



Scott Turansky, Senior Pastor
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NUMBERS 1

Numbers Series

[PRAYER] Lord, there is a particular quality that we need that you offer to us and I want to ask you for that now. It's that quality of peace that is different than the world's peace. As Jesus said, it's a *peace that passes all understanding*. Sometimes I feel like if I understand something then I can have peace, or if it makes sense then I can have peace, or if I've got the answers then I can have peace. But there's this other peace that you give that I really need in my heart, and so do my brothers and sisters here. So I would ask that you would impart that to us. We know, Lord, that that peace comes when we entrust ourselves to you and we sacrifice our desire for control in this world. So we want to be humble before you and ask you to provide for us that special gift that you offer to us.

Lord, allow us to go around this week with this sense of joy in our hearts and peace because we know you and because we've given our hearts to you and because we're serving you. We don't know what this week's going to bring, but we do know that you are the God who can offer us peace in the midst of all the challenges that are there. We may experience conflict and we may experience challenges or surprises that we didn't anticipate. We can come to you and ask for peace.

So this morning, Lord, we're asking that you would take that peace and wash it over our bodies from our heads down to our toes. Free us up so that as we think about our world and the things going on, we think about our lives and the challenges we face, we can enjoy that peace that you provide. In Jesus' name, amen.

Today is the day we get to start the book of Numbers. Did anybody read a chapter in the book of Numbers to kind of get an orientation of what's going on? If you've read anything about this book you're going to see that it has a lot of numbers in it. We're going to start right in chapter 1, but let's step back and let me give you an introduction to the book.

In Hebrew the name isn't Numbers. In the Hebrew Torah the name is *BaMidbar*, which means 'in the wilderness'. That's because the main key word as you're coming into the passage if you look at chapter 1 verse 1 it says in the wilderness. They named it that. That's going to be important because Numbers is all about the wandering in the wilderness. So they called this book 'in the wilderness.'

When the Hebrew Scriptures were translated into Greek (we call that the Septuagint translation), they gave this book a name, *Arithmoi*. They name it *Arithmoi* where we get our word ‘arithmetic’ after the census that was taken in chapter 1 and chapter 26.

Later it was translated into the Latin Vulgate and when it was translated in the Latin the name then was *Numeri*, after the same *Arithmoi* from the Septuagint. And obviously in English that’s where we get our name Numbers.

Now those are important because they tie into these census that are taking place. By the time you’re done today you’ll see why it’s called the book of Numbers.

The book of Numbers is the fourth of five books of Moses in the Old Testament. We call them the Pentateuch. In the Hebrew they’re called the Torah. When you have these first five books, you have Genesis (which is the book of beginnings), you have Exodus (which is the book of redemption as they’re coming out of Egypt), you have Leviticus (which is the book of worship as they’re learning how to worship God), the book of Numbers is about warfare and movement (a lot of motion in the book of Numbers), and Deuteronomy is about second chances and about the preparation to go into the Promised Land. We’re going to zero in on the book of Numbers.

But before you look at Numbers 1:1, I want you to turn with me to Romans 15:4 or you can just look at it on the slide on the screen. This verse excites me about opening the Bible to anywhere that we want to open it. Some of the passages are 2,000 years old or 2,500 years old, yet anytime we open God’s word there’s an excitement when we come to it because Paul tells us in Romans 15:4, *For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through the endurance taught in the Scriptures and the encouragement they provide we might have hope.*

So every time I open God’s word, I don’t care whether it’s in the book of Psalms or in the book of Ephesians or in the book of Exodus or Numbers, wherever it is I can learn something. It will teach me and *through the endurance taught in the Scriptures and the encouragement they provide we might have hope.* And I need hope in my life.

Now to be more specific I’m going to take this same idea because Paul now applies this to the Corinthians in 1 Corinthians 10. One of my favorite verses of scripture is 1 Corinthians 10:13 which says, *There’s no temptation taken you but such as is common to mankind. God is faithful; who will not let you be tempted above what you’re able, but will with the temptation make a way to escape so that you can bear up under it.* Great verse. I love it. I use it all the time in my counseling practices, as I’m teaching people. I help parents know how to apply this in their parenting. It’s a great verse.

But if you look at 1 Corinthians 10 and we look at the whole context, I want you to see that the passage really has the context of Old Testament teaching behind it. In 1 Corinthians 10 starting in verse 6 it says this: *Now these things occurred as examples to keep us from setting our hearts on evil things as they did.*

We’re going to see in verse 13 it says *there is no temptation except that is common to man.* In other words, the same temptations we experience today are the same ones they experienced back

in the wilderness wanderings, the same experience they experienced back in Jesus' time or Paul's time. *There is no temptation that comes to us except that is common to man.*

So Paul is saying, *Now these things occurred as examples to keep us from setting our hearts on evil things as they did. Do not be idolaters, as some of them were; as it is written: "The people sat down to eat and drink and got up to indulge in revelry." We should not commit sexual immorality, as some of them did—and in one day twenty-three thousand of them died.* We'll read about that story in the book of Numbers. *We should not test Christ, as some of them did—and were killed by snakes.* We'll read about that in the book of Numbers. *And do not grumble, as some of them did—and were killed by the destroying angel.* We'll read about that in the book of Numbers. There are a lot of stories we've got in the book of Numbers to come.

It continues that in the passage. *These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us, on whom the culmination of the ages has come. So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall!* Great warning for any of us. Especially those of us who tend to have a little more confidence than others. Confidence can get us into trouble.

Here's my favorite verse or at least one of my favorite verses: *No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind.* Just like the things that happened back there as they're wandering around the wilderness, we can learn from because they will help us in our temptations.

And God is faithful. We're going to learn about God's faithfulness in the book of Numbers.

He will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out. Sometimes we wish we could get out of this, but notice the rest of the verse. I'm glad he puts the rest of the verse in there – *a way out so that you can endure it.* Sometimes the way out is underneath the pressure. Stay there and endure it.

Beautiful passage in 1 Corinthians 10. But for now we're going to Numbers 1.

Numbers 1:1: *The Lord spoke to Moses in the tent of meeting in the Desert of Sinai on the first day of the second month of the second year after the Israelites came out of Egypt.*

Now those words, do you see the first words there, *the Lord spoke to Moses.* One commentator wrote (and I did not count this myself, you can count yourself) 150 times in the book of Numbers it says *the Lord spoke to Moses.* I assume it's some large number because we see it over and over again.

But notice in verse 1 it's giving us some timing of the book. How long were they there? What does the timing that the book of Numbers is going to cover and we'll see that it says there *the first day of the second month of the second year after the Israelites came out of Egypt.* So in their second year, second month, first day, that's when God spoke to Moses and gave the instructions and the things that happened in this passage, in this chapter 1, are going to take place on that day.

That's the starting of the book of Numbers. If we want to find out what happens at the end of the book of Numbers then we're going to go and look at the first verses of Deuteronomy. That's the next book and we'll see what the time frame is there. So we'll be able to see where we are in that whole process.

After the book of Numbers we have Deuteronomy 1:2-3. Now verse 2 I find very interesting. In verse 2 the writer, Moses, throws us in there. *It takes eleven days to go from Horeb to Kadesh Barnea by the Mount Seir road.* Eleven days to go from down by Mount Sinai where Horeb is, up to Kadesh, which is close to the Promised Land. Eleven days. That's how long it takes to take the trip. Eleven days. It took them thirty-eight years to take that trip. Forty years of wandering. They took the long route.

I would suggest that some of us do the same thing. There's the easy route and the long route in our lives. If we're taking the long route, we go round and round and round and round until we learn the lessons we need to learn until we can get where we need to be. There's an easier way to get there. I try to explain this to young people because sometimes young people want to do it their own way. Yeah, you can do it your own way. Sometimes you end up wandering out in the wilderness for a long period of time before you get where you need to be. There's an easy way and a hard way to do this and these guys took the long way.

But now back to our point to finding out the timing here. *In the fortieth year, on the first day of the eleventh month, Moses proclaimed to the Israelites all that the Lord had commanded him concerning them.* So that gives us the timing of the end of the book of Numbers going into Deuteronomy. It's the fortieth year, the first day of the eleventh month. That's going to be forty years they were out in the wilderness wandering and so there's about thirty-eight or more years in this book of Numbers that we're going to be looking at specifically.

I want you to imagine the logistics for a moment of moving from the land of Goshen (which is Egypt) where they crossed the Red Sea. They went down to Mount Sinai (that's Horeb) and then they came up toward the Promised Land but then had to wander around the wilderness for a while before they get up to Jericho, crossing the Jordan River into Israel, and Zion is Jerusalem. That is basically the path with a lot of circles and turns, I assume, for forty years as they're moving around all of that place.

I want you to imagine the logistics of moving 2-3 million people along that path. I know some of you have a hard time getting yourself ready for church in the morning. That's logistics for you. Some of you have a responsibility of trying to motivate a family to get out the door to go to church in the morning. That is logistics. Others of you work in companies where there's 500 employees or a thousand employees or more and you have a responsibility to try to work with them. You know what logistics are when you're trying to deal with a large group of people. This is 2-3 million people moving from one place to another. That's a management exercise. It's going to be a challenge to move them.

The pillar, the cloud or the pillar of fire is going to move and when it moves everybody moves. But are they going to move like bees in a hive and everybody just pick up and go like randomly? No. There's going to be a system to moving which we're going to see next week in chapter 2.

In fact, in chapter 1 we're going to see the counting of the fighting men. Chapter 2 we're going to see how they encamped in order and we're going to see how they progress when they started moving or marching. We'll see what that looked like. Chapter 3 we're going to look at the Levites and priests' responsibility. That will get us forward a few weeks.

Let's move on to verse 2. *He said* (this is God speaking to Moses): *“Take a census of the whole Israelite community by their clans and families, listing every man by name, one by one. You and Aaron are to count according to their divisions all the men in Israel who are twenty years old or more and able to serve in the army.”*

Fourteen times in this chapter 1 we're going to see those words *able to serve in the army* because he's trying to pull together this army. Who are they going to be? These people came out of Egypt. They were not mighty warriors. They need to be trained. They need to learn how to follow their commanding officer who's going to be God. Moses is going to learn how to lead.

So this first chapter is about counting the fighting men. We're going to use it in part to determine the population of this group of people that are coming out.

One of the neat things about this passage for me in studying is it's a passage about leadership in the book of Numbers. Moses is learning how to lead. How do you lead 2-3 million people? We're going to see how Moses does that.

One of the things God is going to teach him right off the bat here starting in verse 4 is about delegating responsibilities. *One man from each tribe, each of them the head of his family, is to help you.* So now you've got these twelve guys who are going to help you move forward.

Verse 5: *These are the names of the men who are to assist you.* Now we're going to have twelve tribes mentioned and the person in each tribe and their father. So we're going to get their family. We have to know who the person is who is going to be the helper in that situation.

The twelve tribes are mentioned. Reuben is the first tribe – *from Reuben, Elizur son of Shedeur; from Simeon, Shelumiel son of Zurishaddai; from Judah, Nahshon son of Amminadab; from Issachar, Nethanel son of Zuar; from Zebulun, Eliab son of Helon; from the sons of Joseph.*

Let's just pause there for just a moment. It says *from the sons of Joseph* because Joseph was one of the twelve sons of Jacob. But when Jacob came to bless his sons, of the twelve sons he blessed Joseph with a double blessing. So he took his two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, and laid his hands on them and blessed them, giving Joseph (the one who had rescued them out of slavery), a double blessing.

It's interesting just as we continue on that there are twelve allotments of land that will be distributed among the people. Manasseh will get one and Ephraim will get the other, representing Joseph's two sons, but there are twelve tribes. The thirteenth tribe or the thirteenth group of people is the Levites. They won't get any land. They'll be distributed all throughout. We'll see

that at the end of the passage as well. So we still have twelve tribes we're dealing with and then the thirteenth group is the Levites. They're also a tribe and we'll learn more about them.

Verse 10: *From the sons of Joseph: the first from Ephraim, Elishama son of Ammihud; from Manasseh, Gamaliel son of Pedahzur; from Benjamin, Abidan son of Gideoni; from Dan, Ahiezer son of Ammishaddai; from Asher, Pagiell son of Okran; from Gad, Eliasaph son of Deuel; from Naphtali, Ahira son of Enan.* So if you're looking for names for your children, you can have a list of them there. These are the heads of the tribes.

Notice in verse 16 as we continue it says, *These were the men appointed from the community, the leaders of their ancestral tribes. They were the heads of the clans of Israel.*

Moses and Aaron took these men whose names had been specified, and they called the whole community together on the first day of the second month. This is the same day that Moses received the instructions from God. He gives the instructions to the people and they gather together for this huge task of numbering the people.

The people registered their ancestry by their clans and families, and the men twenty years old or more were listed by name, one by one, as the Lord commanded Moses. And so he counted them in the Desert of Sinai.

This is no small task. We're going to see as we add up the numbers that there were over 600,000 men to be counted here. Six hundred thousand is a lot of men that are going to form this army, that they're going to need as they're continuing to wander around, face the challenges they have, and they need to be trained.

I want to stop just for a moment. I want to ask the important question, how important is size? Are numbers important? How important is church size? Are numbers important?

There's an extent in which sometimes we say numbers are not important. We are called here whether it's two of us or five of us or 85 of us, which is about our size right now. It doesn't make any difference what the numbers are. We're here to do a job and that is to grow spiritually, to encourage each other in our faith, to worship the Lord. We can do that with no numbers. It doesn't make any difference what the numbers are.

But the people who say numbers aren't important aren't church planters. Church planters know that numbers are very important. Because if you're going to have a sustainable church that's going to have a building and you're going to be in a community and people are going to come and going to be a part of it and it's going to grow, numbers are important. There's a certain number that allows the church to continue to grow and be that kind of a church over a period of time. It's a critical mass that is accumulated. There's a certain number of people that allows the church to be sustainable financially.

Here's some statistics: 59% of churches in America are under 100 people. So that's almost 60% of all the churches in America are under 100 people. Here's another statistic: 50% of all the people who attend church attend churches that are 350 people or more. That means that 10% of

the churches (that's only 10% of the churches that are 350 and up), 10% of the churches have over 50% of the people who attend church. Numbers are important.

There are some times when people have come to visit our church and decide they can't come to this church because there's not enough of people like them. Maybe not enough single girls, if they're guys looking. Or not enough singles at all. Or maybe there's not enough young people. That's not true anymore. We have more young people than we had before. Maybe not enough young married couples or seniors or whatever it might be. People are trying to see, is this church for me?

So numbers are important. It's important for us to recognize that and even to be able to address that as we continue on. That doesn't mean we want to be anxious about that.

There's a certain kind of person that comes to a church like this that doesn't have a lot of numbers. It's a person who's a pioneer, not a settler. It's a person who has a sense of, "Wow, I want to be a part of what God is doing in some big way. God is starting something here. I want to be a part of what is happening." So I admire you guys for being a part of this. I'm grateful that you're here and doing what's happening here with us.

My son, Josh, visited here about two years ago when we were first starting. It was probably about a year and a half ago, I guess, that he came. We were doing video worship like this. I said, "Just sit in the back and watch because even though we're doing video worship, people are worshipping. Our church loves to sing." I think he might have been a little skeptical coming from Calvary Chapel Costa Mesa, the big Calvary Chapel where all of this started. So he sat in the back and afterwards he said, "You know, I'm really surprised. This really works, this video worship."

My son said to me as we were departing, "Let me know when you break 100 in attendance." Why did he say that? Because that's that line, the first significant kind of numerical landmark that we're trying to reach that will help us to be moving toward being a sustainable church. I'll tell you, when we hit 100 on a non-Easter or non-holiday or non-special event Sunday, then I will tell my son, I'll post it on Facebook or something – "Hey, we broke 100." It's just a step in the process as we're moving forward.

Numbers are important in the Bible. The Bible tells us there were 120 people waiting in the upper room waiting for the Holy Spirit to come down on Pentecost. The Bible tells us there were 5,000 men when Jesus fed the multitudes. Numbers are important. There were 3,000 people saved at Pentecost. And there is a whole book now dedicated to the census, numbering people. I think it's important.

Here's why I think numbers are important: because God is concerned about the details. He's not just concerned about the big picture, the visionary kinds of things. God is concerned about the details. He's concerned about every one of us. In fact, He's so concerned about us the Bible says that *even the very hairs of our head are numbered*, demonstrating His care and His interest in the details.

Let's look at some of the numbers mentioned in chapter 1 of the book of Numbers. *From the descendants of Reuben the firstborn son of Israel: All the men twenty years old or more who were able to serve in the army were listed by name, one by one, according to the records of their clans and families. The number from the tribe of Reuben was 46,500.*

From the descendants of Simeon: All the men twenty years old or more who were able to serve in the army were counted and listed by name, one by one, according to the records of their clans and families. The number from the tribe of Simeon was 59,300.

From the descendants of Gad: All the men twenty years old or more who were able to serve in the army were listed by name, according to the records of their clans and families. The number from the tribe of Gad was 45,650.

I just want to point out that the numbers start at twenty. Okay? Twenty years old and up. God sees something in twenty year olds and up that makes them qualified to fight the battle and win the war. That's significant. If you're in your twenties, you're in a very key place. Of course we see other places in scripture where God is using children and young people to serve Him. Every one of us is capable to serve the Lord.

I really like the passage when John is speaking. He's saying, *I am writing to you, young men, because you have overcome the evil one.* Young men, listen. Stand up and be counted. Don't wait for some other thing to happen. You are capable. God has empowered you. There is something about being that age that is pretty significant.

Let's go on. Verse 26: *From the descendants of Judah: All the men twenty years old or more who were able to serve in the army were listed by name, according to the records of their clans and families. The number from the tribe of Judah was 74,600.*

From the descendants of Issachar: All the men twenty years old or more who were able to serve in the army were listed by name, according to the records of their clans and families. The number from the tribe of Issachar was 54,400.

From the descendants of Zebulun: All the men twenty years old or more who were able to serve in the army were listed by name, according to the records of their clans and families. The number from the tribe of Zebulun was 57,400.

Now the numbers are going to add up here in a moment. You can get your calculator out if you want. It's 603,550. That's how many fighting men there were. But I want you to know that of the 603,550, 603,548 of them died in the wilderness. Only two of those guys made it into the Promised Land. That's pretty significant.

I want to be like Joshua and Caleb who said, "Give me that territory. I want to go in." That's the kind of person I want to be. We make choices in our lives of where we're going to be and what we're going to do. It's pretty significant to me that most of these people that are being named here by name die in the wilderness. I want to be like Joshua and Caleb.

Verse 32: *From the sons of Joseph (now we have to remember two families there): From the descendants of Ephraim: All the men twenty years old or more who were able to serve in the army were listed by name, according to the records of their clans and families. The number from the tribe of Ephraim was 40,500.*

From the descendants of Manasseh: All the men twenty years old or more who were able to serve in the army were listed by name, according to the records of their clans and families. The number from the tribe of Manasseh was 32,200.

From the descendants of Benjamin: All the men twenty years old or more who were able to serve in the army were listed by name, according to the records of their clans and families. The number from the tribe of Benjamin was 35,400.

From the descendants of Dan: All the men twenty years old or more who were able to serve in the army were listed by name, according to the records of their clans and families. The number from the tribe of Dan was 62,700.

There's a couple more tribes. We'll get to them in a minute. These guys are all going to be preparing for war. There's a battle. It's really interesting as we're going through the book of Numbers we're going to see them preparing for battle. There's a same analogy used in the New Testament for us as believers that we're part of a battle. In Ephesians 6 we have the armor of God, the armor that we need to put on in order to fight the battle.

So I want you to identify with the challenges that are faced in this Old Testament passage and recognize that we're part of the battle too. God has called us for some important reason. Sometimes the battle that we need to fight is the one inside of our own hearts as we're wrestling with challenges that are inside of us that need to be addressed. Sometimes the battle is outside and we need to be ready for it.

Let's do the last two tribes here.

From the descendants of Asher: All the men twenty years old or more who were able to serve in the army were listed by name, according to the records of their clans and families. The number from the tribe of Asher was 41,500.

From the descendants of Naphtali: All the men twenty years old or more who were able to serve in the army were listed by name, according to the records of their clans and families. The number from the tribe of Naphtali was 53,400.

Twelve tribes. Now we get to the totals. Verse 44: *These were the men counted by Moses and Aaron and the twelve leaders of Israel, each one representing his family. All the Israelites twenty years old or more who were able to serve in Israel's army were counted according to their families. The total number was 603,550.*

So let's take that number just for a moment, 603,550, and let's do some math to get our population figures. If there's 603,550 men, twenty years old and older who are fighting age,

fighting ability, that means there's going to be some older people, some elderly people who are probably not going to be of fighting age that are not counted in that. But of the 603,550 men there's probably an equal number of women, if we have men and women equally distributed. So let's multiply that number by two and we're going to have 1.2 million.

Now we can assume that there's going to be some children, some people less than twenty years old, and some elderly people. If we just take one person for every one of those men, the 603,550 fighting men, if we say there's at least one person then we're going to add another 603,550 to that and we're going to get 1,810,650. And that doesn't count the Levites. We haven't talked about them yet.

So it's a very conservative number that we're going to end up at 2 million. Likely the number of children under twenty years of age and the elderly is going to be more than just one per of those. It's probably going to be a couple. So we can easily estimate that we're dealing with a group of people that's 2-3 million (at least) that they're moving around with in the wilderness. That's a huge group of people.

The logistics are amazing. The leadership skills that Moses is going to need are really valuable – things that I can learn from Moses – because people are not going to cooperate all the time. He's got to lead humans. Any of you who are involved in management or leadership know that leading people is a challenge.

Let's just finish off the passage here. Verse 47 now is going to tell us about the Levites that aren't counted in the numbers. Verse 47: *The ancestral tribe of the Levites, however, was not counted along with the others. The Lord had said to Moses: "You must not count the tribe of Levi or include them in the census of the other Israelites."*

See, the Levites don't go to war. Although they are going to carry the tabernacle in front when they do go to war, they themselves are not going to be the soldiers. They have another purpose in the community and it's mentioned as we continue on in verse 50.

Instead, appoint the Levites to be in charge of the tabernacle of the covenant law—over all its furnishings and everything belonging to it. They are to carry the tabernacle and all its furnishings; they are to take care of it and encamp around it. Whenever the tabernacle is to move, the Levites are to take it down, and whenever the tabernacle is to be set up, the Levites shall do it.

They had a portable church (like us) set up and take down every time they had to move somewhere. Just like we do. But notice it says there were certain people they had that responsibility to do it. No one else could do it. I just want you to know that in our fellowship, any of you can do it. I just want you to know. But it says there, *Anyone else who approaches it is to be put to death.*

Verse 52: *The Israelites are to set up their tents by divisions, each of them in their own camp under their standard.* If you imagine this... We're going to imagine it a little more next week

when we look at the encampment and how they camped and how they marched. We're going to imagine their standard.

A standard is a banner. So you can imagine – you want to know where your group is. We're talking about 2-3 million people. We're talking about a huge camp. I'm trying to find pictures on the internet of drawings of the huge immenseness of the camp. If I just give you an imagination of what it would be like, I'll share that with you next week. But they had banners or flags up that would tell you that's where my family is or that's where my tribe is. You would have to find your camp where your family is. So flags everywhere, just trying to indicate where people were. They were called the standards.

Verse 53: *The Levites, however, are to set up their tents around the tabernacle of the covenant law so that my wrath will not fall on the Israelite community.* So you have the tabernacle and around the tabernacle you have all the Levites all around there, surrounding that. Their whole tribe of thousands and thousands of people, and then outside of that you have an organized camp, which we'll have more about that in chapter 2. *The Levites are to be responsible for the care of the tabernacle of the covenant law.*

Verse 54 is a very important verse. I'm glad it's included here. Just another reminder for each one of us. *The Israelites did all this just as the Lord commanded Moses.* I would suggest that we need to do all that God commands us. That when God prompts us to do something, we need to obey Him. We need to do what He commands and we need to follow His leadership.

There are several lessons I want to point out from this chapter. One of them, first of all, is that God is an orderly God. God is concerned about the details. He's concerned about the specifics of things. I really appreciate that about God. He's a caring God and He cares about the details. Which means that He cares about the details of each of our lives. Jesus tells us that God cares for us like the birds that fly or the flowers that grow, that God cares for us even more than that. Those are details.

You never want to say, "Well I don't want to bring this before God because He's too busy." You never want to say, "God doesn't care about this little thing in my life." God cares about every single thing in our lives. Every single thing that's going on in our hearts. He cares about the details of our lives, the logistics of our lives. He's concerned about the things that are going on as we move around everywhere, the things that we think about. He's concerned about those details, those little things. He's concerned about the little things. That's part of His care for us. Don't ever forget that. That's number one.

The second thing I want to point out from this passage is that He's mustering people for war. As we already mentioned, we are engaged in a battle. So we can learn a lot and we can empathize with the people in the book of Number, the Israelites as they're wandering around facing the challenges that they face, because we too face challenges. We're in a war.

The third thing I want to point out is that in God's care for us He knows us by name. I'm just intrigued – 603,550 people written down *by name*. Their names were written down. The Bible

tells us that when we become a Christian that our names get written in a book, the Lamb's book of life. Our names are written there. God cares about us individually. He cares about us by name.

And He's worthy to be trusted. So I encourage you today, if you've never trusted Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, He cares about you. He knows your name. He knows your life. He knows about your logistics. He knows what's happening and He wants to be a part of that. He wants to guide you through the maze and maneuver through life. He wants to lead you like the Israelites are going to be led by the cloud or the pillar of fire. All of those things He wants to do in your life. So if you've not trusted Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, I want to invite you to do that today. It's the first step. Get your name written in that Lamb's book of life. Allow God to work in your heart in that special way.

It's a privilege to be a Christian. It's a privilege to be identified with the Lord. It's a privilege that other people don't enjoy it. They don't even understand it. I know you come across people and they don't get it. They just don't get it. But you know that God loves you, He cares about you. The special things in your life are really important.

In just a moment I'm going to pray and then we're going to worship the Lord. During these moments I trust that you will take these as an opportunity for God to speak to your heart. Let God speak to you. What is He saying to you that might make your week different, your day different, that might make you a different person because you are learning to trust Him more?

Let's stand together and pray.

[PRAYER] Heavenly Father, I just want to thank you for your interest in the details. As we go through this book, we ask that you teach us and lead us. Help us to have hope because of the lessons learned in this passage, to develop perseverance as we study the Israelites and their path throughout the wilderness. Lord, I pray that you'd give us the grace to trust you and learn how to trust you and what that looks like in very practical ways. Lord, thank you for the intimate knowledge that you have of each of us. That can be scary sometimes, but we know that you're good. You're in control and it's okay for us to reveal ourselves or to open ourselves up to you and to be real and honest with you. Thank you that you know us very personally. In Jesus' name, amen.