

Rossville Church of Christ Doorpost Devo



November 6, 2022



Encouragement from God's Word

Numbers: The Serpent Lifted Up

Ever since the Serpent tempted Adam and Eve in the garden, humanity has been dealing with the consequences of sin and its enslaving power. The Serpent wishes to rule over us through deception, fear, temptation, and death. We are all infected by the venomous poison of sin. We are all under the curse of sin when we choose to rebel against God. Even God's chosen people too often choose the way of the Snake over the way of the Creator. Yet, God in His mercy provides rescue. He provides a way to life. Even so, his mercy is often surprising. His means of grace startles us.

Cont. on pg. 3 and 4

Scripture Plan: Read

Sermon on the Mount

Mon, Tues, Wed.:

Matt. 6:19-24 Each Night

Thurs., Fri., Sat.:

Matt. 6:25-34 Each Night

Devo Plan

1. Mon.--Read and Pray Together
2. Tues.--Read, Pray, Ask Questions, and Discuss
3. Wed.--Read, Pray, and Think about how to Apply
4. Thurs.-Sat.--Repeat steps 1-3 with New Passage
5. Sunday--Pray and Reflect on What was Learned in Worship and Class

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October 23, 2022

Discussion Questions

Matthew 6:19-24

Discussion Question #1: What does it look like to lay up treasure in heaven? Why does Jesus say to do this?

Discussion #2: What does the way I spend my time, money, energy, and effort say about where my heart is? What are some areas of life where my priorities could be aligned more toward eternal things?

Discussion #3: What does it mean that the eye is the lamp of the body? How does what we look at affect who we are?

Matthew 6:25-34

Discussion #1: What lessons can we learn from birds and flowers about worry and trust? How does the idea of laying up treasure in heaven connect to Jesus' teaching on worry and anxiety?

Discussion #2: Name 3 things you worry most about on a day-to-day basis. Discuss why that worries you and discuss some ways that God has taken care of you in that area in the past.

Discussion #3: What does it look like to seek the kingdom first on a daily basis?

Apply and Obey

To obey what Jesus says in Matt. 6:19-6:34, this upcoming week I will...

I will share what I learned with...

Prayer Points

- Lord, Thank You--For providing every need for us.
- Lord, We Praise You--For being the greatest treasure and for teaching us what really matters
- Lord, Help Us--To not worry about things that are temporary. Help us to trust in you and live our lives for eternal treasures

We see this in a striking example in Numbers 21. God's people Israel are wandering in the wilderness. Though the Lord had mightily delivered them from bondage in Egypt and provided for them every step of the way, they consistently rebel against God, complain, refuse to trust, and deny His authority. Over and over, God disciplines His people with severe and loving mercy. Consider Numbers 21:4-9:

"From Mount Hor they set out by the way to the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom. And the people became impatient on the way. And the people spoke against God and against Moses, "Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and we loathe this worthless food." Then the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people, so that many people of Israel died. And the people came to Moses and said, "We have sinned, for we have spoken against the Lord and against you. Pray to the Lord, that he take away the serpents from us." So Moses prayed for the people. And the Lord said to Moses, "Make a fiery serpent and set it on a pole, and everyone who is bitten, when he sees it, shall live." So Moses made a bronze serpent and set it on a pole. And if a serpent bit anyone, he would look at the bronze serpent and live."

Because of their rebellious ingratitude, the Lord sends a curse on the people of Israel through fiery serpents. This punishment was deadly enough to wake them up to the horror of their sin. They plead with Moses to intercede on their behalf. God, in His strange wisdom, orders Moses to make a fiery bronze serpent on a pole. If anyone had been bitten by a snake, they would only need to look at the snake on the pole and live. Perhaps this would have been deeply puzzling to Moses and the people of Israel. Maybe it seemed like a cruel joke. Some in Israel may have thought Moses was crazy when he began crafting the bronze serpent: "Moses, we are in a crisis here and you are spending your time on this?" But this perplexing plan of God was not arbitrary. It had a purpose and a point. The Lord wanted to confront His people with the terrifying consequences of their sin. He surely could have just lifted the curse when they asked for mercy, but in His own way He is calling them to look to Him in faith while also challenging them to see the destructive results of their own actions. Look at what sin leads to. Behold what you have wrought. God is gracious and merciful, but He never sweeps sin under the rug. He never acts as if it is inconsequential or insignificant. Rebellion against the holy God of the universe is never a trivial thing. But as He requires His people to come face to face with their sin, the sign of the curse paradoxically becomes the source of their healing. He takes the awful results of their rebellion and redeems it. He turns it into rescue, mercy, and a call to faith. Jesus Christ saw this story in Numbers as pointing to Himself. Speaking of the new birth and the way of eternal life to Nicodemus, Jesus says this in John 3:14-16:

"And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, 15 that whoever believes in him may have eternal life. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life."

"Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the *doorposts* of your house and on your gates." --Deuteronomy 6:4-9

Jesus calls back to the bronze serpent of Numbers 21 and connects it to Himself and to His coming death on the cross. The cross was necessary because we needed to see the horror of our sin. We needed to see the consequences of the curse—the death of the pure, innocent Son of God. Jesus took the curse on Himself for us. He took on the full consequences of our sin. He allowed Himself to be bitten by the power of the snake; He tasted death on our behalf. Yet, as His heel was bruised by the Serpent, he was not defeated by sin's curse. He triumphed over it through the power of His indestructible life and love. In doing so, He crushed the head of the Serpent and opened up the way of freedom, life, and rescue for all who look to Him and live. The cross confronts us with the ugliness of our sin, but it also provides mercy and hope. Through the cross, the source of curse and death becomes the source of healing and life. Because Jesus was lifted up like the serpent in the wilderness, we are free from the Serpent's power. If we look to the cross with faith and obedient trust, we have access to the gracious healing and mercy that God provides. Praise God for the strange, severe, and surprising mercy of the cross.

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