

**Christ Community Covenant Church**  
**Where you put your eyes matters!**  
**Pastor Dave Scherrer - February 24, 2013**

As I studied the readings associated with the Church Calendar for the Second Sunday of Lent, I found a theme. The passages from the Old Testament, the Psalms, the letters and the Gospel all spoke to me of hope and resolve and an attitude of praise. Well actually they spoke to me of complaining and grumbling and looking for the worst in people and failing to see the blessings of life. I just choose to see the hope and blessings side of the passages. What we are going to discover today in our readings is that grumbling never helps and that where we set our eyes really matters! Let's start with the idea that *Grumbling never helps.*

**Grumbling never helps!**

**Numbers 21:4-9**

<sup>4</sup> 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. <sup>5</sup> 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." <sup>6</sup> Then the LORD sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people, so that many people of Israel died. <sup>7</sup> 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. <sup>8</sup> 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." <sup>9</sup> 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.

Wow, complain about the food that God gives you from heaven and the consequences are pretty severe. What we don't see here in this small vignette is how long the Hebrew nation has been complaining and grumbling. They are described as a stiff necked people and they have a habit of challenging Moses and in so doing challenging God.

The idea of placing a bronze snake on a pole seems a bit counter intuitive. That symbol of a snake on a pole though has a history. This logo is called the Star of Life. It spotlights the Rod of Asclepius, the Greek god of healing and medicine.



This snake on a pole image is trademarked by the American Medical Association and is used now on ambulances and EMT vehicles in the US and around the world. Jesus even refers to this 'snake on a pole' image associating Himself with the story:

**John 3:14-15**

And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, <sup>15</sup> that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

This story helps us understand the message for today, that where we set our eyes matters.

**The Sin – The rebellion of God's people.**  
**The Snake – The judgment of God's people.**  
**The Savior – The deliverance of God's people.**

Jesus wants us to set our eyes on him. Remember, "God made him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf that we might become the righteousness of God in Him." On the cross, Jesus became the subject of God's wrath on the cross, the bronze snake. Jesus is saying look to me, I paid the price. I became sin. Look to me and you will not die. Our readings tell us the same thing: grumbling is bad – it means you are looking at the ground, looking for someone to blame. When we talking amongst ourselves and complain against our God appointed leaders with no intent to heal or help, we hurt ourselves and our community. When we look rightly to the heavens with hope and acknowledge the promises or God we bring healing and hope and purpose to our community. Let's keep going . . .

**Genesis 15:1-6, 12**

After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision: "Fear not, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great."<sup>2</sup> But Abram said, "O Lord GOD, what will you give me, for I continue childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?"<sup>3</sup> And Abram said, "Behold, you have given me no offspring, and a member of my household will be my heir."<sup>4</sup> And behold, the word of the LORD came to him: "This man shall not be your heir; your very own son shall be your heir."<sup>5</sup> **And he brought him outside and said, 'Look toward heaven, and number the stars, if you are able to number them.'** Then he said to him, "So shall your offspring be."<sup>6</sup> And he believed the LORD, and he counted it to him as righteousness.

<sup>12</sup>As the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell on Abram. And behold, dreadful and great darkness fell upon him.

**Seek the face of God – Set your mind on things above!**

**Psalms 27:1-4**

The LORD **is my light and my salvation**, whom shall I fear?

The LORD is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?

<sup>2</sup>When evildoers assail me to eat up my flesh, my adversaries and foes, it is **they who stumble and fall.**<sup>3</sup>

Though an army encamp against me, my heart shall not fear; though war arise against me, yet I will be confident.<sup>4</sup> One thing have I asked of the LORD, that will I seek after:

that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, **to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD** and to inquire in his temple.

**Colossians 3:1-3**

If then you have been raised with Christ, **seek the things that are above**, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.<sup>2</sup> **Set your minds on things that are above**, not on things that are on earth.<sup>3</sup> For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.

**Philippians 4:8-9, 11b-13**

<sup>8</sup>Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, **think about these things.**<sup>9</sup> What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me—practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.

For I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content.<sup>12</sup> I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need.<sup>13</sup> I can do all things through him who strengthens me.

**Where you set your eyes and hope matters!**

**Philippians 3:17-4:1**

Brothers, join in imitating me, and **keep your eyes on those who walk according to the example you have in us.** <sup>18</sup> For many, of whom I have often told you and now tell you even with tears, walk as enemies of the cross of Christ. <sup>19</sup> Their end is destruction, their god is their belly, and they glory in their shame, **with minds set on earthly things.** <sup>20</sup> But **our citizenship is in heaven,** and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>21</sup> who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself. 4 Therefore, my brothers, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, **stand firm thus in the Lord, my beloved.**

**Luke 13:31-35 – ‘I have set my face like a flint’**

<sup>31</sup> At that very hour some Pharisees came and said to him, “Get away from here, for Herod wants to kill you.” <sup>32</sup> And he said to them, “Go and tell that fox, ‘Behold, I cast out demons and perform cures today and tomorrow, and the third day I finish my course.’ <sup>33</sup> Nevertheless, I must go on my way today and tomorrow and the day following, for it cannot be that a prophet should perish away from Jerusalem.’ <sup>34</sup> O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing! <sup>35</sup> Behold, your house is forsaken. And I tell you, you will not see me until you say, ‘Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!’”

**Isaiah 50:7**

But the Lord GOD helps me;  
therefore I have not been disgraced;  
therefore I have set my face like a flint,  
and I know that I shall not be put to shame.

Living resolutely – Christ had his plan and purposes. The cross before me the world behind me. Though none go with me still I will follow. When disappointments and hardships come I look to the cross. When temptation comes I look quickly to the cross. When disagreement comes I look quickly to the cross. When victory and joy comes I look quickly to the cross. He is the source of my comfort and gratitude.

A man if he would do anything for God, for the truth, for the cross of Christ, must set his face and with the whole force of his will resolve to serve his God. The soldier of Christ must set his face like a flint against all opposition, and at the same moment set his face towards the Lord with the attentive eye of the handmaiden looking towards her mistress. If called to suffer for the truth, we must set our face towards this conflict as Jesus set his face towards Jerusalem. He who would conquer in this glorious war, and overcome the Lord at the mercy-seat, must be resolved! resolved with his whole soul, resolved after matured thought - resolved for reasons which are too weighty for him to escape - resolved that from the throne of grace he will not depart without the blessing. *Charles Spurgeon, Feb. 10 1867*

Following the leading of the Spirit regardless of the costs.