

Sermon #4
FAVORING OUR CHILDREN AND GRANDCHILDREN
by **Bob Fraley**



Text: Numbers 16:41-50 (*read from Bible*)

Sermon in a Sentence: If present trends continue unchecked, the devil's grip on our nation will grow tighter and tighter. That's why the faithful of this generation must take seriously their role of intervening for our children and grandchildren.

(Note: ► icon means "Next Slide," indicating when to advance to the next slide.)

It must have been an awful time to be alive. Of all the generations to have been a part of, this would've been one of the worst. If you did your assigned Scripture reading this past week, you probably can guess what I'm talking about.

We are in a Spiritual Adventure called *The Remarkable Revelation: 50 Days to Prepare for What's Ahead*. This is Sunday Four of eight, and, yes, you can still purchase an Adventure Journal. You can get that plus the small book most everyone is reading and talking about, called *The Day That Changed America* by Bob Fraley at _____.

Rather than starting your journal work at Day 1, I would suggest that you pick up where the rest of the congregation is, at Day 22, or Sunday 4. In addition, start immediately reading the seven chapters of Bob Fraley's short book as soon as you are able.

Spiritual Adventures are times for accelerated, measurable and lasting growth in your Christian life.

After Israel's twelve spies explored the land of Canaan, the general populace chose to identify with the majority report. Essentially that was, "It's as wonderful a place as we were told, but the people are powerful and we'll never defeat them."

Numbers 13:33 states, *“We seemed like grasshoppers in our own eyes, and we looked the same to them.”*

▶▶ Here’s chapter 14, verses 1 through 4:

“That night all the people of the community raised their voices and wept aloud.

▶▶ *All the Israelites grumbled against Moses and Aaron, and the whole assembly said to them, ‘If only we had died in Egypt! Or in this desert!*

▶▶ *Why is the LORD bringing us to this land only to let us fall by the sword? Our wives and children will be taken as plunder. Wouldn’t it be better for us to go back to Egypt?’*

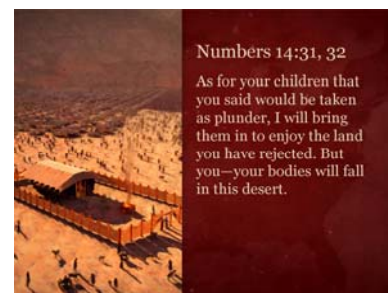
▶▶ *And they said to each other, ‘We should choose a leader and go back to Egypt.’”*

By this time the Lord had heard enough complaining, and He made an emphatic decree that everyone 20 years old or more would never ever enter this good land that He had sworn to make their home. The only exceptions were Joshua and Caleb, whose minority report said, *“We should go for it!”* God speaks in verses 31 and 32. Listen: ▶▶

“As for your children that you said would be taken as plunder, I will bring them in to enjoy the land you have rejected. But you—your bodies will fall in this desert.”

What an awful position to be in. A desert isn’t a pleasant place to live out all the rest of your days. And what a discouraging situation, when you know you’re basically just marking time until you die.

Trying to make adjustments, the people decided to make amends by going to war on their own, but it didn’t work, and they were soundly beaten.



Instead of then choosing to live their lives for the benefit of their children and grandchildren, their proverbial pattern of grumbling resumes. That's when we get the account most of you read in Numbers 16 about the rebellion of Korah. I'll pick up the ongoing narrative following that rebellion with verse 41 and the passage you were to have read yesterday:

‖▶ *“The next day the whole Israelite community grumbled against Moses and Aaron. ‘You have killed the LORD’s people,’ they said.*

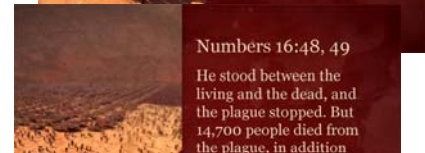
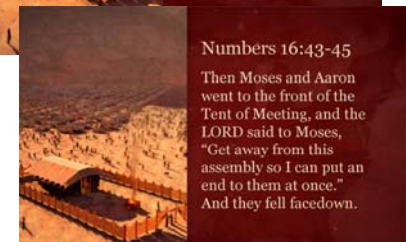
‖▶ *But when the assembly gathered in opposition to Moses and Aaron and turned toward the Tent of Meeting, suddenly the cloud covered it and the glory of the LORD appeared.*

‖▶ *Then Moses and Aaron went to the front of the Tent of Meeting, and the Lord said to Moses, ‘Get away from the assembly so I can put an end to them at once.’ And they fell facedown.*

‖▶ *Then Moses said to Aaron, ‘Take your censer and put incense in it, along with fire from the altar, and hurry to the assembly to make atonement for them. Wrath has come out from the LORD; the plague has started.’*

‖▶ *So Aaron did as Moses said, and ran into the midst of the assembly. The plague had already started among the people, but Aaron offered the incense and made atonement for them.*

‖▶ *He stood between the living and the dead, and the plague stopped. But 14,700 people died from the plague, in addition to those who had died because of Korah.*



‖▶ *Then Aaron returned to Moses at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting, for the plague had stopped.*”

I find myself deeply moved by this dramatic scene of grey-haired, wrinkled old Aaron running in his priestly robes, censer in hand, to strategically position himself between the people and the plague.

These are the rebellious whiners who time and again had spoken against both he and his brother Moses. In fact, these are the exact same men and women who had gotten Aaron in trouble back in Exodus 32. That’s when Moses supposedly took too long coming down from the mountain when he met with God, so they talked Aaron into making them a golden calf like they had learned to worship back in Egypt. What a terrible fiasco that was. The High Priest knew he never wanted to make a mistake like that again.

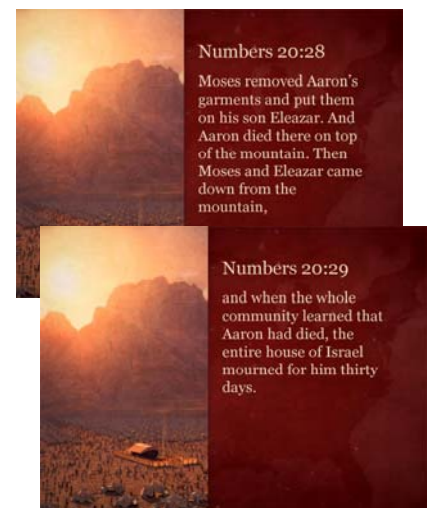
Now he was nervously rescuing them. There he was, all sweaty with censer or firepan in hand. Its flame had come directly from the sacred altar and had ignited the special incense that made atonement for this generation of Israelites that were inclined to mutiny. Thousands had already died, but that was just a fraction of the huge number that would surely have died had Aaron not acted so quickly. The truth is, the entire remaining adult population of Israel owed their very lives to this bearded old gentleman.

Earlier I was reading from Numbers chapter 16. In chapter 20, Moses will take his brother Aaron and climb Mt. Hor along with Aaron’s son. There Moses will remove Aaron’s priestly garments and put them on Eleazar.

‖▶ Verses 28-29:

“And Aaron died there on top of the mountain. Then Moses and Eleazar came down from the mountain,

‖▶ *and when the whole community learned that Aaron had died, the entire house of Israel mourned for him thirty days.”*



By this time most of you have read Bob Fraley's short book, *The Day That Changed America*. His intent is to draw your attention to the possibility that the identity of the frightening beast in Revelation 13, who some future day will make life miserable for all believers, could be a backslidden America. Prophetic Scriptures do support this idea. Of course God alone knows the identity of that superpower. It is not unreasonable, however, to write that this beast could well be what "Christian America" is becoming. If you haven't read his book, once again, I encourage you to do so as soon as possible. Like our Adventure title, I would say what he has written is a remarkable revelation.

▶ My message today can be summed up as follows: If present trends continue unchecked, the devil's grip on our nation will grow tighter and tighter. That's why the faithful of this generation must take seriously their role of intervening for our children and grandchildren.



Once again, if present trends continue unchecked, the devil's grip on our nation will grow tighter and tighter. Restated, unless some incredibly powerful force challenges what the enemy is doing, surrendering to his schemes is inevitable.

Is there a restraining element capable of doing that? Yes, there is. That would be a heaven-sent revival that would sweep through the church and spill over into the non-church world as well.

▶ Let's break apart that word, "Revival." In the middle is the root word "viv." "Viv" words are all life-related. *Vivid* means "full of life." Someone who is *vivacious* is a lively person. "*Viva!*" is a call "*to life!*"

▶ The "viv" in the middle of revival tells you that the word is about life. The prefix "re" means "again." So it's "again-life," or life coming back again. When a person has fainted your hope is that he or she can be revived. In similar fashion, when the church, generally speaking,



appears to have fainted, the hope is that it can be revived.

▶ The suffix “*al*” means “pertaining to,” ▶ so revival literally means “that which pertains to life coming back again” or “to live again.” If housing starts are down and construction and sales suddenly start moving again, there’s been a revival in the housing market. In theatre, when an old play is dusted off and re-mounted, it’s called a revival of that production.

In a special way, however, the word *revival* has always belonged first and foremost to the church. There it refers to a time when the people of God show evidences of a new way of living in the very presence of the Lord, with incredibly powerful results.

Even the most awesome revival in the history of the American church, however, won’t necessarily save this nation from where she will probably end up. My guess is that the history of America will be similar to the history of Israel in Scripture. The start was on a high note. But the delights that accompanied that beginning were not understood by the next generations. They got their eyes off of the one doing the blessing and onto what they were being blessed with, and that began a downward trend.

▶ Like the graphic shows, the general direction is downward. Even though there are times of revival, which are the upward spikes, these don’t reach earlier spiritual highs, and over time the given nation bottoms out.



“Why get excited, then,” you might ask, “about talking or praying for revival?”

It’s because outstanding movements of God like these save a generation or two. That’s meaningful because we have children and grandchildren or at least know people who do.

I also deeply long for revival on behalf of the youth and children of this church.

What revival looks like will be our emphasis during the final three Sundays of this Adventure.

I hate to think about what the alternative bodes for America. If we don't experience revival, if for whatever reason it doesn't happen, then what? That's what prompted me to say, the faithful of this generation will need to take seriously their role of intervening for our children and grandchildren.

To intervene is to come between, or to interfere or keep from happening, or to become a hindrance to some otherwise-foregone conclusion. It's to act in a precipitous manner like Aaron of old did.

It well may be that we are another generation that needs to stop selfishly thinking, "What about us, God? What do you mean we can't know the good life like we want? That's not fair!" Because God has been gracious to us all along, maybe it's time we started focusing now on how we can help our precious children and grandchildren prepare for what could be a treacherous future.

I'm certain most contemporary Christians would prefer to live during a time of revival than they would in days of spiritual lethargy. It's no great honor, being on a playing field where the enemy is constantly running up the score against the church. Observing what's going on in America, one would be hard-pressed to say that the church is influencing society, as much as society is influencing the church. Is it necessary to give specific illustrations? I don't think so. That has been done, and the conclusion is rather obvious.

Where America is headed is not good. But the worst is yet to come. Listen to me, the legacy you leave your children and grandchildren is going to have to be more than someone who was always there when they played soccer, never missed a recital, and participated every year in the Grandparent's Day program. As good as those things are, they won't prepare your precious ones to someday stand for Jesus when all around their peers are enamored by the words and the amazing feats of the Antichrist spirit that is openly influencing the people of our society.

"What do you want us to do?" you ask. Before I answer that question I want to lay a foundation for what we can do.

Great industrial companies have people in their employ who are needed for special assignments when there is a breakdown somewhere. These people jump into

action to address problems and get things back on the right track. They have a passion to locate and correct the trouble.

In the Kingdom of God things are not too much different. The mission of God's people is to be "the salt of the earth and the light of the world." When there is a moral breakdown, a decline in the spiritual health of the nation or the church, it is our spiritual calling to become deeply concerned.

‖▶ Thousands of Christians may labor quietly if the spiritual life of the church or country is normal. But if things begin to go astray from the path of truth and you experience such a moral decline like has happened in America during this past generation, then we who are truly committed to the Lord's work must spring into action in an open, fearless, maybe even fanatical way. The circumstances of the times demand it. If we are not willing to do that, we risk losing God's blessings and His hedge of protection. And it will be because His people do not care enough or love the Lord enough to stand-up for the Lord and His standards.



One of the primary ministries in the church must be geared to the emergency that has developed, which is the decline of the moral standards in our nation. No longer can the conventional work of the church be our main focus. We must deal with the breakdown at hand and this is not the responsibility of the people in the world. In fact the majority of the people in the world do not know how serious of a problem this has become for our country. We are in a spiritual war for the survival of godliness.

Revival is what it is going to take to save true biblical Christian standards in our country; not only for us but also for our children and grandchildren. That responsibility falls directly on the shoulders of God's people!

Revival, although closely linked with evangelism, is not to be confused with evangelism. Revival is an experience, and evangelism is more of an expression. Revival is a new demonstration of the power of God. In these days of acute political helplessness, moral lawlessness, and spiritual helplessness, we need a revival in the

church to overcome the staggering statistical evidence that a tidal wave of hellish impurity has submerged our generation.

God wants to prepare His people for a great earthly offensive revival against militant godlessness, which has become both political and secular, even wearing the deceptive mask of religion. One of the objectives of this 50-Day Spiritual Adventure is help prepare you for such an outpouring of revival, Holy Spirit-born and operated.

Let me give you a few ideas that could be the reason why we have not already seen revival.

▶ One could be because we have highly commercialized the message of the Scriptures. Too many who are proclaiming the message keep asking for the tithes of the widows and poor, yet they themselves spend the money for luxury living. Some even beg for more!

▶ Two: We have cheapened the Gospel. We can never quit preaching that the way of the cross of Jesus Christ and spiritual re-birth as the only way to Heaven. Acts 4:12 is still in the Scriptures. It states, *“Salvation is found in no one else, for there in no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.”*

▶ Number three: Because of our carelessness. We spend too little time in prayer and a dedicated commitment to grow in the Kingdom of God.

▶ Four: Because of our fear of what others may say. We are too tight-lipped about the name whereby men must be saved.

▶ Five: Because we lack urgency in our prayers. This may be the biggest single factor contributing to delaying a Holy Spirit sent revival.

▶ And finally, it may be because we have become too caught up in wanting to steal the glory that belongs to God

Barriers to Revival

1. We have commercialized Scripture

Barriers to Revival

2. We have cheapened the gospel

Barriers to Revival

3. We have become careless in our commitment to God

Barriers to Revival

4. We are fearful

Barriers to Revival

5. We lack urgency in our prayers

Barriers to Revival

6. We covet the glory that belongs to God.

and Him only. Jesus said, “*I do not accept praise from men.*” And “*How can you believe if you accept praise from one another, yet make no effort to obtain the praise that comes from the only God.*”

Now back to the question of “what do you want us to do?” And there will be a couple of other things before we finish this series.

Today, I’m suggesting four steps. And I’m fully aware these will take you some serious thought and time to accomplish. The truth is, when you’ve completed everything I’m recommending, you’ll no doubt have to consistently work on regularly revising your conclusions. Step number 1, however, you can and should finish today. I sincerely hope you will. Here it is:

1. ▶ Fill in the names on your *Circle of Love*.

A *Circle of Love* is simply a listing of those people who mean the most to you. Older members in the congregation could write down many names in their *Circle*. For example, if you were married and had a healthy number of children, who in turn gave you grandchildren and then great-grandchildren came along, the number in your *Circle* could reach into the 30s, 40s, 50s or even higher.

If you don’t yet have great-grandchildren, it’s more likely with children and their spouses plus some grandchildren; we’re talking a number more around 10 to 30 people. That’s still a lot.

Couples with younger children probably won’t break into double digits. Then again, you might want to add parents and siblings to your *Circle of Love*.

Singles can put down quite a few names too. Does someone have to be a blood relative to be in your *Circle of Love*? No. What you’re doing is listing those people to whom you feel the closest. Who those individuals are is totally up to you. It’s your *Circle of Love*.



2. ▶ Think through what you have to give each of these special individuals that has eternal value.

It might be lessons learned from a lifetime of following Jesus. But, for whatever reason, these have never been shared with a son or daughter or close friend. Now you're feeling divinely compelled to do that.

Possibly it's a special book or experience that totally turned your life around, but nobody knows about that except for you.

Maybe it's the promise of Grandpa's persistent prayers and phone calls to see how they're being answered. It could be money for a grandchild to attend a Christian school, or a short-term missions trip with Mom before your daughter heads off to college, or simply sharing the story of how you came to be a follower of Jesus. You put it off, but now you feel the need to write out your testimony of how the Lord brought you through some really difficult times. It's whatever the Holy Spirit lays on your heart as you think about each of the precious individuals on your list. This is what I have to share with my son, or my closest friend, or my granddaughter, that I believe has eternal value. You might say to your fiancé, "It's my life verse, sweetheart, and believe me, I've said it to myself time and again! And because we're going to be married, I wanted you to know about it."

You might even see the larger book I've been recommending in this way. To me, *Salt and Light* by Bob Fraley is like his conviction about life and the future being shared with those who will take the time to listen. Again, how to get a copy is highlighted in the church bulletin.

3. ▶ To the best of your ability, write down your present and 5- and 10-year prayer requests for each of the people in your *Circle of Love*.



What should I be requesting of the Lord for Emily right now? Too often our prayers are hasty and short-sighted. “Lord keep Emily healthy and pretty and sweet!” That’s not adequate. “Lord, protect her from the evil one. Give her the teachers at school and church who will love her and challenge her to be your special servant.”

“Five years from now, Lord, I want You to be the one who guides her in her choice of schooling.”

“Ten years off—start preparing her for either choosing to be single, if that’s how she can best serve You, or for getting married, but to the young man of Your choice.”

When you stop long enough to write out your requests and regularly revise your list, it makes you a much more focused person of prayer.

“Lord, maybe my 43-year-old son-in-law needs to make a career change. He’s making good money, but he has almost no time for church or family. Please give him wisdom regarding his career path.”

“Dear Jesus, my wife is a true saint. But I think she gives so much of herself, that she gets depleted. Help me know how to either teach her to sometimes say ‘No’, or otherwise to help fill her tank in some way that I’m not aware of.”

“Heavenly Father, I fear my son lacks a certain spiritual toughness. I ask You to help me think of ways to provide that for him.”

Anyway, to the best of your ability, write down the specifics regarding how you want to pray for each of these individuals. Only as you do this will you become the prayer warrior who effectively intervenes or stands between your loved ones and the plague of the enemy.

I didn’t use the word *intercede* because not only is it overused by pastors, but I believe it’s also not really understood by parishioners. But to *intercede* is to go to God on behalf of another. Doing that without serious forethought too often results in spiritual superficiality. This is not a day when that’s going to suffice.

4. ▶ Examine your own life. What changes is God asking you to make?

“The devil is winning today in America. In my heart I hear the wake-up trumpet playing *Reveille*. *Reveille—revival*—same basic idea—wake up! And what does that mean for me, Lord? I don’t want to be lolling around watching one ballgame after another on TV if You’re sounding the emergency siren!”

In a setting of all kinds of seductive distractions, ongoing self-examination is important if you want to be a true disciple of the Son of God.

These four steps are in today’s church bulletin. They are also in your Adventure Journal.

1. Fill in the names on your *Circle of Love*. I would do that today.

2. Think through what you have to give each of these special individuals that has eternal value.

That will take a while, but you can begin the process this week.

3. To the best of your ability, write out your present 5- and 10-year prayer requests for each of them.

4. Examine your own life. What changes is God asking you to make?

Without trying to sound overly dramatic, as I conclude this sermon I almost feel like Moses of old, whose senses immediately picked up that danger was in the air. Facedown on the ground with his brother, he knew that God’s warning meant there wasn’t a whole lot of time left before bodies began dropping.

“Take your censer and put incense in it, along with fire from the altar,” he almost commanded Aaron, “and hurry” (like I can’t do the job God assigned you), “hurry to the assembly to make atonement for them.”

That’s somewhat how I feel as I talk to you. You have to hear me. I can’t do what’s your job. If you don’t cover for your loved ones, no one else is going to. The



threat is real. People are going to be lost if you don't intervene for them. The time to begin that process is now. Get a move on. Hurry up!

Hey, I told you before that adventures involve real danger. This is not a make-believe exercise. What we are involved in is both hazardous and exciting. Now maybe you're starting to believe me. At least I pray that you are.