

Moses, the Rock, and the Serpent – Exodus 17; Numbers 21
Notes, Family Worship, Bible Reading

Notes from the Sermon

We sure like to complain, don't we? I feel like complaining is a potential future Olympic sport, and all of us could qualify for the games! It has become an art form. What is nightly news and TV if not just complaining about politics and the world at large? We get some kind of pleasure in wallowing in our "misery", and making sure others join us in the fun!

In the next installment of our series "The Serpent Must Die", we are looking forward to one of the biggest and most important figures in the scriptures, and a man whose full-time job seems to be to deal with the complaining of God's people. Moses, a prophet chosen by God, the same guy who facilitated bringing the 10 plagues to Egypt, who with God's power parted the Red Sea, who met with God and received the 10 Commandments, who led the people of God to the entrance of the Promised Land, basically spent all his time dealing with the complaining of God's people.

The first thing they complain about is having bad water – so he throws a log in some water, and the water is sweet and drinkable. Then, they complain that they are hungry – so Moses intercedes for the people and God causes Manna, a bread-like material, to fall from the sky every morning – except on the Sabbath day, and people complain about that! He even provides quail to eat. Then, they get thirsty again, and Moses has to beat a rock with his staff so that water comes out. After that – back to complaining for God's people. We see this in Exodus 17 – but the story has more to it than meets the eye.

In 1 Corinthians 10, Paul makes sure we know that the Rock struck was Christ. That the whole scene in the desert of the Rock being struck and giving the people of God water, so they live was all a picture of God's provision of Jesus to us, and if we drink of Him, we obtain water that quenches our thirst forever. Even we complain or doubt, as we do so often, our God is a God who provides for His people and is faithful to sustain us!

The story of the Rock happened early in Israel's wanderings in the desert – our other story happens in Numbers 21 when they are almost ready to enter the Promised Land. And shockingly (not), we find the people of God complaining once again! This time, God's patience and forbearance have reached their end, and God sends fiery serpents among them, who bite and kill many. The area of the Sinai they are in is full of these snakes even to today. They cry out to Moses to beg God to send rescue, and God does by having a bronze serpent (no direct relation to the serpent of Genesis) fashioned, and if the people get bit, they can look at the serpent lifted up and they will live.

What's the point of that weird story? Jesus gives the full understanding of this truth in John 3, where he says just like the serpent, Nicodemus (and we) must look to Him lifted up and crucified to be saved. That is what saving faith is. It is not by works, but by trust. God provides a savior in Jesus even though we complain and doubt. Jesus came to save all of us complainers and doubters – those are the only kind of people that exist!

Moral of the story – trust in the Rock who is Jesus who can give you the water of Life, and if you drink, you will live forever – and trust in the Christ who was raised up on the cross, who died for you and for me, so that we could have life!

Finally...STOP COMPLAINING ALL THE TIME!

Bible Reading for the Week

Daily Bible Readings

Sun	Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Fri	Sat
2 Kings 8	2 Kings 9	2 Kings 10	2 Kings 11	2 Kings 12	2 Kings 13	2 Kings 14

Reading from this past week's sermon: Exodus 17

Reading in preparation for this coming Sunday: Exodus 33

Family Worship

Song – *Lay Me Down*

<https://youtu.be/8JBBqC3Rbyg?si=TaGeCxOYd9j8-ACm>

Gospel Project

Unit: Jesus the Healer

Story: Healings in Capernaum

Big Picture Question: Why Did Jesus perform miracles?

Answer: Jesus performed miracles to glorify God, to show He is the Son of God, and to care for people.

Scripture: Mark 1

New City Catechism

Question 24: Why was it necessary for Christ, the Redeemer, to die?

Answer: Christ died willingly in our place to deliver us from the power and penalty of sin and bring us back to God.

Verse: Colossians 1:21-22

Exodus 17:1-9; Numbers 21:4-9

- The people of God complained and complained about everything. How often in our lives are we mostly complaining and not being thankful for what we have? Why do you think that we like to complain so much? What does complaining like that do to us?
- The people of God question whether or not God is with them when they are enduring a hardship. Do you do the same thing? Where is God when bad things happen? Where is God when good things happen? What is God doing in our lives with both things?
- God provided both water and healing to God's people even when they didn't deserve it. What about us? What has God given us that we don't deserve and maybe we even grumble and complain about daily? What should our response be to God's provision to us?
- Jesus says in John 3 that, like the Serpent in Numbers 21, we must look on Him – have you done that? Have you looked to Jesus in faith and trust? Does that "looking toward Him" stop the day we are saved, or should we make sure to look to him daily, hourly, etc.?

Prayer

*Pray that we would trust our God more and complain less.

*Pray that God's people would be known as people who are thankful, not grumblers.

*Pray for our mission in the city of Pacific.