

## SERMON TOPIC: FROM DEATH TO LIFE

(Numbers 21:4-9, Eph 2:1-10, John 3:14-21)

“Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the desert so the Son of Man must be lifted up that everyone who believes in Him may have eternal life” –  
John 3:14-15

### 1. INTRODUCTION

This Sunday we look at three passages of scripture taken from the Old Testament, Epistles and the Gospels. Even though these passages span 1400 years of human history, yet there is an amazing continuity from the beginning to the last. This testifies of God's involvement in man's destiny throughout his existence to our modern information age. Man today face vast political, social, economic problems because of pollution, global warming, waste disposal, deforestation, overpopulation, loss of biodiversity to name some of them. *Alvin Toffler a famous socialist and futurist talks about the fragmentation of society, nations because we cannot cope with the overwhelming pace of technological change. Man needs to be open to learn, unlearn, and relearn.* The Bible talks about the fall of man in the utopian Garden of Eden. He was the crowning glory of God's creation and made to love His rich bio-diversified earth and multi ethnic fellow man. However because of this sin and our sins, this has resulted in the situation we face today. The passages today talk about God launched a mission to rescue man when the situation seemed impossible. The message today discusses what we need to do about it.

### 2. The Present State of Man (Eph 2:1-3)

Dysfunctional, degenerate, sick, broken are some of the terms that we use but we are actually spiritually dead. Here the bible is not talking about certain groups of people but the state of all man, no matter who they are. There is no institution, no force of society or governmental policy that can reform or change us from this dead state (v.1). Man is a fearful and wonderful being (Psalm 139:14) with amazing talents and abilities. But under Satan's evil control (v.2) and with all communication lost with His Creator God, he is useless and doomed to fail in his destiny. We become a very selfish being, doing what we like, when we like to please ourselves (v.3). We become objects of wrath (v.4), alienated (Col 1:21) from God, consigned to the rubbish heap and for punishment in hell (Matt 25:34, 46).

### 3. Restored Man (Eph 2:4-10)

The good news is that God in his grace and mercy did what seemed impossible and made us alive through His Son Jesus (Eph 2:4). How is this possible when we look at our own degenerate and sinful state? Jesus in

his meeting with Nicodemus emphasized the need for spiritual rebirth through the power of the Holy Spirit (John 1:12-13, John 2:3, 5, 8). Just like birth, there needs to be a crisis point in our life when we believe in Jesus came to die for our sins (John 3:16). The Israelites who raised their eyes to the bronze serpent that Moses made on the pole and were healed of snake bite (Numbers 21:9). Likewise when we raise our eyes to the Cross, repent (Numbers 21:7) and believe that Jesus died in our place, we are healed of the venom of sin (Isaiah 31:5) and become alive in Christ.

### 4. The Power of the Cross

But it is just the beginning. The bronze serpent is a symbol of the power of evil that is forever broken at the Cross (John 12:31, 32, 16:11). In this season of Lent, we are reminded that the Devil is our adversary and sin needs to be dealt with in our lives as Christians. Jesus came not only to save us but also teach us how to live a life that pleases God. At times in our Christian lives, we are disobedient and stray from the path that God has chosen for us to walk as his disciples. Life is also a struggle when we face situations and obstacles in our lives that seem insurmountable. That is when we look at the Cross for forgiveness, sustenance and power to live God's Holy Life. Bronze was the metal of choice for tools and weapons (Gen 26&27, 1 Sam 17) during the Bronze Age when the Israelites were still in the wilderness and when they were a nation. As an alloy, It was stronger, durable, superior and the bronze serpent also symbolizes that the Cross is mighty and a tree of life for all Christians today. The example of Jesus and faithful man and woman of God who persevered in the face of life's daunting challenges through faith (Heb 11) show that we can more than triumph in this life through the power of the Cross.

### 5. The Great Love of God (Eph 2:4)

It is up to us. Can God do much more? Our past and present state before and when we became Christians is a complete contrast. From a position of helpfulness, emptiness, despair, rebellion we are elevated to be objects of honour and love under God's eyes and tutelage where we can share the wonders of eternity together with him (Eph 2:6-7). We judge and condemn ourselves if we refuse to accept God's greatest gift to humanity (John 3:18).

Out of the Cross flowed the greatest good that will ever come to humanity. Let us step into its light (John 3:21) so it can transform us to be like Jesus and take his message of love and forgiveness to this troubled and broken world (Eph 2:10).