

Dealing with Snakes

By Brent Paschall – brent@brentnrachel.com

Presented August 2012 at Blue Ridge Church of Christ – www.blueridgecoc.org

- I. Introduction
 - a. We just got back from our August 2012 family camping trip
 - b. The most significant statistic from our camping trip was not:
 - i. 3 out of 3 days with rain falling on our campsite
 - ii. 2 out of 5 children stung by yellow jackets
 - c. Snakes
 - i. We saw two snakes while we were on our camping trip
- II. KEY THOUGHT: There are many spiritual lessons suggested by our experiences with snakes
- III. There are dangerous snakes out there
 - a. In Virginia there are three varieties of venomous snakes
 - i. SOURCE:
http://www.virginiaherpetologicalsociety.com/reptiles/snakes/snakes_of_virginia.htm
 - ii. The Northern Copperhead
 - iii. The Eastern Cottonmouth
 - iv. The Timber Rattlesnake
 - b. We told our children
 - i. If you see a snake, stop and slowly back away
 - ii. And let mommy and daddy know
 - c. We live in a world that is also inhabited by the great serpent – Satan
 - i. Genesis 3
 - ii. He deceives – Gen. 3:1-6
 - iii. He is cursed by God – Gen. 3:14-15
 - d. He is still seeking to harm people today
- IV. When you need help, call
 - a. The whistles
 - i. First whistle – first day in the evening
 - 1. Sarah and Bethany had gone to the restroom building
 - 2. We heard a whistle
 - 3. We dropped everything and went running
 - 4. Sarah was walking back with Bethany
 - 5. She was very upset, because she had seen a snake
 - 6. It was 2 inch ring necked snake, like this picture -
<http://life-on-the-moraine.blogspot.com/2011/09/ring-necked-snake.html>
 - b. We should call when we need help
 - i. Psalm 50:15 – God says call
 - ii. Psalm 86:6-10 – The Psalmist calls
 - iii. We should too
 - c. Second whistle

- i. Bethany was very upset again
 - ii. Sarah was pretty shaken as well
 - iii. She said they had seen a snake
 - iv. She pointed it out to me, but it took me a long time to be able to see it, even though it was sitting in plain sight
 - v. It was a three and a half foot timber rattlesnake!
 - vi. This is why they put zippers on tents!
 - d. Yellow jackets can hurt you. Rattlesnakes can kill you.
- V. If bitten, seek immediate treatment.
 - a. “Rattlesnake bites are rarely fatal to humans, if treated promptly.^[31] Between 7,000 and 8,000 people are estimated to have been bitten by venomous snakes in the United States each year, and about five of those die.^[67] The most important factor in determining survival following a severe envenomation is the amount of time elapsed between the bite and treatment. Most deaths occur between 6 and 48 hours after the bite. However, if antivenom treatment is given within 1–2 hours of the bite, the probability of recovery is greater than 99%.^{[68]”}
 - b. Num. 21:5-9 – the fiery serpents and their treatment
 - c. John 3:14-16 – Jesus is the treatment for the deadly attacks of Satan
- VI. Do not face serpents without the help of your Father
 - a. My kids did exactly what I wanted them to, they moved away and called for help
 - b. It would have been foolish and deadly dangerous for them to attempt to deal that snake by themselves
 - c. We are foolish if we try to take on Satan without the help of the Father
 - d. We cannot face him by ourselves
 - i.
- VII. Experiences with snakes make us desire our Father to be near at all times
 - a. The sight of a snake almost instinctively fills us with dread and loathing
 - i. Those are healthy emotions
 - ii. They make us stay clear and seek necessary help
 - b. Sarah’s comment: I have been so proud of myself for taking care of my younger brothers and sisters, but since seeing that snake I want you around
 - c. I feel the same way when I see what Satan can do
 - i. I want to stay very close to my Heavenly Father
 - ii. I may be able to take care of a rattlesnake, but I cannot face the devil with my Father’s help
 - d. The problem is that sometimes snakes are hard to see
 - i. They are camouflaged or hidden
 - ii. Sometimes they are hidden in plain sight
 - iii. What’s the solution? Always stay close to the Father
 - e. I can’t always be with my children, but my Heavenly Father can
 - i. My father is gone, he couldn’t help me with that rattler
 - ii. But my Heavenly Father is always with me, and He was with me then
- VIII. Even when defeated, the serpent seeks to kill
 - a. Snakes are hard to kill
 - i. I dealt that snake several deadly blows

1. From a distance, with heavy stones
 2. And then closer up to make sure it was dead
 3. But it kept threatening and striking as long as it could
 4. And much longer than I would have thought it could
- b. “Caution is advised even when snakes are believed to be dead; rattlesnake heads can see, flick the tongue, and inflict venomous bites for up to an hour after being severed from the body.” - <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rattlesnake>
- c. Satan is the same way
- i. He has already been defeated
 1. Cast from heaven - Rev. 12:7-9
 - ii. But still he seeks to kill the saints
 1. The woman and her offspring – Rev. 12:12-17
- d. Sin in our lives is the same way
- i. We died to sin – Rom. 6:1-2, 6
 - ii. But the old man keeps attempting to rise from the dead, and must be killed again

IX. Conclusion

- a. Overcome sin through Jesus Christ – Rom 6:3-6
- b. Follow these lessons for dealing with snakes
- c. INVITATION