## **Confronting Others in Their Sin!**

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[0:00] This message was recorded at Vision Baptist Church in Alfred, Georgia. It is our prayer that you will be blessed by the preaching of God's Word. Take your bowels and turn with me if you would to Numbers chapter 12. Numbers chapter 12. If you enjoyed that, say Amen.

Alright, Numbers chapter 12. We're going to read just some of the chapter. We're going to do the Tennessee hillbilly reading of the chapter. And we're going to talk about confronting others in their sin.

And this is a story of how it was wrongly done. And Lord willing, by the time we finish, we'll learn how to rightly do it. So read with me if you would.

I'm going to skip to just some of the chapter. Numbers chapter 12 verse 1. And Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses because of the Ethiopian woman whom he had married.

He had married an Ethiopian woman. So Miriam and Aaron and Moses are the leaders of Israel. And they come and they speak against Moses because they don't like the lady he married.

[1:00] Verse 3. Moses was a very meek man. Verse 4. What's really funny is that they want to talk to Moses and straighten him out.

And the Lord somehow says, Y'all get over here now to the tabernacle. We're going to have a talk. And that's what verse 4 says. The Lord spake suddenly unto Moses. In verse 6, God says to them, If there be a prophet among you, I, the Lord, will make myself known to him in a vision and will speak to him in a dream.

If there's a prophet, I'll talk to him. But Moses is not like that at all. He is my special guy. Verse 7. My servant Moses is not so who's faithful in all my house.

Verse 8. He said, Why were you not afraid to speak against Moses, my servant? Why were you not afraid? In verse 10, God's angry. Verse 9.

And his anger is kindled and he leaves. God pulls away from the tabernacle, away from the people of God. And Miriam has leprosy as white as snow. And then the Bible says that Aaron immediately knew he had done wrong.

[2:08] And he said, We have done foolishly. And so all of a sudden, Miriam has got a life-threatening disease and she's in big trouble. And so in verse 13, Moses cries unto the Lord and says, Lord, please don't.

Aaron's already said we've done foolishly. Please don't let her hurt. And Moses now asks, God, please don't let her. It's my sister. Don't let her be suffering for this. And God says, Okay, I'm going to heal her.

But the whole, she's got to go outside the camp for seven days in isolation because if her daddy had a spit in her face, that's at least that much would have been done. So here's the story before we start working our way through it.

There was leadership in Israel that was doing something that two other leaders in the church, in the congregation, it's not a church yet. They didn't agree with it. And so they go to Moses and discuss with Moses and tell him he's been wrong at what he did.

And so all the story is going to take place. And I want us to learn how to rightly confront people and their sin. You ought to know that you have the right and the privilege as a Christian to confront me.

You ought to know there is a way to go to a pastor and say, Uh-uh, that's not right. We're going to talk about that. You also ought to know that there's a right way to talk to each other if there's some kind of problem, but there's a wrong way.

Most people do it wrong in both ways. And so we're going to see what the Bible says and see if we can't apply that. If you would, 1 Peter chapter 5, you don't have to look this up. You can write it down. We'll stay pretty much until we get to the end part of it.

We'll stay pretty much in the text. But in 1 Peter chapter 5 verse 8, the Bible says that the devil as a roaring lion walks around seeking whom he may devour. And Israel's been in trouble.

The last message you heard from Trent, the nation of Israel was complaining about the food. They weren't satisfied with what God was providing them. Now they're not satisfied with what leadership is.

And it seems like in life and in ministry, one problem follows another. So they've complained about provision, and now they complain about leadership. Let's have a word of prayer and work our way through this chapter.

[4:16] Father, I love you, and thank you so very much for the opportunity to talk to your people. I pray, God, that as a church we would grow and mature. We would know how to handle problems and difficulties and division that might come in the church and disagreements.

We might know how to handle them in a biblical fashion after the way you would have us to. And I pray that today this message would help us. And we'll give you praise for it. In Jesus' name, amen.

First thing you ought to look at, they falsely accuse the man of God. In verse 1, they falsely accuse the man of God. Miriam and Aaron speak against Moses because he married an Ethiopian woman, and they're not happy about it.

They come and they speak to him. Now, you need to know, right in the margin of your Bible, God has three leaders. Everybody knows. Everybody knows these are the three leaders. Micah chapter 6 and verse 4, the Bible says, And redeem thee out of the house of servants that I sent before thee, Moses, Aaron, and Miriam.

So, they're all in this big position of leadership. God's put them out there in front. And Miriam has a very important role in the congregation. She's a lady, but she's got a very important role.

You remember that she took care of Moses when Moses was a baby. And they wrapped him up, put him in a little cradle, stuck him out in the water. It's Miriam that watches in Exodus chapter 2 and verse 1 all the way down to verse 10.

It's Miriam that watches. It's Miriam that tells them they can get somebody to take care of the baby. It's Miriam that gets them to Pharaoh's daughter. And Miriam was doing a great thing. Not only that, she's leading in the church.

She's leading the ladies in worship. In Exodus chapter 15 and verse 20, And Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a timbrel in her hand, and all the women went out after her with timbrels and with dances.

And Miriam answered them, Sing ye to the Lord, for he had triumphed gloriously. So, she leads them in singing and leads the ladies in singing and praising God.

Aaron's a special guy. In no way is Aaron to be not looked on with great respect. He's been appointed by God. He is Moses' older brother. And he was the voice for Moses.

You remember, when God tells Moses what he wants him to do, Moses says, I can't talk. I'll never get my point across. And God's a little upset with him and says, I made your mouth.

You can do what I tell you to do. And Moses keeps throwing a fit. So, God says, Aaron can be his spokesman. And then Aaron's the first high priest of the congregation.

He's the first one of the nation of Israel as their high priest. In the story, the false accusation is brought by Miriam. She's the one doing the talking. She's the one speaking.

Aaron just comes and stands there. The complaint she brings is that she doesn't approve of Moses' wife. But that's not the real reason she's upset. That's not the real reason that she's upset.

Maybe she didn't like his new wife. And maybe she thought the 70 elders and 70 leaders had been put in place. Maybe she's thinking, I'm beginning to lose some power and I'm not going to be so influential in the nation.

[7:26] Her real problem is more, I think I'm not getting my voice heard. I think you're not respecting me like you ought to. But she uses the wife. Isn't that the way it works in church problems? You figure out something you think you can fuss about when you've got really another thing you want to fuss about.

That's what's going on in the story here. Some say she was upset because he married an Ethiopian and she was black and he shouldn't have married a black woman. So you might have been to a church and you might have heard that.

Just not any scripture to back that up. Just not any scripture to back that up. There's no mention made of her race, just the place that she lived. And by the way, they've used this as an argument against interracial marriage.

But if there's anything that goes on in the story, if it was interracial marriage, by the end of the story, God's like, Miriam, you keep your big mouth shut. You got leprosy to kick you out of the camp. Don't mess with Moses and his woman. Amen.

So if you ever heard that story, let's just kind of clear that one up. Can I get an amen right there? So, I mean, that's often been used in our country in a wrong way. God ends up defending Moses and severely reprimanding Miriam.

[8:31] So that argument doesn't work. The real problem was that they thought that they were on an equal leadership plane with Moses. People usually attack with one accusation.

There's really another problem that they want to fight about. They just need something obvious so they can have a point to fuss and fight. And here's the story you learn. Moses is very meek.

Now, we use the word meek. That's kind of a sheepish, mousy little guy that's cowardly and not courageous and won't stand up for stuff. But that's not at all. It means humility and gentleness.

It means putting others as more important than you. It means not forcing your way. It means not being proud or assertive. It's a fruit of the Spirit of the Holy Ghost.

The Bible says in Galatians 5.22, but the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness. So all of us ought to learn to think of others as more important than us.

[9:30] Amen? We ought none of us be trying to push our way around. And so when they come and attack Moses and start fussing at Moses instead of Moses saying, you just hush. I'm the man of God here. That's not what he did at all.

Some preachers are known for doing that. They ought not do that. The only one I can preach at right now is me. So don't do that. So we're supposed to be meek. We're supposed to not defend and not fight and not fuss.

And I know some preachers have royally done the opposite of that. So what's the practical application of the first thing I want you to look at? Don't attack anyone or speak against them unless you're biblically right.

Don't attack unless you're biblically right. Miriam is in the story is going to go chew him out for marrying an Ethiopian woman and then he's going to basically say I should be more respected in this organization and God's going to say wrong on both counts lady.

Wrong on both counts lady. Watch it. So don't, we shouldn't be taking things unless we got biblical precedent not preferences. And we ought never participate in gossip.

[10:35] That's what Baptists are famous for, isn't it? We don't necessarily say maybe we don't go talk to the person but we talk about the person. Never should we be jockeying for position which is what it appears to be going on with Miriam.

Don't presume to be in a place that you're not in like Miriam did. I think Miriam might have thought wait a minute Moses you need to ask us. You don't need to be making decisions on your own. You need to respect us and leadership and that's not going to happen.

And if you're attacked be like Moses and let God defend you. Never take yourself so seriously. That's the first thing I want to show you but watch this real quick. Isn't it amazing?

They come and they attack Moses. Moses doesn't even respond and all of a sudden they hear the voice of God saying, Alfred you get to the tabernacle we're about to have a talk. Now if that ever happens around here you ain't the only one that's going to pass out and faint.

I'm going to also. Amen. But anyway so they get to the tabernacle they get to the place for God to deal with them. Second thing God quickly judges their sin.

[11:37] The sin that gets judged in the chapter is not he married an Ethiopian woman. The sin that gets judged in the chapter is speaking against Moses. Look at verse 4. Look at verse 4 if you would. Numbers Numbers I forgot what chapter I'm in.

Numbers chapter get back over here 12 thank you. Numbers chapter 12 I need to put that in my notes don't I? Numbers chapter 12 in verse 4 and the Lord spake suddenly unto Moses and unto Aaron and unto Miriam come out ye three you three get to the tabernacle of the congregation and they came out.

Verse 5 the Lord came down in the pillar of the cloud stood at the door of the tabernacle and called Aaron and Miriam and they both came forward. So all three of them are there and he says you two come out where I can talk to you. So Moses kind of hangs back the two step forward verse 6 and he said hear now my words if there's a prophet among you I'll make myself known in a vision.

I'll speak to him in a dream but my servant Moses is not so who is faithful in all my house with him I'll speak mouth to mouth even apparently I'll do it openly and obviously not in dark speeches and similitudes of the Lord shall he behold wherefore then were you not afraid why weren't you afraid to speak against my servant Moses and the anger of the Lord was kindled against him and he departed and Miriam became leprous and white as snow.

all three called to the tabernacle Moses is more than a prophet he is not just a regular guy he's not just a member of the church or the congregation he's more than a prophet she should have been afraid to speak to him like that God pulls back his presence and Miriam is sick with leprosy here's some application for us know that we all answer to God now in this life I constantly hear stuff like well you'll answer to God for that there honestly our sins are already under the blood amen so I'm not answering there but it can affect me here and it can hurt people there is a right way to confront others there's a right way to confront others so let me walk you through several of them if I can in private we confront with the right attitude of trying to win our brother in private with the right attitude trying to win our brother we're not there to fight and fuss and split up we're trying to keep the family together trying to help him see and so we can get this thing together you're to treat the older men like they were your dad or if it's a woman like your mom or the younger like your brother or your sister so you and I when we talk that's 1st Timothy you and I we don't ever come at each other pastor against people people against pastor brother against brother sister against sister we ought never come against each other without a sweet spirit about it a desire to win each other over a desire to do right only with evidence should you come if it's for judgment only with evidence never gossip about them go straight to them we should be afraid we should be afraid to confront others unless we have truly prepared ourselves in our hearts you should you definitely should confront people but there's a wrong way and a right way to do it before I go further let me just

I hope you understand this and I hope vision is different and I know some of you came out of very dictator like churches and the pastor was a jerk and you couldn't talk to him and you couldn't say hey we think you're making a mistake here I hope I'm not like that and I hope you come and just tell me you ought to come with the right spirit and talk to me but you ought to talk to me you ought to talk to each other there ought not be the attitude that we can't talk things out in Spanish we say hablando se entiende it's talking we can understand each other so let's talk that's what's going on here always be helping and not trying to fight for your position this is not an either or situation it's just do it right remember there are no Moses alive on the earth today I want to say that like three times so you know I'm not Moses in this story there's no Moses alive on the planet if there's a Moses his name is Jesus and you better not talk to him you got a problem with him that's your problem so you don't go to Jesus and confront him

I'm not Moses so if you thought I was saying a while ago hey you better remember I'm just not like a regular prophet I got this real special relationship I'm your brother you're my brother that's all I have and there's no other Moses's on the earth today not your pastor or anyone else is above being talked to when there's a problem and they should handle it with grace no one should be above being talked to when there are problems number three in the chapter go with me to verse 11 please go with me to verse 11 and Aaron said unto Moses alas my lord I beseech thee lay not the sin upon us wherein we have done foolishly wherein we have sinned let her not be as one dead of whom her flesh is half consumed when he comes out of his mother's womb and Moses Aaron said God please we're sorry Moses we're sorry we shouldn't have done it we were wrong and Moses also cries to the Lord and says heal her don't do that don't let her be like a lady that's dead don't do that when the punishment started

Aaron knows that he should have stopped his sister I should have never let my sister run her mouth you know they had that conversation over here you know they were talking how it works she got Moses she got Aaron she said come on the two of us will call her Moses and we'll put Moses right and we'll say that's how it always works isn't it and he says I should have stopped her Lord please don't let this happen he admits his part in the sin he wants to save his sister's life she had leprosy this is not a joke she's got the disease she's a dead lady and she knew she was dead and everybody knew she was dead it's bad Moses quickly responds and he asked God not to punish applications for us quickly see your sin and repent quickly see your sin and repent don't try to blame it on someone else but see your part what's interesting here is Aaron doesn't say hey wasn't me wasn't me it was a medium we know it was Miriam you can tell that who got sick who got sick Miriam got sick who did God get after

Miriam he didn't get after Aaron but Aaron doesn't go whoa thank God hey Moses I was never really with her I just happened to come up here about the same time and I'm standing here and I didn't have anything to kill her God kill her God that's not what he does he said we have sinned you admit your part and get that part right don't try to blame it don't be vindictive and rejoice in the punishment of others beautiful Moses immediately says God please I know you're defending me and you don't have to defend me right now please God don't do this to her please forgive and ask God for mercy for those that have hurt and offended you can I just stop here a second and say some of us have a real hard time forgiving there are people that have hurt us in the past and we hold bitterness in our hearts and we wish something bad would happen and by the way if we hear about a car wreck we're like thank you Jesus next time kill him would you mind I mean that never should be our attitude they had stood against Moses but Moses immediately said God let's show mercy let's show mercy realize that sin is not against a person but against

God the sin here was not against Moses and Moses understood that so Moses is meek and quiet and doesn't see anything well Lord you handle it any way you want to handle it and so I need to realize that everybody said you know in Psalm 51 David has killed Uriah and David David's killed Uriah and David has committed adultery with Bathsheba and when he confesses his sin he says God against you and you only have I sinned and I'm like wait a minute David you killed a man and you suffered a man's wife against God only but see sin's not really this way it's this way and I need to realize I'm dealing with the almighty God verse 14 everyone's got to wait because of Miriam's sin everybody is put on hold the Bible says and the Lord said unto Moses if her father had but spit in her face should she not be ashamed seven days let her be shut out of the camp seven days and after that let her be received again and Miriam was shut out of the camp seven days and the people journeyed not to Miriam was brought in again and afterward they left interesting she doesn't die

[20:22] God has mercy her eternal security is not in danger here your salvation is not in danger when you mess up but the way it affects your life can be messed up and so the whole nation's waiting on her and she's embarrassed she's ashamed like her dad had spit in her face sin and rebellion always hold us back from progressing in our spiritual life if I'm not careful I'll let sin hinder me it can hinder you you can let sin hinder you and it can hinder us all of us together as a church we want to go forward being a spiritual leader brings more responsibility I'd like you to read with me 1st Timothy chapter 5 verse 19 and 20 and I'm almost through you can have some more saying 1st Timothy chapter 5 I really want to make something clear in case you ever leave our church and join another church which you probably will someday you'll move somewhere or something else you need to know this every preacher is responsible to his church none of us ought to be so high and mighty we're the anointed of God and nobody can speak to us and Paul

Timothy this is how they're to handle it you teach the people how to deal with this so read what it says in 1st Timothy chapter 5 and verse 19 against an elder receive not an accusation but before two or three witnesses them that sin rebuke before all that others may fear go back if you would to verse 19 1st Timothy 5 19 I hope you'll write that in the margin an elder in that verse is a pastor the word pastor is only used in your new testament like two times the word bishop is used when we talk about the requirements for being a pastor it actually says bishop and the other word that's used often in the bible is elder not a bad word it really doesn't talk about being an old man it's about being a spiritual leader it is not about there are times when the word elder is used in the other way but this word elder here is about a spiritual leader and he says Timothy teach them I'm helping you get the churches straightened out teach them that you do not receive against an elder against a pastor against a spiritual leader do not receive an accusation unless you have two or three witnesses could you mark that verse in your bible you should not accept somebody accusing me unless you have two or three witnesses

I'm going to show you something in a minute you shouldn't accept them accusing anybody else without two or three witnesses it's all through the bible so there might have been a tendency to jack the pastor's jaws and he said whoa whoa you don't do that unless there's two or three witnesses by the way you don't do that with anybody unless there's two or three witnesses verse 20 look at what it says though if he sins if you find out the pastor's doing wrong you know what you got a responsibility we're to confront sin and look what it says them that sin and that them is the antecedent of them the word that comes before it them points to is elders if you got an elder who's done wrong rebuke him in front of everybody nail his hide before all so that every other elder can get scared that's pretty rough ain't it especially if you me it's like mess up

Austin we'll nail your hide in front of everybody so Robert will be afraid to do it too so Trent will catch on you better not do that so Miguel will get the idea so in Numbers chapter 12 we're finding out about Miriam attacking Moses and you might take that as well you can't ever talk to a pastor that's not the story at all it's not the story at all number one number one we got clear new testament evidence that you have every right to confront an elder or a pastor but you do it with the right witnesses that's true about anyone I hope you know that don't be a gossip about anybody don't be a gossip about anybody and if you know somebody is doing something wrong go to them and talk to their face and say hey I need to talk to you by the way you don't always have to have two or three witnesses you just can't accuse you can't rebuke if you don't have witnesses a man in my church this happened many times over the years but a man in my church and I keep up

I got word that he was committing adultery and this has happened lots of times over the years so I went to him and I walked into the store where he worked and I said hey it was first thing in the morning it was 9 or 10 o'clock that's first day in the morning for a store opening back in those days at I keep I said anyway you and I could get a cup of coffee he said he knew then that he was in trouble because I never came to the store and I never asked and so we were sitting there and I said you know somebody told me something and I need to ask you straight up to your face because I want your answer I said I understand that somebody said you're committing adultery and he goes who told you I said I can tell you who told me but really that's not what's important right now I'd like to know if it's true or serving

God by the way so like if you were to hear something about a pastor or a deacon in our church and you heard they were doing something wrong there's nothing wrong with you going and asking just don't go accusing unless you got witnesses but if you came to me and there was proof I've been doing wrong and I say I hadn't nail my hide say amen visitor said who said it yeah look at this guy over here he said he don't even go here you don't get to vote he wouldn't nail my heartbeats either but it's the right thing to do it's the right thing to do a church needs to stay holy and clean so don't read numbers chapter 12 and walk away from it saying Moses is some high and mighty guy and you can't watch this you can you can only ask not accused they're to be rebuked even if they are pastors I say that because

I know some of you have come from places where you don't say anything to the pastor about anything well that's hogwash it's not biblical and by the way and you don't need to back down just stick your hind legs in the ground and say I ain't that big I don't have to back down this is not just for doctrinal or moral issues that's another thing you're going to hear all time he can be mean to people no he can't I am told in the Bible I treat you like my dad or my brother my mother or my sister I am not to be a jerk so sometimes thank you Lamar I appreciate that I don't treat Lamar that good y'all I would like to ask forgiveness for it right now watch this so you're in a church and a pastor is acting like a jerk you feel free to go to him and say brother that's offensive you're hurting feelings you ought not do that go talk to him do it right but go talk to him never accuse anyone unless you have witnesses that are ready to testify you see you can't here's what here's what always happens this happened to me hundreds of times in

I need to know something was you drinking nope he gave me all his story about it I said I I couldn't accuse him because I had not two or three witnesses and I told him I will tell you now if they would speak at the church I would bring this before the men right now because you're denying it but they won't speak so here's what it said go back to verse 19 if you would go back to verse 19 against an elder received not an accusation but before two or three witnesses by the way you could change that word elder to anybody in this church if you hear that so and so is committing adultery or so and so is doing something and we're going to need some proof and we're going to need somebody man enough to stand up to them and in Matthew 18 we're going to them you go to them take a witness with you and then we'll take it to the church verse 20 let me finish that part and I'm through verse 20 1st Timothy 5 20 bro them that sin rebuke before all that others may fear sins not to be taken lightly though she was forgiven there were still consequences you never accused without eyewitnesses you can't have a gossip witness either well so and so told me that so and so saw them that that's not all of us realize it affects us now and not at the judgment so here's a big lesson out of numbers chapter 12

Moses didn't do anything wrong and we know he didn't do anything wrong because God judged Miriam and not Moses and God said you better back off and so had Moses done something wrong it would have been a very clear indication God would have done something God didn't do anything and Miriam having done something wrong and Miriam is going to suffer and the whole camp is going to wait seven days so that's the story there but I would I hope you remember this it was obviously a not against interracial marriage but you're going to hear that in some churches but it's not in the Bible it's Georgia it's southeast but it ain't Bible that's a weak answer you can say amen it's the truth you might not like things but it's in the Bible and so I get the New Testament you could easily say let's don't judge the pastor he's like Moses I'm not like Moses I promise you me and

[31:53] God we do not talk face to face and mouth to mouth that's just not how it works he doesn't sit down and talk to me I have no special connection you don't have we have priests to the believer that's a Baptist doctrine you can talk to God just like I can talk to God you have individual soul liberty just like I have individual soul liberty and so I don't have that special relationship and by the way nobody else did either he said if Moses were a prophet I talked to him like I talked to prophets I don't talk to Moses that way so that would be more like Jesus not like us and in the New Testament is very clear that you can speak to another person in sin we ought to take a stand against sin but we ought to always do it right never go to hurt always go to help never go to hurt always don't make it about your preferences don't make it about your preferences if you don't have concrete Bible verses and just let me tell you what the Bible is pretty clear about in Matthew chapter 18 when one person goes and you go with a witness the reason they were going to take it before the church was you get to present your side and the other guy got to present his side and the church vote on which was right so if you got proof it ought to be where you can present it and the jury can say yep we're with you accuser or we're with you defendant that's the whole deal so we do confront sin we do confront sin and just because we've got an independent

Baptist tradition I'd like to make something really clear no pastor has some kind of special pass we have no special hall pass there's no pass that says I get to do stuff you don't get to do there's no pass that says I'm a step above you not one I have no special privileges and I should never be treated like that if I have respect I should earn that respect I should earn it I should not I don't deserve it and I don't it's because I'm a pastor or preacher you're supposed to get goosebumps when you're around me some preachers love to put on that holy they can't even say God without saying God they gotta figure out some way that sounds like some weirdo when they talk so you'll know they're the preacher well that's not the Bible teaching the Bible teaching is you can come and say Austin we need to talk buddy you should do it lovingly like I'm your dad because I'm older than all of you not this old guy over here but the rest of you I am okay and so like your dad or like your brother like your sister and by the way amongst each other don't ever fall into talking about each other if you think somebody's doing wrong go talk to them like a man and be honest and talk to their face that's the lesson of

Numbers chapter 12 Father in heaven I love you I thank you so much for the privilege of being here I thank you for your wonderful people I thank you for the privilege I have of preaching your book and standing in front of your people and I pray God that you would help me to honor them and you by doing right and having a meek spirit and not thinking I'm somebody special I pray to God that God where you can find our service times location contact information and more audio and video recordings

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