

## Sermon Notes

### “Playing God for Profit”

*Sermon series: Lessons learnt from Balaam and his donkey”*

A few things I need to remember from hearing today’s Bible Reading and Teaching.

## The Bible Reading

### Numbers 22 verses 15 to 35.

<sup>15</sup> Then Balak sent other officials, more numerous and more distinguished than the first. <sup>16</sup> They came to Balaam and said: “This is what Balak son of Zippor says: Do not let anything keep you from coming to me, <sup>17</sup> because I will reward you handsomely and do whatever you say. Come and put a curse on these people for me.”

<sup>18</sup> But Balaam answered them, “Even if Balak gave me all the silver and gold in his palace, I could not do anything great or small to go beyond the command of the LORD my God. <sup>19</sup> Now spend the night here so that I can find out what else the LORD will tell me.”

<sup>20</sup> That night God came to Balaam and said, “Since these men

have come to summon you, go with them, but do only what I tell you.”

<sup>21</sup> Balaam got up in the morning, saddled his donkey and went with the Moabite officials. <sup>22</sup> But God was very angry when he went, and the angel of the LORD stood in the road to oppose him. Balaam was riding on his donkey, and his two servants were with him. <sup>23</sup> When the donkey saw the angel of the LORD standing in the road with a drawn sword in his hand, it turned off the road into a field. Balaam beat it to get it back on the road.

<sup>24</sup> Then the angel of the LORD stood in a narrow path through the vineyards, with walls on both sides. <sup>25</sup> When the donkey saw the angel of the LORD, it pressed close to the wall, crushing Balaam’s foot against it. So he beat the donkey again.

<sup>26</sup> Then the angel of the LORD moved on ahead and stood in a narrow place where there was no room to turn, either to the right or to the left. <sup>27</sup> When the donkey saw the angel of the LORD, it lay down under Balaam, and he was angry and beat it with his staff. <sup>28</sup> Then the LORD opened the donkey’s mouth, and it said to Balaam, “What have I done to you to make you beat me these three times?”

<sup>29</sup> Balaam answered the donkey, “You have made a fool of me! If only

I had a sword in my hand, I would kill you right now.”

<sup>30</sup> The donkey said to Balaam, “Am I not your own donkey, which you have always ridden, to this day? Have I been in the habit of doing this to you?”

“No,” he said.

<sup>31</sup> Then the LORD opened Balaam’s eyes, and he saw the angel of the LORD standing in the road with his sword drawn. So he bowed low and fell facedown.

<sup>32</sup> The angel of the LORD asked him, “Why have you beaten your donkey these three times? I have come here to oppose you because your path is a reckless one before me. <sup>33</sup> The donkey saw me and turned away from me these three times. If it had not turned away, I would certainly have killed you by now, but I would have spared it.”

<sup>34</sup> Balaam said to the angel of the LORD, “I have sinned. I did not realize you were standing in the road to oppose me. Now if you are displeased, I will go back.”

<sup>35</sup> The angel of the LORD said to Balaam, “Go with the men, but speak only what I tell you.” So Balaam went with Balak’s officials. (NIV)

## A prayer.

Almighty God and loving heavenly Father, guide me and teach me of yourself from your Word. Help me and others to see the wisdom and value of

living life according to your word the Bible; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who lives and reigns with you in unity with the Holy Spirit, one God forever and ever. Amen.

## The Bible Study

### Before reading the passage.....

- Familiarise yourself again with the promises God made to Abraham back in Genesis 12 verses 1 to 7. What were they? Remember, they form the background to understanding the story of Balaam and why it’s in our Bibles.
- **Discussion question:** Do you believe God could allow (or even orchestrate) you or someone else to go through an event in their life not knowing why at the time but when it’s over then knowing? Why?

### Now read the Bible Reading from Numbers 22 verses 15 to 35.

### Questions:

1. What do you think the reader is to learn about Balak, Balaam and God from these verses?
2. Imagine now you have finally arrived with the Israelites in the Promised Land. Moses reads this story to you. How might the lesson learnt from it been an encouragement and a warning to you all?

**There is more to come in the coming weeks of Balaam’s story!**