Week Four: March 9
Writer: Rev. Meshach Kanyion, United alumnus, class of 2011

Text: Numbers 21:4–9

From Mount Hor they 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.

Reflection:

There is a great lesson in this passage about the driving force of problems. In the beginning, at the sight of God’s greatest act of salvation and deliverance (the Red Sea), the people of Israel allowed their problems to drive them from God. By the end of the passage their problems have become a means for drawing closer to the God who saves and delivers. Without fail we will all experience a problem of some sort today. What will yours do for you? Will it distance you from or drive you toward God?

Personal Prayer:

O God, my help in ages past, my hope for years to come. Your faithfulness to me is evident; yet I, at the sight of a small problem, soon forget you. Enable me to look steadfastly upon your face and to draw comfort and strength by the memory of what you have done, the promise of what you will do, and your abiding presence in my life. Amen.

Community Prayer Focus:

Pray for those who are overwhelmed with problems and feel as if they have nowhere to go and nobody to help.

Meeting Idea:

Choose a person (perhaps one you prayed for above) and be a source of help to them. If possible, offer your help in secret. Then spend time thanking God for being his agent and for the many ways you have been helped.