?

*O Lord, help me leave a legacy that allows others to know how to worship You. Help me, please, to always cherish You and those whom You love. May I be a light for You and may others see You in me. Amen.*