

Daily View

“But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called ‘today’” Hebrews 3:13

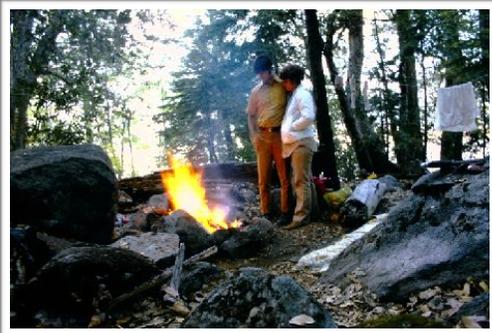
May 11, 2020

Snakes in the Way

“Therefore we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it”
Hebrews 2:1

In the summer of 1973, Christie and I decided, for some reason that seems totally insane to me now, to hike into Cherry Lake, a trek of about 7 miles each way. We got to the trail entrance, put on our huge backpacks, and off we went. I was armed with a .44 magnum, on loan to me by our neighbor, Larry, “just in case you are attacked by a bear.”

There had been a drought during the winter and spring that year, so the upper part of the lake was bone dry. That meant that we had to walk over about mile of lakebed rocks to get to the water's edge and find a suitable spot to camp. No worries. We stepped briskly from one rock to another and found an ideal spot to camp. Though we couldn't venture far from the campsite, we had a nice time (see picture of us having a nice time below).



After a couple of days of fighting the bugs, cooking food that we pretended to enjoy, waking up every 30 minutes to make sure the fire was still burning so we didn't get eaten by a mountain lion, we decided to head back. We got our stuff together, and headed out from our little campsite.

We stood and viewed the lakebed that we had traversed to get to our site, still an ocean of dry, smooth rocks — with a huge difference. This time, there were 10-15 birds dive-bombing the rocks. We didn't realize what was going on, until we heard a frightening sound: a symphony of *rattles*. Not baby rattles but rattlesnake rattles. The birds were bedeviling the rattlesnakes that were lying in and among the rocks that we had walked over previously.

We had a problem. There was no other way out. This was also the age well before cell phones so, if we got bit, there was no way to contact anyone. Our only option was to step over the rocks — and the snakes — to get out of there.

So, I unholstered the .44 magnum, feigned courage and gingerly led the way, pointing the gun at the rocks as I went. I realized that if I fired a shot it could ricochet off a rock and hit me, but it was worth the risk. The cacophony of rattles

“After a couple of days of fighting the bugs, cooking food that we pretended we enjoyed, waking up every 30 minutes to make sure the fire is still going so we didn't get eaten by a hungry bear, we decided to head back.”

continued for the entire mile.

We made it, but this is right up there with the most frightening things I have ever experienced. It also ended, once-and-for-all, any plans to go camping ever again.

Is there a spiritual lesson? It seems analogous to what we face in our spiritual journey. There are lots of “snakes” a long the way. There are a lot of things that can rise out of the rocks and “bite” us. [You might pause here and think of some “snakes” along our walk with Christ].

I thought of several “snakes”: There are the elitist snakes who think they are wiser than the Lord. Paul speaks of them:

For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened.” Claiming to be wise, they became fools. Romans 1:21-22

Then there are the simplistic snakes, anti-intellectuals who have become “dull of hearing” (Hebrews 5:11) and reject deeper study and ridicule those who have honest questions.

Of course, there is the “snake in the grass,” the divisive man who disguises himself as an “angel of light” (I Cor. 11:14). There are the “you-can-be-a-Christian-but-live-on-the-moral-fringes” snakes who “pervert the grace of our God into sensuality and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ” (Jude 1:4)

As the old song goes, we are “camping toward Canaan's happy land.” But we must not be naive on our journey; there are a lot of snakes along the way. *“Therefore we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it”* (Hebrews 2:1).