

Connecting Church and Home

Quarter 4, Week 7 :: The Bronze Serpent

Treasure Story: Numbers 21:4-9

Every sinful action has its own consequences. For the children of Israel in Numbers 21, their sin of persistent ingratitude and rebellion resulted in snakes. These snakes, however, were not normal snakes. They were fiery serpents whose bite would cause death. In His mercy, God instructed Moses to place an image of a serpent on a pole. All who looked at it would be spared death. This means of mercy foreshadowed when Christ would be lifted up on a cross and those who looked to Him in repentance would be spared eternal death and separation from God.

Connect

“Nothing humbles and breaks the heart of a sinner like mercy and love. Souls that converse much with sin and wrath, may be much terrified; but souls that converse much with grace and mercy, will be much humbled.”

- Thomas Brooks, *The Complete Works of Thomas Brooks, Vol. 3*, pg. 36

Sometimes it takes the terror of God's wrath against sin to help us appreciate the beauty of God's mercy. This was certainly the case for the children of Israel. They, like us, quickly forgot all that the Lord had done for them. He had brought them out of Egypt, protected them, and provided for them in the wilderness. Yet they complained about even the food He gave them and rebelled against Him. When God demonstrated His wrath against their sin, they quickly repented and sought His mercy. We would do well to seek God's mercy every day instead of inviting His displeasure on our sin. Here are a few ways that your family can practice making the pursuit of God's mercy a daily endeavor:

- **Keep Short Sin Accounts:** One of the best ways to be reminded of God's mercy is through repentance. Be sure to seek repentance for your sin as soon as it comes to your mind. Every sin that remains unconfessed can pile up on us and dull us of our need for God's mercy.
- **Have Mercy Reminders:** Consider spending some time reflecting on what your life may have been like apart from God's mercy. We are so much better for having been given His mercy and for having received His grace. Thank the Lord every time you recollect how He has been merciful to you. Demonstrate mercy to your children in how you withhold punishment that they rightly deserve and then explain to them that God does this for us as His children.

My Mission As Parent

- God shows each of us mercy, and we should show mercy to our children in appropriate ways as well. Find constructive ways to properly discipline your children while still showing them mercy. For example, if a child admits to lying, consider responding this way: “Thank you for telling the truth. Even though you lied, I am going to choose to show you mercy. That means that you deserve a consequence, but I am not going to punish you this time.”
- Be careful to connect mercy to the cross of Christ. Remind yourself and your children that we show mercy because Christ showed us mercy on the cross. When we forgive others, we should not think more highly of ourselves than we ought. Instead, when we show forgiveness, we should be reminded that God forgave us first.

Prayer Points

- Pray that the Lord will help you recognize times when you rebel against Him and deserve His judgment.
- Ask God to help you have a good memory of all the ways that He has been merciful to you.
- Pray with your children and thank the Lord for showing you the greatest mercy of all in lifting up His Son on the cross to deliver you from sin.