Sermon at Bluff 11 March 2018 (John 3.14-21)

**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 3.14f, my stress)

**Moses made a bronze snake and put it on a pole. Then when anyone was bitten by a snake and looked at the bronze snake, he lived.** (Numbers 21.9)

What is the connection between Moses and The Medical Council of NZ? Snake and rod symbol.

Left symbol = Hermes, right one = Asclepius (Greek god of healing). See also Numbers 21.4-9. In this story the people of Israel complain about life in the desert with no food or water. Snakes kill some, and God told Moses to erect the symbol so those who looked at it would be healed.

It does not matter how this worked – it is enough that the people believed it would work. TEXT.

What Jesus is saying is that the Son of Man is the equivalent of the snake, and will be lifted up for healing. This comes in a conversation with Nicodemus, a Jewish religious leader. At the time Nicodemus, or anyone else, would have had no idea quite what Jesus meant, but we understand it with the benefit of hindsight.

* Son of Man –often in Matthew, Mark and Luke, but only here in John. Clearly refers to Jesus.
(Mark 2.10, 27; 8.31, 38; 9.9, 12, 31; 10.33, 45; 13.26; 14.21, 41, 62 = 13 times)
* Lifted up – the Cross
* Believes – not just looks, but trusts it will help.
* Life – in Moses’ case physical healing that enables life to continue, but in Jesus’ case something quite different – eternal life.

What is eternal life? It is two things:

[1] Life that will not end in death – Jesus shows this through the resurrection which we gain the benefits from.

[2] A life now with an eternal quality – God-filled, through his Spirit. This is not some magical force, but a strengthened way of life seen from God’s point of view. Living in Bluff it seems imposing and big, until you climb up Bluff hill and look down – so small! In the same way our life can seem hard and imposing until we see it from God’s eternal point of view.

Mike King and the Tour of Hope. (*Along the way they'll stop at around 45 schools and community halls and talk to more than 20,000 schoolkids and adults about mental health, and how every one of us can be the hope someone needs when times are tough*.)

In the same way what the cross offers is not just forgiveness for the past, and life everlasting in the future, but a better quality life in the present.