

Living Lent | March 28

## Grace Beyond Our Imagination

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*From Mount Hor the Israelites set out by the way to the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom; but the people became impatient on the way. 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 detest this miserable food." Then the Lord sent poisonous serpents among the people, and they bit the people, so that many Israelites died. The people came to Moses and said, "We have sinned by speaking against the Lord and against you; pray to the Lord to take away the serpents from us." So Moses prayed for the people. And the Lord said to Moses, "Make a poisonous serpent, and set it on a pole; and everyone who is bitten shall look at it and live." So Moses made a serpent of bronze, and put it upon a pole; and whenever a serpent bit someone, that person would look at the serpent of bronze and live.*

**Numbers 21: 4-9 (NRSV)**

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### Encouragement for the Lenten Journey:

I remember taking our kids to Disney World when they were the perfect age to enjoy all of the "Disney magic." We were staying at a hotel close to the Disney property. It was a nice hotel, but nothing compared to the World of Disney that awaited us. Well, long story short, after one day of playing and swimming at our hotel, and then one full day of playing at DISNEY WORLD, on our short drive home to the hotel, my kids had decided, yelling from the back of our minivan, that they wanted to stay at the hotel the next day and NOT go back to Disney World. We were stunned. All that we had saved and sacrificed to make the Disney Trip happen for our kids and they wanted to go back to the hotel!!!

But isn't that just like us? God has something unbelievable for us. For the Israelites, it was freedom from captivity, over 400 years in Egypt. Now they're free! I would

think “land flowing with Milk and Honey” could compete with Disney, right?? But God’s children complained. “Let’s go back to Egypt.” Sounds like my children...and it sounds like me too sometimes.

I wonder how often God shakes His head at His people. He knows how amazing His promises are, but He also knows how easily we can get impatient. God’s grace is amazing. He never gives up on His promises. Even as God allowed poisonous snakes into the camp of the Israelites, He also provided a way to avoid the “sting of death.” His instructions were to take a serpent, put it on a pole, and if anyone will look up at the serpent, they will be spared from death.

In John 3, Jesus references this Old Testament story as He describes the amazing gift of grace offered to anyone who would believe in His promise of eternity with Him. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, 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.”

We never need to return to the old, impatient ways, of our old life. God has better for us than we could ever hope or imagine. As we make our way to Easter, God’s grace is not only awaiting us, but it’s available to us right now. The empty tomb is the doorway for us to live how God has always intended, not in “Egypt”, not even in “Disney” but in the land He provided, “a land flowing with milk and honey”, a paradise with Him.

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### ***Contributor and Contributing Body of Christ***

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