

“The Defeat of Corruption”

A sermon for Easter

What is corruption? That’s a popular topic these days, as we so clearly are seeing and experiencing corruption in government, corruption in the economy, even corruption in the church.

Good ol’ Webster defines corruption as “dishonest or illegal behavior, especially by powerful people.” Further, corruption is defined as “a departure from the original purest form.”

Humankind had its original purest form in the Garden of Eden, the home of the first humans Adam and Eve.

But something happened in that garden which forever changed the future of all humanity.

The heart of human beings chose their ways over God’s ways. The human heart became permanently altered with the introduction of sin, of continually making selfish choices. We call it the Fall.
(Genesis 3)

From that day forward, every human was born with a corrupt heart. And as people built and occupied places of power, corruption naturally and easily followed.

This is so obvious today. You do not have to dig long before corruption is found in the worlds of religion, government, business, media, education and other arenas. We are more surprised when we find something is not corrupt than we are when we find it to be corrupt.

Ok, so how does this relate to Easter? Religious and political corruption were the cause of the death of Jesus. The story of the cross is the most egregious form of corruption in world history. The Bible states it plainly: “On the cross, you denied the Holy and Righteous One, you killed the Author of life.” (Acts 3:14,15)

Was Jesus a victim of this corruption? Being God, Jesus knew the thoughts of his enemies who believed they were secretly

plotting their conspiracy against him. He certainly had the power to stop them. He knew their plans and had evidence of it all along.

But how did Jesus respond? Did he call his followers to rise up and defend him? Did he flex his supernatural powers and strike all his accusers dead with one single word or wave of his hand?

Let's remember three points. First, Jesus' perspective was not from a human view of understanding. He saw events from the view of the eternal, with a heavenly understanding. He saw and knew the condition of the human heart. It grieved him. He was well aware of corruption, especially the corruption aimed at him.

Second, let's remember, Jesus always utilized the greatest weapon in his divine possession whenever there was conflict, that is truth. Truth. The Bible has a synonym for this, calling it "The sword of his mouth." Truth. (Revelation 9:15)

As we read the story of Jesus' betrayal, arrest, trial, torture and death, whenever corruption rears its nasty head, Jesus humbly and skillfully wielded the sword of his mouth, of truth.

Third point, let us remember Jesus understood his Heavenly Father had a plan of salvation that was carefully being carried out under God's watchful eye. Jesus entrusted his life to his all-powerful and loving Father.

The followers of Jesus were confused and disillusioned. They did not understand. On Friday morning, while still alive, Jesus' body was nailed to a wooden cross. Hours later, he died. Then he was buried. His lifeless body sealed up in a tomb.

“It is finished.” Those were Jesus' final words. Those were also his followers' words. Finished, over, dead, defeated, done. It made no sense, but it was obviously finished.

On Saturday, Jesus still lay dead in a tomb. Had the corruption of

humanity defeated the King of Kings? Was evil and corrupt scheming to account for silencing God? Absolutely nothing made sense, except for the fact that corruption always wins.

Until. Until. Don't you just love that word, until? Until Sunday morning.

As the sun slowly inched above the landscape, as the beams of the sun shot across the horizon, a rag-tag group of women, weighed down with grief, came to the tomb of their teacher. As they approached, the ground rattled, shaking violently. Then suddenly, an angelic being appeared sitting atop of the stone that had previously sealed Jesus tomb. The huge stone had been rolled away. The angel told the women, "Jesus is not here, for he has risen. Come, see the place where he lay." (Matthew 28:6)

He had risen? He had risen! Jesus was alive! The corrupt schemes of the evil religious and governmental leaders had been defeated. Try as they might, the

corrupt ones were left powerless to cover up history's greatest miracle.

In every nation on earth, in every group or organization we know, lawlessness, deceit and wickedness is present at some level.

How shall we live in times like these? We live like Jesus. Let us fight lies with the sword of his mouth, with truth. Speak power to truth. We fight immorality with his spirit of holiness. We fight anger with his love. Arrogance with his humility. Human cleverness with heaven's wisdom. Worldly urgency with Godly patience.

An Easter prayer for you: Lord God, open our eyes and let us see there is nothing new under the sun, nothing new among the children of men and women. Corruption has existed since nearly the beginning of time. And these days, corruption seems to be encouraged and congratulated.

But through Jesus' death and resurrection, we can overcome.

Because Jesus is risen, we stand with confidence before any and all corruption and injustice. Let us be willing to lay down our lives in this battle with evil while taking up your sword of truth. In the name of our risen savior, we pray. Amen.

Dear friends, Easter comes in the calendar only once a year. But for us, every day is an Easter. Each morning, rise to newness of life. Christ arose once and for all. The glory of his victory shines everywhere. The power of his resurrection is felt wherever he is known and loved and followed.

He is risen, he risen indeed.
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.