

“Through the Bible in a Year with Pastor Don and the FBC Family”

March 15, 2016

- ✓ Numbers 16:1-50 – Challenge to Moses’ authority.
- ✓ John 21:1-25 – Jesus appears to His disciples by the sea.
- ✓ Psalm 17:1-15—Appeal to Heavenly Supreme Court.

REFLECTIONS:

Numbers 16:1-50. Many of the Israelites were unsatisfied with Moses’ leadership because he had not yet brought them into the Promised Land, so they rebelled against Him. It is quite amazing how quick a believer can blame a spiritual leader when the problem is their own failing

spiritual life, for which he is supposed to give them power lesson or formula much like a drug to heighten an otherwise languishing spiritual life—whether the “lesson” is true or not becomes irrelevant. The rebels in our text are rebelling against God’s plan and the closest target is God’s appointed leadership. These rebels were led by men of high standing, like Korah. Note their corrupted and perverted memory and perspective by describing Egypt as the land “flowing with milk and honey.” Observe God’s response in



verses 31-33. What a powerful lesson for the rest of the Israelites! However, note the next day: *Numbers 16:41* *On the next day all the congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and Aaron, saying, "You have killed the people of the LORD."* How quickly they forgot the fearful judgment that had fallen the day before. Even more, they had the gall to blame Moses for killing them—as if he could have caused the Earth to open up and swallow the rebels—as they arrogantly boasted of being “the people of the Yahweh.” One’s attitude to spiritual leaders often reveals one’s attitude to the plan of God in general. Appreciation for Truth always leads to appreciation of those who labor to give them the Truth.

John 21:1-25. In verse 15 we see an interchange between Jesus and Peter. We have a threefold question, triple answer, and a triple commission. One thing that I would like to bring out in this interchange is that Peter did not have to go through severe suffering to learn his lesson. The idea that God *must* use suffering before a believer can “get it” does not square with the Whole Truth of Scripture.

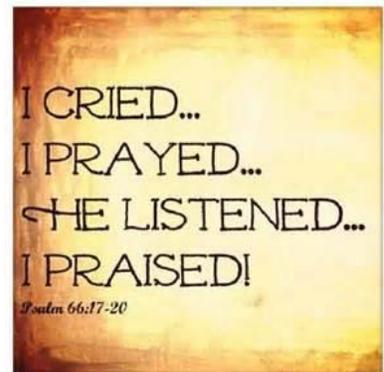
The idea that suffering always produces a greater good is not true either, as evidenced above in Numbers 16. Although I am not denying that one can learn certain



things in suffering, I am denying that God must use suffering to achieve our greater good. By the way, note that there is not one passage in the entire Word of God that says the believer should thank God FOR sufferings, which should be the case if sufferings are absolutely necessary for a

better spiritual life with the Lord . . . more in our next Bible class. For now, let us turn our attention back to Peter and the Lord. First, observe the threefold question about “love,” which is meant to get Peter to revisit and repudiate his threefold denial—as each “love” was a rebuke against each ‘I know not the Man!’ All Christ needed to do here was to get Peter to retrace his shameful denials of the Lord. This act by Christ was an act of grace by providing Peter to think about his past and openly proclaim his love for the Lord. It also shows that love is the key virtue that Christ looks for in His own. Second, we have Peter’s triple answer, ‘Yea, Lord, You know that I love You.’ Peter was sure about his love for the Lord and every believer should have that same assurance. It should be pointed out that love for the Lord is not totally inconsistent with sinfulness. In other words, just because a believer sins does not mean that he does not love the Lord. Love is measured by one’s desire for Christ. Of course, there are sins which are totally incompatible with love for the Lord, like living for this world rather than for Jesus Christ. Third, note the triple commission: to feed and tend both the sheep and the lambs. Love for Christ is to be expressed by feeding the lambs and feeding the sheep—just as every believer who loves God will love his brother also. It is love for Christ that gives us the proper motive in all that we do in this life as we prepare for the next life. May God grant us the supernatural power to be able to say “You know all things; You know that I love You.”

Psalm 17:1-15. In this psalm David makes three appeals to God. First, he appeals to God *to hear* him based on the fact that David was righteous in this cause—note the emphasis on his own integrity in the first five verses. Second, he appeals to God’s faithful character in answering prayers of the righteous in verse 6. Third, David entreats God to divine action (13, 14) as he faces suffering from evil doers. He does not see the evil as coming directly from God. Rather, he seeks deliverance from this evil by God. We live in a broken world and much of our sorrow is from our disjointed world; and we are to appeal to God to deliver us from evil. This is different than the common view that God needs to bring evil and suffering into our lives to make us better. Neither David nor others in the Bible thanked God for evil and suffering, which they should have done if it came from God and made them better. Rather, they looked to Him to deliver them from evil and suffering, which so permeates our fallen, broken world.



In, by, with, through, and for *Esse*,

Pastor Don