

Rejecting Grace

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Preacher: Niels van de Kastele

[0 : 00] Our Father, thank you for your words. Thank you that it makes us wise for salvation through! Faith in Christ Jesus. We just pray that you would speak to each one of us. And as you speak, would we hear your voice deep in our hearts? Would we hear what you want us to hear? Lord, thank you that your words are always good and loving. And pray that we would receive them today. In Jesus' name. Amen. Great. Now, Hong Kong is a very pragmatic city, people say.

Actually, people just care what works, right? That's the thing that matters. Does it bring results? If it brings results, it's good. Of course, if it doesn't bring results, then don't bother. Now, that's in a way, what's it called? Utilitarian ethics. In a way, it's a good thing, right? You look at the consequences. You look at the benefits, right? You have a promotion coming up. Okay, is this a good thing? Well, what are the benefits? What are the dis-benefits? You weigh it up and you make a decision. So in some ways, that's a good thing.

Of course, sometimes, the problem is, what if God says something and the consequences seem so different, right? So God says, don't lie. But, you know, what's the harm in this lie, right? What's the problem, right? It brings me good and I don't see any harm that it does, so why would it be a bad thing? Well, of course, the flaw with this kind of thinking is that we don't always know the consequences, right? We don't always know what will happen in the future. We don't know what the result might be. Now, you think of David and Befsheba in the Bible and David thought it was fine what he did, except, of course, if you know the Bible, you know the terrible consequences. Now, we need to sometimes think, okay, well, what are really the consequences of what I'm doing? And I think sometimes the Bible shows us that, that God shows us what's going on. And Numbers today, we're in the Book of Numbers.

It's a great book about Israel's journey, you know, from Egypt to the Promised Land. But, yeah, we have seen how the people are not really doing what they should and, well, we shouldn't be like them. And why not? Well, look at the consequences. Today, we're going to see some of the consequences of what they do and, yeah, this will be a good warning for us not to go the same way. Now, today is a larger chunk of the book. So, we're doing this whole book in eight weeks and today we're going to do six chapters. Okay, so, don't worry, we're not going to have a 28-minute reading. We're going to read only parts, but the reason is that sometimes the point kind of comes from the big picture. Rather than the detail, we need to step back and see the big picture. So, that's why we're doing a big chunk, but it should be good. And it means it's a bit arty, right? Rather than just the simple verses, let's look at the big picture and think about it. So, we need to do some thinking today, but I think it will speak powerfully. So, with that, let's, Iris will come and read while I drink some water.

[3 : 01] Good morning, Watermark. Today's scripture reading is taken from Numbers chapter 16, verses 1-7, 25-35, and 41-50.

Please follow along your Bible. If you don't have a Bible, please do still grab them from the front of the stage or at the back near the door. Our passage is on page 116.

Now, Ahchorah, the son of Esau, son of Kohath, son of Levi, and Dathan, and Abiram, the sons of Eliab, and Ahm, the son of Peleth, sons of Reuben, took men.

And they rose up before Moses with a number of the people of Israel, 250 chiefs of the congregation, chosen from the assembly, well-known men.

They assembled themselves together against Moses and against Aaron and said to them, You have gone too far, for all in the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the Lord is among them.

[4 : 05] Why then do you exhort yourselves about the assembly of the Lord? When Moses heard it, he fell on his face, and he said to Korah and all his company, In the morning the Lord will show who

is his and who is holy, and will bring him near to him.

The one whom he chooses he will bring near to him. Do this, take censers, Korah, and all his company, put fire in them, and put incense on them before the Lord tomorrow, and the man whom the Lord chooses shall be the holy one.

You have gone too far, sons of Levi. Moving on to verses 25 to 35, we read, Then Moses rose and went to Dathan and Abiram, and the elders of the Israel followed him.

And he spoke to the congregation, saying, Depart, please, from the tents of these wicked men, and touch nothing of theirs, lest you be swept away with all their sins.

So they got away from the dwelling of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, and Dathan and Abiram came out and stood at the door of their tents, together with their wives, their sons, and their little ones.

[5 : 17] And Moses said, Hereby you shall know that the Lord has sent me to do all these works, and that it has not been of my own accord. If these men die as all men die, or if they are visited by the fate of all mankind, then the Lord has not sent me.

But if the Lord creates something new, and the ground opens his mouth and swallows them up with all that belongs to them, and they go down alive into Sheol, then you shall know that these men have despised the Lord.

And as soon as he had finished speaking all these words, the ground under them split apart, and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up with their households and all the people who belonged to Korah and all their goods.

So they and all that belonged to them went down alive into Sheol, and the earth closed over them, and they perished from the midst of the assembly. And all Israel who were around them fled at their cry, for they said, Let the earth swallow us up.

And fire came out from the Lord and consumed the 250 men offering the incense. Moving on to verses 41, we read, But on the next day, all the congregation of the people of Israel grumbled against Moses and against Aaron, saying, You have killed the people of the Lord.

[6 : 38] And when the congregation had assembled against Moses and against Aaron, they turned toward the tent of meeting. And behold, the cloud covered it, and the glory of the Lord appeared.

And Moses and Aaron came to the front of the tent of meeting. And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, Get away from the midst of this congregation, that I may consume them in a moment. And they fell on their faces. And Moses said to Aaron, Take your censer and put fire on it from off the altar and lay incense on it and carry it quickly to the congregation and make atonement for them.

For wrath has gone out from the Lord, and the plague has begun. So Aaron took it, as Moses said, and ran into the midst of the assembly. And behold, the plague had already begun among the people.

And he put on the incense and made atonement for the people. And he stood between the dead and the living. And the plague was stopped. Now those who died in the plague were 14,700, besides those who died in the affair of Korah.

[7 : 44] And Aaron returned to Moses at the entrance of the tent of meeting, when the plague was stopped. Let us believe and respond to God's true and living word. Great. Thank you so much, Iris.

For reading this part of this chapter. Okay. So we'll start in chapter 16. And if you've been with us for the past few weeks, you know that, yeah, well, this looks like just another rebellion, right?

We've had quite a lot of grumbling, quite a lot of rebellion. And here's another one. This is actually a huge one, right? It's three chapters long. And what is going on? Well, the people of Israel, they're rejecting the priesthood.

I think if you just look at it on the surface, it's rejecting the priesthood. So there's these three guys, Korah, David, and Byram. They're kind of the ringleaders. And they get 250 chiefs of the people. And basically, they are complaining about, you know, Aaron being the priest. Because, hey, everyone is holy, right? Everyone can come near to God. What makes you special that you can go near to God?

[8 : 54] And we can't. Of course, Moses is horrified, right? Hey, this is God's choice. It's not what we've done. So let's have a test, okay? Tomorrow, maybe all of us go to the tent of meeting.

All of us go with censers. You know, that's what priests do. They have a censor with incense. Go before the tent. And God will show who he has chosen, right? And that's what they do.

Well, actually, not all of them. Because Moses proposes that. Some of them don't even come up. These guys, David and then and Byram. 16, verse 12. Look here at what they say. Right? Moses sent to call Dave and then Abiram, the sons of Elias. And they said, we will not come up. Is it a small thing that you have brought us up out of a land flowing with milk and honey to kill us in the wilderness, that you must also make yourself a prince over us?

I mean, if you've been here for a few weeks, these guys have lost completely touch with reality, right? They were slaves in Egypt. And, oh, that was the land of milk and honey. Why did you bring us out to kill us here?

[9 : 54] Right? They are terrible. And so the results are predictable, right? We just had a catechism. Will God let our disobedience go unpunished? Well, no.

It's not, right? At least the ringleaders, their tents are swallowed up. And they go alive down to hell. Then there's 250 men. Fire comes out and consumes them.

They get burned up. The people, of course, they were afraid. But then the next day they're complaining, right? Verse 41. Hey, you've killed the people. Well, on the next day, all the congregation of the people of Israel grumbled against Moses and against Aaron, saying, you have killed the people of the Lord.

And so, yeah, God shows up. And, again, there's a plague. And people start to die. And, well, Moses acts quickly. He tells Aaron, verse 46, take your censer and put fire on it from the altar. And lay incense on it. And carry it quickly to the congregation. And make atonement for them. For wrath has gone out from the Lord. The plague has begun. And so, Aaron does that. He puts stuff on his censer.

[11 : 00] And he runs. And he stops the plague. Okay, right. It's stopped now. And yet there was a massive cost, right? If you add it up, it's like 15,000 deaths. Now, of course, it's three chapters long.

Most of the chapter, actually, is God just putting lots of reminders. Lots of danger, keep out signs. Right? Because that's what the people need, right? And so, you know, those censers on those 250 men, okay, they make it into a cover of the altar to remind people that only priests can come near and otherwise you'll die.

And Aaron's staff is dead stick. It sprouts flowers. Well, so that people know that Aaron is chosen. And he can come near. And you can't. Unless you die. And more laws.

Right? That's the idea. God is, you know, I don't know if you're reading numbers. Actually, these are loving things, right? I think a danger, keep out, is a loving thing. So that is what God is doing.

But it's clearly yet another rebellion. It feels similar to the previous ones. I mean, it's amazing how these people haven't changed, right? If you were here two weeks ago and you saw how they were at the border of the promised land and God brought them all the way there and they refused to go in and they were punished to stay in the wilderness, you'd think that they would change, that they would show some humility, some contrition.

[12 : 22] But no, there's nothing of that, right? But at the same time, it feels very familiar. What is the significance of this huge rebellion? Well, I hope you see in this passage, actually, the priesthood is a seriously important thing.

Why is it so important? Well, look at this plague. The plague is coming and who stops it? Well, it's the priest. It's Aaron the high priest with his censer.

I love verse 48. And he stood between the dead and the living. And the plague was stopped. The difference between life and death, the difference between the dead and the living, is this priest who makes atonement for you.

Because we think of priests as like difficult rituals. Actually, they offer sacrifices that forgive your sins. They're so important. In a way, Moses as well.

Moses, they rebel against Moses and Aaron. Moses is the guy who prays and stops God destroying the people. The priests are so important. And I think if we zoom out, that is the significance.

[13 : 32] This is about the person who brings you forgiveness. Because if you were here last week, actually, we saw that God is offering these people grace. We saw that they had this terrible rebellion.

And yet God says, hey, I'm not done with you. I want to continue with you. I'm offering you grace. If you offer sacrifices, you'll be forgiven. Sins can be forgiven.

He offers grace and forgiveness. But what are they doing? Well, they are rejecting forgiveness. They're rejecting the guy who can forgive their sins.

That's the problem, right? But they're rejecting the guy who is their only hope. So in context, I think what they're doing, they are rejecting grace. It's not just rejecting the priesthood.

They're rejecting grace. And I hope you can see how serious that is, right? Their only hope is grace, right? The only hope for sinners is grace. And yet they are rejecting that.

[14:35] They don't want forgiveness. They don't want the only thing that can save them. And so even though maybe it doesn't feel as big as chapter 14, and yet this is huge, right?

Because they're rejecting the forgiveness that God offers. And of course, don't do that. Of course, it's not just the same, not just for Israel. For us, it's exactly the same, right?

I mean, what does the New Testament say? Well, that all of us are sinners. We've all, you know, rejected God. We've all lived our own way. But again, God has a great high priest, Jesus, right? And he offered the perfect sacrifice on the cross so we can be forgiven. That's wonderful. I hope this passage actually shows you more what that does, right?

I mean, the cross, yes, Jesus shows his love. That's wonderful. But it's more than that, right? He stops God's judgment. God's judgment needs to come. And Jesus on the cross, well, he pays for that, right?

[15:32] And he stops the plague coming to us in a way. But, yeah, if you then reject. But what if you don't come to Jesus? What if you reject Jesus? I mean, here are some verses from Hebrews 10.

And, again, we quote a lot of Hebrews this series because it often talks about, don't, about, yeah. In this verse, it says sinning in the context that he's rejecting Jesus.

But what does it say? For if we go on sinning deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a fearful expectation of judgment and a fury of fire that will consume the adversaries.

That's kind of true, right? I mean, Jesus is the one perfect sacrifice. And if you, well, if you walk away from him, no sacrifice for sins is left. Just a fearful expectation of judgment.

I mean, there's two possible responses to sin, right? There's judgment or forgiveness. It's one of the two. And if you reject forgiveness, you're going to get judgment. Yeah? And that's, yeah.

[16:36] I mean, Kevin alluded to that last week. Last week, Kevin talked about the unforgivable sin. It's exactly the same thing. Maybe, yeah, here in Mark 3, for example.

Truly, I say to you, all sins will be forgiven the children of men. And whatever blasphemies they utter. What a wonderful promise, right? Every possible sin can be forgiven. But whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin. You can ask me later, why is it called blasphemy against the Holy Spirit? You look at the context. It's rejecting Jesus and his ministry of forgiveness. And, yeah.

If you reject the person bringing you forgiveness, then you don't have forgiveness. That's why this is so incredibly serious, right? Rejecting grace is the worst thing you can do.

Forgiveness is wonderful. But if you reject it, yeah. So if you have forgiveness, don't let it go. Let's stick close to Jesus. But why?

[17:39] Well, I think the second part of this section, the second part of this sermon, well, it's why? Well, because of the consequences. What are the consequences if you reject grace?

Because that's the next few chapters. And, yeah, if you reject grace, it means there's nothing left but death. Nothing left but death. I think that's the next few chapters.

I mean, we know the wages of sin is death. We've seen the priest. He stands between the dead and the living. And otherwise, there's nothing left but death. Again, now these two chapters, they're pretty difficult.

They're pretty, we need to think about them. But I think this is the big point. And Numbers really wants us to feel it. Now, chapter 19, first it seems a bit weird because we get another chapter of laws.

I don't know if you found last week a bit weird, right, all these laws that we read. And what lies behind these laws is the things about clean and unclean. So in Israel, people had to be clean because, you know, God was living with you in the camp.

[18:43] And so, you know, things had to be proper and clean. And, you know, if someone was unclean, they couldn't be there. And so you had to make a sacrifice so you could be clean again.

It's like, you know, God is the God of life. And things that, yeah, are contrary to that. They contaminate the camp. And so they need to be cleansed. So, you know, some diseases or blood or

death.

That seems weird to us. Although, actually, here we have all kinds of rituals about death, right? You know, ghost apartments or not having a fourth floor. There's various things that people do here in the culture that kind of stay away from death.

That kind of idea. But, yeah, you have to offer a sacrifice to become clean. And chapter 19, God has something really exciting. He has instant sacrifice.

Instant sacrifice. I don't know if you know instant coffee, right? It's really great. You have some powder and some water. And you don't need to go to Starbucks. You don't need a barista. Just, you know, some powder, some water.

[19 : 44] And voila, you've got your caffeine boost. Isn't that wonderful? Well, basically, this chapter is about instant sacrifice. Because sacrifices are annoying, right? You have to go all the way to the tabernacle with an animal to the priest.

And he has to make a sacrifice. What a hassle. Well, here's an idea. We have a red heifer, some animal, and we let it completely burn to ash. And we save the ashes. And then whenever something needs cleansing, yeah, you take some ashes and some water.

You mix it. And you sprinkle it. And it's clean. That's the idea. Instant sacrifice. Right? It makes it so easy. There's all these talk about, you know, 19 verse 11.

Whoever touches the dead body of any person shall be unclean for seven days. He shall cleanse himself with the water on the third day and on the seventh day and so be clean. And no sacrifice. Just the water. Or verse 14. If someone, this is the law when someone dies in a tent, everyone who comes into the tent and everyone who is in the tent shall be unclean for seven days.

[20 : 46] Every open vessel that has no cover fastened on it is unclean. Verse 18. Then a clean person shall take hyssop and dip it in the water and sprinkle it on the tent and all the furnishings and on the person who was there.

And whoever touched the bow, and they will clean. Right? Yeah. Basically, laws to, you know, an easy way to make people clean after death.

And so it's basically a chapter to efficiently deal with dead bodies. That's basically what we have here. A chapter about dealing with dead bodies in a convenient and efficient way. In a way, that makes sense because we just had 15,000 dead bodies that we need to deal with.

What? Well, let's come back to this chapter in a moment. Because death is also the theme of the next chapter. Chapter 20. Very similar. Because if you are in your Bibles, what does it say above 20 verse 1?

The death of Miriam. Miriam was Moses' sister. Right? Her older sister who, you know, brought him to the river. And the people of Israel, the whole congregation, came into the wilderness of sin.

[21 : 50] In the first month, the people stayed in Kadesh and Miriam died there. And if you look down, verse 22. The death of Aaron. So this is surrounded by death.

And in the middle, Moses gets condemned to death for what he did. And actually, what's interesting is that there's a lot of... Chapter 20 is like a copy of chapter 14.

Chapter 14 was the big rebellion. And actually, this chapter has lots of echoes. So for example, this is in Kadesh. Well, Kadesh was exactly the place where chapter 14 happened.

Right? Because they came to Kadesh. Second thing. Moses. He sins. Right? The people grumble. And Moses gets angry. And he strikes the rock.

And God says... He says, you did not believe in me. Right? 21st 12. Because you did not believe in me. And in chapter 14, what was the problem? The people did not believe in me.

[22 : 48] And it's only two times that it appears in this book. What's the result of the sin? Well, you can't enter the land. And then later they try to enter the land. But an army stops them. It's like, hey, we have a copy of chapter 14 here.

We have exactly the same story. It's like... Well... It's like, okay, these are the deaths coming out of chapter 14. The only thing here is the leaders who sin.

Right? It's not the people. It's the leaders. Because leaders are also sinful. We see that so clearly. But as we see chapter 20, I don't know if you found verse 1 interesting.

Because it says, they came to Kadesh in the first month. Now, if you've read your Bible, usually it says the month and the year. Where's the year?

Right? Okay. In March. When is this? It's a bit weird. It should make you think. But actually, later in chapter 33, we find out this is the 40th year.

[23 : 50] So 33 verse 38. It says that... If we can have a slide, please. Yeah.

And Aaron the priest went up Mount Hor at the command of the Lord and died there in the 40th year. After the people of Israel had come out of the land of Egypt on the first day of the fifth month. So this is in the 40th year.

So, you know, remember we had the people of Israel and they were condemned. And now, suddenly, we are already in the 40th year. By the way, so 14 and 20 is almost like, okay, bracketed. This is it. This is the old generation. By the way, poor Moses, right? This was the 40th year. So for 40 years, he walked through the desert hoping that he would go into the land.

And now, in the 40th year, he sinned and he couldn't go in. Poor Moses, right? Maybe you're here in your 50s or 60s or 70s and you think you're there. There's still time for you to reject Christ.

[24 : 51] That's just a warning for the elderly among us. But the thing is, what happens in between? Right? We read about this rebellion in chapter 14 and they reject grace.

And now, suddenly, we are in the 40th year. And what do they do? Where is those 40 years? What happens in these 40 years?

We don't have anything about it. We seem to have jumped. The only thing is this chapter of laws about dead bodies. Well, actually, that is the 40 years.

If you think about those 40 years, what happened on dealing with dead bodies? Actually, that's the only thing that happened. The only thing worth mentioning.

Right? Just this list of instructions. 1.2 million people died in the wilderness. And it doesn't really show how they died, whether they were in a tent or on the way.

[25 : 51] It doesn't show all the burials, all the funerals. It's just 40 years of people dying. Right? It's a little bit like, you know, sometimes you have a war movie.

And in a war, there was a terrible battle. And you know a lot of people died. But it doesn't show the battle. It just shows you a picture like this. And you know what happened. It just doesn't show it. And that's kind of here. But the author wants to say, in a way, this is the reality of death. So here is 40 years of your life.

Basically, your whole adulthood. And the only thing that is left at the end is a dead body. And there's nothing else worth mentioning. Right?

I mean, these people lived for 40 years. They got married. And they had kids. And they raised their family. And they took care of their animals. And they built tents. And they sent around a campfire.

[26 : 46] And they played games and all those things for 40 years. And none of that matters.

Because in the end, all of that is gone. All of that in the end. Well, there's only your dead body left.

That is, I think, what the writer wants to say. That's a dead body that needs disposing. Your whole life was just a waste. Their whole life was just a waste. Pointless, staying in the desert.

In the end, they just died. Such a waste, right? I mean, when I was a student, I wasn't a Christian yet. And, yeah, so I got drunk a few times a week.

That was the most exciting thing that I could do. Two times I remember I woke up the next day. And I didn't even remember. I woke up.

And the last thing I remembered, I was in this bar with my friends. And now I was home. I didn't remember. I mean, I don't know. Did I have a terrible night? Or did I meet the girl of my dreams? I have no idea.

[27 : 50] The thing is, it's gone, right? I just, I've forgotten. I don't remember a word. A single thing. Because I was so drunk. And I thought, what a waste of evening.

What about it? Just a waste. Right? And not just the money. But just, you know. Because if you don't remember, if there's nothing, if it's all gone, then what's the point?

Well, I think that's exactly the thing here. Right? This is the Bible's perspective on death. When you die, this life is just gone. It's forgotten. And the only thing left is your dead body.

It's so sad, right? So tragic. These people were rescued from Egypt. They were meant to go into the promised land and live with God forever. And now their life was just a waste.

They rejected his grace and forgiveness. And now none of that came to pass. And the only thing they had was death. Such a waste. And the New Testament is no different, of course.

[28 : 46] It talks about the fact that we will all die. Right? We're all sinners. We will all die. And that's a waste. Right? And after that comes, yeah. What's even worse?

Because after that comes the second death. Where we will suffer forever. And nothing is left. Right? All the things you did. Your job and your promotions and all your achievements and your family and

all the countries you visited.

And all of that didn't matter in the end because you're dead. That is the reality that the Bible talks about. Right? That's the consequences of sin. The consequences of rejecting forgiveness.

So if you're here, you're not a Christian. Certainly. If you don't have Jesus, let me implore you. Don't let this be you. Right?

Here is. You may have all kinds of questions about Jesus. But I hope you see the importance. You see the big picture. That's... The Bible says we're all sinners and we're all facing judgment.

[29 : 45] We heard how that's necessary. And you see here a little bit how horrifying that is. How tragic that is. And Jesus wants to forgive you. He wants you to come back to him.

He's willing to show all this grace. But you need to come. You need to accept it. And if you don't, I hope you see here that this is terrible. Because then at the end of your life, there's nothing left. Just a dead body.

Don't let this be you. Please come and talk to me afterwards. I'd love to help you. But you need this. And of course, if you are a Christian, don't let go of Jesus. I don't know what your Christian life is like.

I'm sure life is full of disappointments. And frustrations. And struggles. And it can be hard to be a Christian. And it's very tempting sometimes to give up. I hope from today, you really don't want to give up.

You really want to stay as close to Jesus as you can. Because he's the only one who can save you. And if you walk away from Jesus, if you lose him, then you've got nothing left. You really don't want it.

[30 : 46] I think that's the message here. Let it be a wake-up call. Let's share this hope with others. I mean, if you're a mother, I hope this message will tell you, you know, invest in your kids, right?

Pray for them. Teach them about Jesus. Disciple them. Because if they don't have Jesus, then whatever school they got into and whatever uni they got into, it doesn't matter. Right? A hundred years from now, all a waste.

That is what this passage is saying. So, yeah. It has been really depressing. I think this is the lowest point of numbers. I'm sorry if I've ruined your Mother's Day.

That's just what it is. And you may wonder, is there any hope? Right? Is there anything left? Well, yes, there is.

We're going to have three more sermons the next three weeks, and they're all going to be very positive. Do come back for that. But that's why I wanted to finish a little bit with chapter 21.

[31 : 46] Because actually, there's going to be changes. And the change starts in the last chapter. In 21, the tide is turning. We're not going to look at it in detail, but as you go on in chapter 21, after chapter 20, it's very different.

It's like a breath of fresh air. I mean, what happens to the people? They get attacked. And then in verse 2, they suddenly pray. I mean, these people have never prayed before, but they pray.

And then they grumble. And what happens after they grumble? Verse 7, and the people came to Moses and said, we have sinned, for we have spoken against the Lord and against you.

They repent. Right? Again, they haven't done that before. They're praying. They're repenting. They start, and after that, no more grumbling. They start singing. Right?

You see all those indented paragraphs in your Bible. They're singing. Right? They're going through the desert. Hi-ho. Hi-ho. Right? It's a different group of people. And even when they get attacked again, they defeat the army, and they possess some land.

[32 : 49] Right? That was their hope. You know, they were going to go to the promised land and possess it. They're possessing land. They even beat a giant. Right? That they thought they could in chapter 13. No.

It's like, but it's so different. It's like they seem a different people. Well, they are with different people. Right? It's 40 years later. Most of the old generation has died.

Their children are now grown up, and we have a new generation. They're going to be the focus in the next few weeks. But we get a kind of a little glimpse here of hope. But for now, in keeping with the theme here, I mean, look at these people, what they do when they sin.

Right? Because we saw that they repent. They admit their sin. They turn away from it. But they accept grace. Yeah? Because God, of course, when they sin, when they grumble, God sends serpents.

And they pray, please would God take it away. Well, God doesn't take it away. Instead, what does he do? Verse 8. And the Lord said to Moses, make a fiery serpent and set it on a pole, and everyone who is bitten, when he sees it, shall live.

[33 : 59] So Moses needs to make a serpent on a pole. It's a bit, yeah, it's like a copy of the judgment. Right? They're facing punishment, and this is like a copy of the punishment.

And if they look to it, right, if they just see it and trust it, then they will live. Right? The word here is not death. It is they will live. And they do it in verse 9, right?

And if a serpent bit anyone, he would look at the bronze serpent and live. They trusted God's grace and lived. And, of course, if you have read the Bible, maybe you know in John 3, Jesus takes the same story, right?

He says about the cross, about what he's going to do. As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life. Again, we deserve punishment, but on the cross, well, it matches our punishment, right? And Jesus was lifted up, and if we just look to him, if we just see him, trust God's gracious provision, then we will live.

[35 : 03] And so, yeah, again, don't be like this old generation. Come to Jesus. Whatever your sin, whatever you've done, whatever your life has been like so far, you can come to Jesus.

And he will forgive you, and you'll be with him forever. Father, right? That is what we all need. And if you have him, don't let go. Don't choose death like they did. Choose life.

Why don't we pray? Our Father, thank you that you do speak to us.

And sometimes you warn us. You warn us strongly. But they are words of love. Good words that tell us where to go and where not to go. Lord, we pray that each of us would hold on to Jesus.

If we haven't yet come to him, would we do that? Would we see our need? And thank you that whoever we are, we are welcome. And we can be forgiven. And if we have Jesus, would we not let go?

[36 : 06] Whatever life throws at us, whatever it's like to walk through the desert, whatever Christian life throws at us, we need Jesus. Would we hold on to him? Thank you for him. Because we know we didn't deserve it.

We just deserve death. And yet Jesus took that for us. He died in our place. It's so wonderful. Lord, would that be the great news, the good news that we can celebrate today? In Jesus' name. Amen. Amen.