

SERVE IN NEWNESS OF SPIRIT

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Scripture Portions: Num.16:1-34;17:1-11; Rom.6:13-15

Korah, Dathan and Abiram were leading men among their tribes. They were jealous of Moses and so they murmured against him. They wanted name, fame and power. That is the desire of every man in every country. He longs for authority and power over fellow-men, and so by every possible means he tries to have that. You find such men in the assemblies also. Some believers have a desire to become elders in the church. If they are not given that position they fight for it. Some fight with their tongues, and some with their angry looks. If you give them some authority, they are satisfied. That fit is human nature. In the days of Moses these three leading men, men of renown, gathered together about 250 princes. They must have been wise and familiar with the Word of God because they managed to get these princes on their side (Num.16:2). The princes thought that these three men were more concerned about the welfare of people than Moses and Aaron. So they were. Deceived and turned on their side. They all "organized rebellion against Moses and Aaron, the men of God. As a result, they, along with all their possessions were swallowed up (Num. 16:32). The earth opened her mouth and swallowed them up. Their sin was so great that God's judgment fell upon them immediately. Thus you find that much harm is done in families, among God's servants, and churches through jealousy.

Most of our troubles in the family are due to some one's jealousy. Perhaps your brother is against you or your own sister is jealous of you. They wait for an opportunity to do some harm to you. Sometimes in your office your colleagues become jealous of you, when you get promotion. Even in the ministry, if some servant of God is being used of the Lord, others become jealous of him. They think, "Why is so and so given so much importance? In which way is he better than I?" "Thus through jealousy and suspicion, the enemy brings much harm. Jealousy is a great sin and God will judge that sin very severely.

Now those rebels also were saying, "In which way are Moses and Aaron better than we?" Perhaps they were more familiar with the Scriptures, and preached better than even Moses. Perhaps they were more popular and could speak well. So they were proud and thought that they knew more than Moses. That is what many people say even today. "In which way are you better than we? We also read the Bible. We have passed many exams. We know the Bible very well". They do have much Bible knowledge. They know every statement in the Bible about salvation. You cannot find any fault in their teaching, but there is something lacking. Then the rebellious men also said, "Why do you say that you are the only persons whom God has chosen to lead? There are lakhs of people amongst us, but why only two should lead them? We too will bear the responsibility of leading them." They were fighting for leadership. You find the same thing going on in every country and much more among Christians. They have an ambition to have power, fame, name and leadership in the assemblies.

Korah and his company were judged very severely and yet we see that the children of Israel did not stop murmuring against Moses. "But on the morrow all the congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron, saying, Ye have killed the people of the LORD" (Num. 16:41). That is why God told

Moses to take twelve rods, one for each tribe and keep them in the tabernacle. Then He said, "And it shall come to pass, that the man's rod, whom I shall choose, shall blossom: and I will make to cease from me the murmurings of the children of Israel, whereby they murmur against you. And Moses laid up the rods before the Lord in the tabernacle of witness" (Num. 17:5, 7).

God wanted to show who were chosen by Him to lead His people. That is why He asked Moses to put the rods in the tabernacle. The next day, they saw to their surprise that the rod with the name of Aaron had blossomed and yielded almonds. It all happened overnight. Normally it takes a long time for an almond tree to bear fruit. Here in one night, the rod brought forth buds, blossom and fruit. Through this, God was saying that even though Aaron's rod appeared to be the same as other rods, there was a vast difference. There was some kind of life in that rod which other rods did not have. It was heavenly life. When a seed is sown in the ground and watered, it grows because the seed has life in it.

When a seed is sown in the ground and watered, it grows into a tree because the seed has life in it. Sometimes a plant is planted, but it too must be a green one. There must be life in it. Only then it begins to grow. But Aaron's rod was completely a dry one and yet the same dry rod yielded blossom and fruit. The same power was manifested when God created everything as we read in Gen. 1: 11, "And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth: and it was so. "There was no sowing, tilling or gathering. God just spoke and different kinds of trees came forth straightway. That is how in the beginning the whole earth was created.

Some people make fun of the record of creation in the Bible and say, "Did God make the egg first or the chick?" But according to the Bible, all animals came into existence straightway. Adam was created from the earth and Eve from the rib of Adam, but animals were created by God's word. He said and they came into existence. He said, "Let there be light, and there was light." He said, "Let there be birds" and the sky was full of birds. In the same way He said, "Let there be fishes" and there were fishes. That is the power of the word of God. God wanted to give manpower to live forever, but man in his folly wants power only to destroy. Even though Moses and Aaron were ordinary men, yet God had put new life into them. The Spirit of God was working through them.

God appeared to Moses in a dry bush as we read in Exo. 3:2, and told him to go to Pharaoh. Moses said, "I am not eloquent" (Exo. 4:10). As a prince in Egypt, Moses was proud of his wisdom and knowledge, but when he ran away from Egypt and was in the wilderness for forty years, he could see for himself how weak, empty and foolish he was. Once there was a wealthy man who was fond of reading. He prepared a long list of books and bought them, thinking that if he read those books he would become a scholar. One by one he read them all very carefully. After many years of reading his friends asked him, "What have you learned by reading these books?" He said, "I have learned that I know nothing." After reading those books he discovered how foolish and empty he was. That is our condition. When we are empty and foolish, we make much noise. An empty tin makes much noise. So also with the crop. Before it ripens it is straight but once it is ripe, it bends.

Moses was proud in Pharaoh's palace, but now he is humble. With all his wisdom he thought he was able only to look after the sheep. Even though he had

much knowledge he was willing to work as a shepherd. Supposing a person has obtained his Ph.D. or any other high degree. When he applies for a job and shows his certificates and testimonials, the only job offered to him is that of looking after swine. That was the condition of Moses. Even though he was learned in all the wisdom of Egypt and was mighty in word and deed, still he was looking after sheep. He had become totally dry and empty. God had allowed that. When Moses became empty God appeared to him in a bush. God poured new life into him and called him for a great ministry. According to Exodus. 4: 12, he became God's mouthpiece. Later, God showed him on the mountain the plan for building the tabernacle. He was not to take any suggestion from anyone. In every small detail he had to obey God. In Exo. 40: 16, we read this phrase, "according to all that the Lord commanded Moses". It is repeated a number of times in the same chapter (vs. 19, 21, 23, 25, 27, 29, 32). Moses had to obey the Lord and give His message at His command. Whatever God told him he spoke without adding anything to it. But Korah and his followers thought that Moses was saying everything in his own wisdom.

Even though Moses and Aaron spoke the same words as others, yet there was life in their words. One could find new life flowing through their words. In John 7: 46 we have this testimony about our Lord Jesus. "Never man spake like this man". There was authority in every word that He spoke. Whether it was a rebuke or a warning, there was authority in it. He had the words of eternal life. "For he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes" (Matt. 7: 29). Luke 4: 22 says, "And all bare him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth".

Whenever the Lord Jesus Christ spoke, power came out of Him. Even though the Pharisees knew it, they were blind. They were not willing to accept Him. Light rejected becomes darkness. They only opposed Him and were jealous of Him. It was the same with Korah and the people who followed him. Rather than accepting the message of Moses as God's message, they regarded it as man's message. When they heard him speak, they said, "we also can speak like him:" Even though they could repeat the same words, there was a difference. Moses had the authority of God, which they did not have.

When I worked as a cook in a hotel in Canada, I used to prepare different kinds of food. The head cook there who was drawing As. 1,000/- a month, was very clever. Whenever I took leave for a day or two he would ask me to give him the recipe, so that he could serve the same food. Very gladly I used to give him all the instructions. He used to cook accordingly and serve the food using my name also. But the people said, "It looks nice and alright, but the taste is different. That is quite true. Even at home, you can make out whether it is your mother's preparation or your wife's, because the taste will be different.

When Moses spoke, he did not use his own words. He spoke what God told him to speak. There was power and authority in every word. But these men, because they were princes, thought surely they too could speak like Moses. God showed them through the budding rod that they were only like dry rods, whereas Moses and Aaron had power in them. God proved that He had chosen them for His service. Many people want to become great preachers in the world by getting much knowledge. They learn some passages by heart. They pass many examinations and learn many phrases but they have no peace in their hearts. There is no joy and no power in them. One can see only dryness; though they may teach and preach very cleverly in

the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ. In Matt. 7:22, 23, we have a solemn warning. "Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? And in thy name have cast out devils? And in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."