



Scott Turansky, Senior Pastor  
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## NUMBERS 5-6

Numbers Series

[PRAYER] Lord, I want to ask you now that you would help us to learn to be content so that we're not always feeling anxious and upset in our own hearts. But Lord, we know that there is a godly discontent that we also need in our lives. So we ask you to make us uncomfortable with the present, always wanting to move forward, getting closer to you, growing in our spiritual development, taking risks for you, moving forward. Lord, we're asking you to churn that up inside of our hearts so that we are always thinking about what you want next and what we need to do. In the midst of that, keep us content so that we aren't anxious about tomorrow and about next year, but we can trust in you and rely on you. So balance those things out inside of our hearts. Today as we look at your word we do so with this sense of anticipation, knowing that you speak to us as we open your word. So would you do that miracle that you regularly do when we open your word, and talk to us now. In Jesus' name, amen.

We are in the book of Numbers. If you want to open your Bible, you can open your Bible to Numbers 5 and 6. That's what we're going to look at today. As we do, in Numbers 5 and 6 I want you to experience in essence what they're experiencing in their journey.

Do you remember the Israelites, only seventy of that family went down to Egypt and then when they came out of Egypt they had like two million people. Two million people. That is a lot of people. I looked up on the internet today the population of the states of the United States. Fourteen states in the United States have less than two million people in them. We're talking about there's a hundred nations or – they don't call them provinces or possessions – a hundred of them that have less than two million people.

So there's this huge group, a nation of people coming out and they don't know to a great extent what they're doing. They need a lot of instruction. So in our Bible we have a lot of instruction given to them. If you start at Exodus 19 (you've got Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy), you go all the way through the book of Exodus, all the way through the book of Numbers, all the way then to Numbers 10, all of that period of time is all that time down by Mount Sinai where God is giving them instructions. He's telling them how they should live because they've never done this before.

They don't know how to live. They don't know what they're doing. They don't know about public health and they don't know about social justice and they don't know about abusing authority in a marriage relationship. They don't know about that. They don't know what to do with it. So God is giving them all kinds of instruction.

When we come to Numbers 5, we're at a place where He's going to give three instructions – one for public health, one for social justice, and another for abuse in a marriage relationship. That's what we're going to look at and those are just three examples. If we look at all of the law, we'll see a lot more examples of all kinds of things. But as we go in now, He's giving them instructions to know how to respond. How do you deal with some of these things that are challenging. What do you do in order to make this work?

If you look at Numbers 5:1, it starts the same way we're going to see several times here. *The Lord said to Moses, "Command the Israelites to send away from the camp anyone who has a defiling skin disease or a discharge of any kind, or who is ceremonially unclean because of a dead body. These are people who have potential contagious issues. Send away male and female alike; send them outside the camp so they will not defile their camp, where I dwell among them." The Israelites did so; they sent them outside the camp. They did just as the Lord had instructed Moses.*

This week Melissa graduated from NYU and got her master's degree. One of them was in public health. I went to the events and at one of the events she was explaining about the project she did when she went to Togo (this is part of her program) with some other students. They were mapping out what things need to be done in order to increase or decrease infant mortality.

We also heard from other groups. A group of Nepal and the challenges that they face because the women who could be getting medical help at the clinic or go to the hospital where there's professionals can't get there either because the transportation is really poor or the husbands say, "No, we're not going to spend money on it." So there are public health issues all over our world today. It was fascinating to hear some of the things that are going on in the midst of all of that.

It's that kind of thing that God is speaking to here as He's trying to help these people with their public health issues. Community health so that we're not having a contagious disease that's moving all around and hurting people. So they have to send them out of the camp.

We aren't told here, but in other places when they want to come back they have to go to the priest and the priest has the job of checking them out to make sure that the skin disease is gone or the rash is gone so that they can reenter the camp. Fascinating. So he's describing all of that in those first few verses. That's one kind of problem He's helping them with.

Now let's go to another kind of problem starting in verse 5. This one has to do with social justice. *The Lord said to Moses, "Say to the Israelites: 'Any man or woman who wrongs another in any way and so is unfaithful to the Lord is guilty and must confess the sin they have committed.'*

So now we have the problem of someone wronging someone else. What do you do? How do you handle it when someone's wronged somebody else? We've got to have a plan for the community to address some things. He starts by saying the person *must confess the sin they have committed.*

I help parents work with their children and one of the things we do is we help children develop good patterns of relating to each other, especially when we're dealing with sibling conflict. We

say sibling conflict is a child's first class in relationship school. So they're learning things in the midst of sibling conflict they're going to use as life skills for the rest of their lives.

When two kids are having offense against one another, we say to parents it may not be best to have one say, "I'm sorry," to the other. Because sorrow is an emotion and they might not be experiencing the emotion of sorrow. So you don't necessarily want to have them say, "I'm sorry," unless they are sorry. It might be better for them to say, "I was wrong. Will you forgive me?" This sense of confession is this idea first this person has to confess their sin to the other person.

It's not just good enough to go apologize to someone. You tell a child go apologize. "I'm sorry." His heart may not be in it. He can admit, "I was wrong. Can you forgive me?" That's what we're talking about here.

God has a plan in His word for healing relationships. We see that not just in the Old Testament. We see that in the New Testament. When someone sins or makes a mistake or acts foolishly there's a way to handle that. So here we start with the very first part is they need to confess.

Now we teach parents as they're working with their children to have a positive conclusion with their kids by asking three questions and making a statement when they correct their kids. The three questions are these. The first one, "What did you do wrong?" It comes right out of this idea of confession. That's God's first step in restoring a relationship. First we confess. We ask the question what did you do wrong? Then we ask the question, why was that wrong? The next question is what are you going to do differently next time to get focused on repentance and moving forward. Then we make a statement okay go ahead and try again, a conscience-freeing statement for children now as they're growing up learning how to process offenses in God's way.

It starts in this passage where God is saying if someone has wronged somebody else they need to start by confessing the sin they've committed. That's the first thing.

Notice it continues in verse 7 by saying, *They must make full restitution for the wrong they have done, add a fifth of the value to it and give it all to the person they have wronged.*

Now this is a very interesting idea. It's restitution. If you've taken someone or you've damaged someone else's thing there's an offense there. Because now the relationship has changed.

I just encourage you to be careful about loaning stuff to somebody, especially your friends. If you want to keep them as friends be careful about loaning stuff to friends. Don't loan money to people you love because it changes the relationship. Just be really careful about that. Or just give it to them so there are no strings attached. But if someone damages your stuff or someone hurts you or steals something from you, he's saying the solution is pay them back.

But not only pay them back, do you see what it says? *Add a fifth of the value.* Why? Because relationship is important, not just the thing that was lost. That other twenty percent is the contribution to relationship. I want to make it right with you. I'm not just going to give you back what I took from you or what I damaged while I was in your presence, but now I'm going to give

twenty percent more to you because I value the relationship. It's the twenty percent that's the relationship component.

Keep that in mind whenever you are indebted to someone. You want to give back more than what you owe because it's a statement about relationship. He's illustrating that. Do the restitution part. Go back and pay back the damage that you've done.

But what if the person that you need to pay back isn't around, he's dead or whatever, what do you do? That's what we have provision for in verse 8. *But if that person has no close relative to whom restitution can be made for the wrong, the restitution belongs to the Lord and must be given to the priest, along with the ram with which atonement is made for the wrongdoer. All the sacred contributions the Israelites bring to a priest will belong to him. Sacred things belong to their owners, but what they give to the priest will belong to the priest.*

You see, when you do restitution it's not just for the person that you've offended, it's also for your own heart. There's something that happens inside of you when you have to do restitution. You're kind of making it right. In the Catholic Church they call it penance, where you're having to do something to kind of make it right.

The restitution that you pay, the person might not be around. What do you do in that case? Well it's important that you obtain a clear conscience and that's partly what's happening here. You're obtaining a clear conscience by paying it back. So if he's not around then get the priest involved again, and give it to the priest so that you can have this sense of I'm giving it to the Lord and turning it over to the Lord so that I can have a clear conscience and not have to live with the offense that I have. You can't say, "Well he died. I can't do anything about it" or "I don't know where the guy is anymore."

One of the things that helped me (I appreciated it so much when I was in my late teens), I learned about the conscience and how powerful it is and how important it is for my life. In the training that I received, the teacher said if you want to obtain a clear conscience, this is what you do: Make a list before the Lord. Say, "God, I'm going to make a list and you can help me with this list," because God will help you with it. Make a list of all the people you've ever offended. For some of us that's a pretty long list. You take that list and you write it down and you say, "Lord, if there's anybody else, just add it to the list." So He starts making that big list with you and then you say, "Okay, I'm going to make it right. I'm going to send a letter to that person. I'm going to pay back that person." Start making your wrongs right in that sense.

There's some people it's not appropriate to go back. If you had a relationship with someone and you did things that were immoral in that relationship, you don't necessarily want to revive that relationship or go back to that person. But you may just say, "Lord, if I ever come across that person again, I want to commit before you to make it right. I want to turn it over to you to do that." That's obtaining this sense of a clear conscience.

Obviously coming to God and saying, "God will you forgive me?" is the first step in a clear conscience. God cleanses us and He says *He forgives us of all unrighteousness*. But then there's

this sense of making it right with other people. Paul says, *I strive to keep my conscience clear before God and man*. God is easy; it's the man part that's hard.

Here in this passage we're learning about social justice. How do we deal with the offenses that take place and how does a community involve in all of that?

Let's go on to verse 11 and look at another situation. The situation where you might have abuse in a marriage relationship where a husband might be inclined to take out his authority that he has and mistreat his wife.

In this time remember, if I bring you up to speed in the book of Numbers, we have the men that were counted. Twenty years old and older were counted, the fighting men. Now they're training for war so that they can be soldiers and they can go out and protect the people and fight them. It's these men who are being established in this way.

You might imagine that when men are going to work or they're getting ready or they're fighting or they're playing a video game and they get into it, as we men do, take the leadership, sometimes we bring those ideas back home and we try to treat our wives the way we treat people at work. Or we try to treat our children the way we treat people elsewhere. Sometimes we end up abusing our leadership in that way.

God has a plan for that. He's going to lay out some ideas here. I just want to explain them to you as we go through because we're going to have a situation here where we've got a wife who may have sinned. Maybe she committed adultery. Maybe she didn't. Maybe it's just a jealous husband. What do we do in the midst of that?

Starting in verse 11 – *Then the Lord said to Moses, “Speak to the Israelites and say to them: ‘If a man’s wife goes astray and is unfaithful to him so that another man has sexual relations with her, and this is hidden from her husband and her impurity is undetected (since there is no witness against her and she has not been caught in the act), and if feelings of jealousy come over her husband and he suspects his wife and she is impure—or if he is jealous and suspects her even though she is not impure.*

Do you see the different categories here? We don't know if this is just a jealous husband and his wife hasn't done anything wrong, or she's actually committed adultery and he just suspects something.

Then notice verse 15 – *then he is to take his wife to the priest.*

Notice in each one of these three public policy issues, the priest is involved. That's because they lived in a theocracy where God was running the government. They didn't have kings yet that separated the priesthood from the political authority. It was all the same. God was running the government through the priest. So if the person who had an infectious disease or a rash was put out of the community they had to go to the priest. He was the one who was the public health official who would say, “Yes, you can come back into the community.” If there was some social

justice issue and there wasn't someone for restitution, they'd go to the priest who would deal with the social justice issue.

Now we have a marriage situation and you've got a conflict between a husband who thinks his wife might have done something wrong and a wife who may or may not. We don't know for sure, but the jealousy that can take place in that relationship could be an opportunity for a husband to abuse his authority and mistreat the wife. So what do they do? They go get another person involved. He takes his wife to the priest.

Notice what's going to happen. See here's what happens. In a marriage relationship you know your mate. If your mate is doing something on the side, you know that. You suspect something. Something's wrong here in this relationship. So you have this suspicion that something's going on. You can't prove it, but you have the suspicion that something's going on. You think it is, or maybe it isn't. Maybe it's just your problem and you're just suspecting something that isn't there and so that's one of those times when you get help. So he goes to the priest.

Here's what he does. *He must also take an offering of a tenth of an ephah of barley flour on her behalf. He must not pour olive oil on it or put incense on it, because it is a grain offering for jealousy, a reminder-offering to draw attention to wrongdoing.*

See, being falsely accused is a hard thing to bear. Maybe you have been misunderstood or falsely accused at times. It's a painful place to be. So God is setting up some standard, a way to address in this society so they could go to the priest and get some help.

Verse 16: *The priest shall bring her and have her stand before the Lord. Then he shall take some holy water in a clay jar and put some dust from the tabernacle floor into the water.* Now the tabernacle floor, the dust you can imagine they've got sacrifices being offered, probably bacteria in that dust. This is not clean dust. This is probably dirty dust. Holy water mixed with dirty dust.

*After the priest has had the woman stand before the Lord, he shall loosen her hair and place in her hands the reminder-offering, the grain offering for jealousy, while he himself holds the bitter water that brings a curse.*

*Then the priest shall put the woman under oath and say to her, "If no other man has had sexual relations with you and you have not gone astray and become impure while married to your husband, may this bitter water that brings a curse not harm you. But if you have gone astray while married to your husband and you have made yourself impure by having sexual relations with a man other than your husband"—here the priest is to put the woman under this curse—"may the Lord cause you to become a curse among your people when he makes your womb miscarry and your abdomen swell. May this water that brings a curse enter your body so that your abdomen swells or your womb miscarries."*

Now maybe this is just a miracle from God that God steps in, uses this kind of situation in a particular way. I don't know. I don't know exactly what's going on in the midst of this situation, but it may be like a lie detector test of some kind.

Did you know that Jewish people would eat very healthy food? Their dietary laws were established. God was very concerned about their gut, about their immune system, about all of those things. It was established and set up for them to take care of their bodies. I suspect that they had probably very strong immune systems, so having some bacteria come in, some dust wouldn't bother them.

But in the same way when you take a lie detector test the body makes physical changes. When a person's under stress because they're guilty, maybe that's the response her body has to that is different. I don't know what it is, but it's a way to do some kind of a lie detector test before the Lord and God is intimately involved in the process here.

So notice the next verse says, *Then the woman is to say, "Amen. So be it."*

*The priest is to write these curses on a scroll and then wash them off into the bitter water. He shall make the woman drink the bitter water that brings a curse, and this water that brings a curse and causes bitter suffering will enter her. The priest is to take from her hands the grain offering for jealousy, wave it before the Lord and bring it to the altar. The priest is then to take a handful of the grain offering as a memorial offering and burn it on the altar; after that, he is to have the woman drink the water.*

*If she has made herself impure and been unfaithful to her husband, this will be the result: When she is made to drink the water that brings a curse and causes bitter suffering, it will enter her, her abdomen will swell and her womb will miscarry, and she will become a curse. If, however, the woman has not made herself impure, but is clean, she will be cleared of guilt and will be able to have children.*

*This, then, is the law of jealousy when a woman goes astray and makes herself impure while married to her husband, or when feelings of jealousy come over a man because he suspects his wife. The priest is to have her stand before the Lord and is to apply this entire law to her. The husband will be innocent of any wrongdoing, but the woman will bear the consequences of her sin.*

You might ask the question, "Well what about the husband? When does he drink the water?" I don't know! We don't have the answer to that, but I suspect that it has something to do with the abuse of authority that could take place in a relationship. If you look elsewhere in the law you see that if two people have committed adultery and they're caught in the act, they're both stoned. They're killed right away. There's no favoritism given to a man in the midst of adultery.

This is a special situation where there's suspicion. Maybe we only have this part of a story because there's a tendency among men to dominate women with their authority in ways that are improper, so God is setting up a plan here that may free her up and not allow the abuse to take place.

But here's what we do know. We do know that God values marriage. It's very important that adultery damages the marriage relationship. We know that getting help is important. All of those things can be helpful as we're moving forward.

Well let's go on to chapter 6. I want to share chapter 6 with you because it's a discussion of the Nazirite vow. It's when someone wanted to dedicate themselves to God in a very particular way, for a period of time maybe. But it's a Nazirite vow.

We learn in this passage about dedication to the Lord. Now dedication to the Lord never goes out of style. We are not Nazirites. We don't take on Nazirite vows, but there's some things we can learn about that custom in those days about our dedication to the Lord and what that looks like. So let's go into chapter 6.

*The Lord said to Moses, "Speak to the Israelites and say to them: 'If a man or woman wants to make a special vow, a vow of dedication to the Lord as a Nazirite. The word Nazirite is a transliteration of the Hebrew word Nazir. We don't have a translated word for it in English, so they just brought the Hebrew word into English, Nazir, Nazarite.*

*As a Nazirite they must abstain from wine and other fermented drink and must not drink vinegar made from wine or other fermented drink. They must not drink grape juice or eat grapes or raisins. As long as they remain under their Nazirite vow, they must not eat anything that comes from the grapevine, not even the seeds or skins.*

This is not a statement about whether drinking alcohol is good or not. That's not what this is about. This is about someone who is making a dedication to the Lord in this particular vow, this Nazirite vow. They are radical. Notice it's not just about not drinking alcohol, they can't even drink grape juice. In fact they can't even eat raisins. Interesting. They're making a pretty dramatic statement in dedication to the Lord.

Let me take an application out of this. Not saying we all need to stop eating raisins, but the application for us is this: Dedication always requires sacrifice. Always. If you're dedicated to your job it means you're sacrificing something else. If you're dedicated to a sport it means you're sacrificing something else. If you're dedicated to the Lord it means you're sacrificing something else.

See, I think all of us need to be able to say sometimes, "You know, I don't do that because I'm a Christian." There's a lot of things I don't do because they're not healthy. There's a lot of things I don't do because they cost too much money. But there ought to be some things we do. I don't do that because I am dedicated to the Lord.

It might be different for one person than it is for another person. One person might say, "I'm a Christian and I decide I'm not going to drink alcohol." We'll take that example. Someone else says, "I'm a Christian. I'm not going to watch R-rated movies." Each one says, "I'm not doing that because I'm a Christian." That's great for that person to make that kind of a statement and say, "This is who I am as a Christian. That means I'm going to separate myself from something. That's who I am." I think we all need to be asking those kinds of questions. What does God want us to do?



The challenge is when the person who says, “I’m not going to drink alcohol,” says, “You know, everybody else should not drink alcohol,” and they start taking their standard of dedication to the Lord in an area where God is not clear and says, “You have to do this as well.” As soon as we start making that judgment we become in error.

The person who says, “I’m not going to watch R-rated movies,” that’s fine. They’re doing that before the Lord. That’s great. But if they start saying to someone else, “That’s sinful to watch R-rated movies,” we have to be really careful about judging someone else in areas that are not clearly stated in God’s word.

For someone who says, “I’m not going to celebrate Halloween,” fine. For them they say, “I’m a Christian. I’m not going to celebrate Halloween.” I say that’s fine. Don’t celebrate Halloween. But the person who then says, “And nobody should celebrate Halloween if they’re a Christian,” then they get into trouble because God isn’t clear about such things.

But do you see if we take this personally then we say, “I want to be different. There are some times when I’m going to give up something because I’m a Christian.”

I was thinking this week about Lent. A tradition really primarily in the Catholic Church, but some of the mainline denominations observe that as well. In my tradition I’ve never really observed Lent, but I value and I respect those who do. Sometimes they say I’m going to give up candy or I’m going to give up soda for Lent, for the forty days before Easter. I admire those people.

I was talking to Deborah. Deborah’s here for the second time, she just came, and she was telling me about Lent this morning. I said, “I’m going to share that because that’s just what I was talking about.” How did you come to church? She doesn’t really have a church background, but you know what she gave up for Lent? Doubt. Ah! I’ve never heard of that before! So when she gave up doubt it opened her ideas to maybe go to church. Wow.

See, I think we all need to be asking the question, what does God want me to give up? Because sometimes the things we have so close around us confine who we are and we are stuck within a boundary. Deborah makes this great movement outside of her boundaries by giving up something for Lent. I admire that.

I think it’s stunning to me and that’s what’s happening in the Nazirite vow. I’m going to give up raisins, I’m going to give up this because I am a Nazirite committed to God.

*Verse 5: During the entire period of their Nazirite vow, no razor may be used on their head. They must be holy until the period of their dedication to the Lord is over; they must let their hair grow long.*

Hair is a hard thing to hide. God had chosen in this particular thing to have something obvious. So if you were concerned about styles and guys would cut their hair short or whatever (they must have because now they’re doing something different by growing their hair long), then this would

be an outward demonstration of something inward that was going on inside of them. They were letting their hair grow long.

Here's the application as I look at the dedication taking place among the Nazirites. I say many times as Christians we make the mistake of trying to blend in. I'm not saying we have to look weird. There are a lot of weird Christians. I'm not saying we have to be weird like them. But I'm saying there ought to be something that says to people he's different or she's different. Well they could look at the Nazirite and say, "His hair is long. He's different." There's something there that's obvious. We ought to be able to be different, not just blending in. We ought to be obviously different as people are looking at us and saying, "That person does different things. That person lives differently because he's a Christian. He's dedicated to the Lord."

Let's go onto verse 6. *Throughout the period of their dedication to the Lord, the Nazirite must not go near a dead body. Even if their own father or mother or brother or sister dies, they must not make themselves ceremonially unclean on account of them, because the symbol of their dedication to God is on their head. Throughout the period of their dedication, they are consecrated to the Lord.*

Now in our society we don't come into contact with dead bodies, most of us. If someone passes away in the hospital, the next thing we see is the casket we're lowering into the ground or we have a memorial service.

But in those days it was the family who was responsible for caring for the body, making sure the body was ready, burying the body, and so on. So they're saying even if it's someone you're related to, because you're in this dedication period, even within the family, you say, "Look, because I have this dedication, I can't do that. I can't be a part of that. Let's get some other people to do that" So that's pretty interesting. Even in the family I'm different than someone else might be.

But the vow ends and there's a couple ways it could end. Let's look at verse 9. *If someone dies suddenly in the Nazirite's presence, thus defiling the hair that symbolizes their dedication, they must shave their head on the seventh day—the day of their cleansing. Then on the eighth day they must bring two doves or two young pigeons to the priest at the entrance to the tent of meeting. The priest is to offer one as a sin offering and the other as a burnt offering to make atonement for the Nazirite because they sinned by being in the presence of the dead body. That same day they are to consecrate their head again. They must rededicate themselves to the Lord for the same period of dedication and must bring a year-old male lamb as a guilt offering. The previous days do not count, because they became defiled during their period of dedication.*

So if you make a vow "I'm going to dedicate myself to the Lord for three months" and then in the midst of that, the third month you come into contact with a dead body and you don't even realize, you just kind of didn't even realize it was there and that happens, then you start all over again is what it's saying there. In other words, you've ended that and you need to start the whole process again.

We're not Nazirites. We're Christians. But I think it's important to ask ourselves a question – am I dedicated to the Lord? That dedicated that I'm willing to serve Him and sacrifice other things? We want to pray, "Lord, will you make me a testimony to other people."

See if you remember, as we looked at all the Israelite people, we had all of the tribes and they're getting ready to be fighting men, but God took the Levites and He said, "Those are mine. They are dedicated to me. They are the ones who would take care of the tabernacle. They are the ones who sanctified for me." But then what if somebody else wants to be dedicated to the Lord? Well this is the provision for them. The Nazirite vow would be the way that they could do that.

Verse 13 says, *Now this is the law of the Nazirite when the period of their dedication is over. They are to be brought to the entrance to the tent of meeting. There they are to present their offerings to the Lord: a year-old male lamb without defect for a burnt offering, a year-old ewe lamb without defect for a sin offering, a ram without defect for a fellowship offering, together with their grain offerings and drink offerings, and a basket of bread made with the finest flour and without yeast—thick loaves with olive oil mixed in, and thin loaves brushed with olive oil.* I mean that's a lot of sacrifices for someone who's just been really dedicated to the Lord.

*The priest is to present all these before the Lord and make the sin offering and the burnt offering. He is to present the basket of unleavened bread and is to sacrifice the ram as a fellowship offering to the Lord, together with its grain offering and drink offering.*

Even the Nazirites offering these sacrifices aren't more holy than anybody else. We all have sin in our lives. And you need to offer sacrifices is what He's saying here.

I think we can say this about the Christian life as we're growing in our dedication to the Lord. The closer we get to the Lord, we sin less but we repent more. Because we become more aware of our weakness and our humility and our need for the Lord in ways that we never did before. Dedication. What is it?

Verse 18: *Then at the entrance to the tent of meeting, the Nazirite must shave off the hair that symbolizes their dedication. They are to take the hair and put it in the fire that is under the sacrifice of the fellowship offering.*

*After the Nazirite has shaved off the hair that symbolizes their dedication, the priest is to place in their hands a boiled shoulder of the ram, and one thick loaf and one thin loaf from the basket, both made without yeast. The priest shall then wave these before the Lord as a wave offering; they are holy and belong to the priest, together with the breast that was waved and the thigh that was presented. After that, the Nazirite may drink wine.* So it was just for a period of time that he separated himself.

*This is the law of the Nazirite who vows offerings to the Lord in accordance with their dedication, in addition to whatever else they can afford. They must fulfill the vows they have made, according to the law of the Nazirite.*

It's interesting to see the holiness that's there, the separation that takes place. It reminds me of these verses in 2 Corinthians 6:15-18. Now we're in the New Testament. These verses from the Old Testament are quoted in the last part of this. Paul is writing and he's quoting Old Testament passages as he's talking about our separation, our holiness.

Here's what he says: *What harmony is there between Christ and Belial? Or what does a believer have in common with an unbeliever? What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? For we are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people." Therefore, "Come out from them and be separate, says the Lord."*

Wow. Interesting. That's to us. That's a quote from the Old Testament being applied now in the New Testament. *Come out and be separate.* Be different. Do you know that the word *ecclesia*, which is translated 'church,' means the called out ones. We are called out of the world to live in the world, but we're different. We're not like everybody else.

*"Come out and be separate, says the Lord. Touch no unclean thing and I will receive you." And, "I will be a Father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty."*

It just reminds me that there are privileges and responsibilities to being a child and we're being drawn to attention here to those things.

If we look at the Nazirite vow, we see this. One, they're not separated from the camp. They don't go into a monastery somewhere as a recluse; rather they're among the other people. Secondly, there's no length of time set for them. It's just some period of time that they determine. Next, it's willing. They can't be a Levite or a priest, but they can dedicate themselves in this particular way. They're separating themselves to God, not just separating themselves from something.

If you're only saying, "There's all these things I'm not going to do," then I think we make a mistake. We want to separate ourselves to God. I'm going to God and when I dedicate myself to God that means I say no to some other things. That's the idea here.

And then lastly I just want to say the blessing that follows in the passage comes right after the dedication. Notice it's interesting it's tied into this passage about dedication. Verse 22. Beautiful passage. I love this. These are the most often quoted verses in the book of Numbers.

Verse 22: *The Lord said to Moses, "Tell Aaron and his sons, 'This is how you are to bless the Israelites. Say to them: "The Lord bless you and keep you. Blessing is to bring good upon. The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine on you (give light to you, his face shine on you, bring light to you) and be gracious to you (God wants to give you grace); the Lord turn his face toward you. "Look at my eyes," God says, "as my face is looking at yours." The Lord turns his face toward you and give you peace."* That peace that just washes over us that we need.

*"So they will put my name on the Israelites, and I will bless them."* See that verse 27? *So they will put my name on the Israelites, and I will bless them.* God puts His name on us. We are called

Christians, little Christs, and He blesses us. We're part of His family. But it really requires a dedication to Him, a willingness to give our hearts to Him, a willingness to say, "God, I want to serve you 100% of my life." It's a beautiful thing when we come before the Lord and we're able to do that.

If you're here today and you've never committed yourself to Jesus Christ, I want to invite you to do it. It's a dedication. It's a commitment. It's a willing commitment that you make that says, "I want to put God first in my life. I know it means sacrifice of other things, but I'm going to commit myself to you. I want to give my heart to you in that special way."

So if you'd like to do that this morning, I want to invite you to do that. As we sing this next song I'm going to pray and after we pray we'll have counselors on the side. Go and pray with them and ask the Lord to come into your life this morning.

Let's pray together. Would you stand with me?

[PRAYER] Heavenly Father, we come before you and thank you for your love for us and your grace. We take these passages out of the Old Testament that some of those are customs that are very different than ours. But we see your character behind those. We see what you're doing in the lives of those people. We ask, Lord, that you would teach us from those and apply ideas, same principles to us in ways that we can apply in our own lives. Thank you for your love, thank you for your grace. Thank you for allowing us to be your children. Lord, may we be dedicated to you, take on those responsibilities associated with the blessing that you want to provide for us. In Jesus' name, amen.