

Once again, the Israelites have sinned against God in our first reading. Once again, they complained about how God brought them out of Egypt to die. This just goes to show that we tend to live in the "now" and forget about all that God has done for us. The people would have preferred to stay as slaves in Egypt as opposed to being free and trusting on God to take care of them.

As a direct result of their lack of faith, God went about to teach them a lesson. Poisonous snakes were sent among the people and people were dying after being bit. They actually realized that they were cause of the snakes because of their actions and so they asked Moses to pray to God to take away the snakes. Instead of taking the snakes away, God told Moses to make a bronze serpent and put it on a pole so that whoever was bit could look at it and they would not die.

The Israelites are known throughout the Bible to put God to the test and today's reading is just one example of that. But even though they tested God on a regular basis, God still forgave them when they repented.

That isn't too much different from us is it? We test God. We blame God when things don't go the way we planned. We sometimes believe that God doesn't care or has forgotten us when we are too busy to notice that HE is right with us. Just like the Israelites, when we are too busy with life to notice God active with us, then HE is also out of our mind. And the first instant that things do not go our way, it is God's fault. He doesn't care for us enough or love us enough.

In our first reading, the people turned their backs on God and when they repented, God protected them by having Moses make a bronze snake that those who were bitten could look at and live.

When we turn our backs on God, we have the cross which we look up to so that we may ask for God's forgiveness. All who believe in what God accomplished in Christ has the promise of forgiveness.

There are a few steps in receiving that promise. First, you must admit that you are a sinner. There is not one person in this building who is righteous because we all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. Second, we need to ask God to forgive us. Third, we need to believe in Jesus the Christ and trust that our salvation comes through him.

As we look up toward the cross, we will receive eternal life because Christ defeated death and the devil. True life comes through the cross