

DESERT LESSONS**SALVATION**

Numbers 21:4 – 9

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MESSAGE NOTES

1. It all began with spiritual stubbornness — lack of trust (Numbers 21:4 – 5).
2. Which resulted in a plague of snakes — discipline (21:6).
3. Which prompted the people to change their perspective — repentance (21:7).

Come near to God and He will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Grieve, mourn and wail. Change your laughter to mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves before the Lord, and He will lift you up. — James 4:8 – 10

We don't see reality very well. We don't seem to realize how bad sin is, so we don't appropriately grieve over it. At the same time, we don't realize the miracle of Christ's mercy. Perhaps, if we could see the darkness of our sin more accurately, we would understand the power of God's grace. So we don't see things very well, whether we're looking up or looking down. In reality, my sin is much darker than I know, and God's grace is far more brilliant than I can imagine. — Lee Jeagers

Blessed are the desperate. With nowhere else to turn, the desperate just might turn to Jesus, the only one who can offer deliverance they long for. Maybe, just maybe the desperate person will cry out to God for help. If so, that person is truly blessed. — Philip Yancey, *The Jesus I Never Knew*

It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. — Luke 5:31 – 32

4. Which produced a solution they never could have imagined — salvation (21:8 – 9).
5. Which provided us with a picture of God's ultimate remedy for the curse of sin — the cross (John 3:14 – 16).

Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, that everyone who believes may have eternal life in Him. For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through Him. — John 3:14 – 17

God made Him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God. — 2 Corinthians 5:21

Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who is hung on a pole." — Galatians 3:13

He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by His wounds you have been healed. — 1 Peter 2:24

So how do we apply this personally?

- We come to God for His grace, fully convinced that the death of Christ in our place is enough.
- We surrender our whole selves to God daily, being honest about our own battles, and allow His grace to work changes in our character.
- We pursue holiness by the power of God's Spirit living in us—bringing new life where sin once dominated and destroyed.

We pursue holiness by the power of God's Spirit living in us—bringing new life where sin once dominated and destroyed. How can it be said any clearer? Look on Him! If your heart is breaking, look on Him! If gloom is sticking to your soul, look on Him! If you're down and you can't get up, look on Him! Let His redeeming work be for you the serpent in the wilderness. Then you have only to look to live! For when you see the conquest of the cross, then you will find healing for your soul.
— Calvin Miller, *The Unchained Soul*

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What stuck with you from the message this past weekend?
- Can you recall some of the many symbols of the coming Messiah and God's salvation in the books of Exodus and Numbers?
- Why do you think God provided so many symbols of what was to come?
- When the people complained again what did that reveal about their hearts (even after all that God had done on their behalf)?
- What dramatic symbol did God send, both as a discipline and ultimately as a means of salvation?
- What was required of the people to receive God's rescue?
- In what ways is that true of our salvation now that Christ has died on the cross?
- Why is the symbol of a snake on a pole, actually an amazing depiction of Christ on the cross? (See 2 Corinthians 5:21, Galatians 3:13 and 1 Peter 2:24).
- Why do you think many people refuse to seek out and receive God's salvation?
- Can you share a bit of your own salvation story—how God showed you your need for a Savior and pointed you toward the cross?
- As you move forward in your journey of faith, what are some ways you've been personally challenged through this series?