

46-02-03-Rescue from Darkness

Lent, Cross, spiritual warfare, suffering,

1 Cor 2:1-8

God's secret wisdom in the Cross destroyed demonic dominion.

INTRODUCTION:

–**V-hand gesture**: symbolizes the joyous victory of winning a war. But that joy is *superficial and trite*, if the struggle of battlefield and the loss of comrades—is *not remembered*.] Deep reflection on what Jesus did at Calvary helps us truly appreciate the victory of Easter morning.

–Christ's Cross brought *reconciliation* with God, *release* from sins, *ransom* from death, *redemption* from the law, and **rescue from darkness**. **HOM.idea. Text: 1 Cor 2:1-8**, *When I came to you, brothers, I did not come with eloquence or superior wisdom as I proclaimed to you the testimony about God. For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. I came to you in weakness and fear, and with much trembling. My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, so that your faith might not rest on men's wisdom, but on God's power. We do, however, speak a message of wisdom among the mature, but not the wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. No, we speak of God's secret wisdom, a wisdom that has been hidden and that God destined for our glory before time began. None of the rulers of this age understood it, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. Satan and his cohorts didn't realize how God would use their attempt to get rid of the Messiah. The Cross would overturn the realm of darkness...*

I. God's Judgment on Human Sin Was the Devil's Undoing

A. Humanity's *fall* into sin (Gen 3) was *judged* on Christ's Cross:

1. *Sin* is Satan's territory. (By *participating in sin*, the human race fell captive to Satan's dominion— **1 Jn 3:8a**. He who does what is sinful is **of the devil**, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning.)
2. Satan knew that: 1) God created humans to rule over all created realms; 2) sin would bring spiritual death to humanity, so 3) if he lured us into sin, it would *kill us*— **Jn 8:44a**, You **belong to** your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desire. He was a **murderer** from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him.
3. **BUT, let's finish 1 Jn 3:8**: "He who does what is sinful is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was **to destroy the devil's work**."

TRANS: God planned a counterattack against sin's darkness "before time began." (v.7) It openly displayed His holy verdict on sin by executing judgment in such a way that it turned divine wrath into transferable human righteousness. He did this work through a real human Being....

II. Christ's Cross Established Both Justice *and* His Righteousness

- A. Some are repulsed at verses mentioning "judgment" or "the wrath of God."... "Why not just talk about God's love and the Spirit Dove?" What about the Spirit Dove?— Jn 16:8-11, When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to **sin** and **righteousness** and **judgment**: in regard to **sin**, because men do not believe in me; in regard to **righteousness**, because I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer; and in regard to **judgment**, because the prince of this world now stands condemned.
- B. God's Spirit has one message: "Jesus Christ and him crucified." (The Cross displayed: 1) the horror of sin; 2) the righteousness in Christ; and 3) the condemnation of Satan and his fallen angels— Col 2:15. And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a **public spectacle** of them, triumphing over them by the cross. [Just like a Roman victory parade]
1. On that Cross, God's absolute love exposed with absolute light the deceit and defilement of sin. (The laser beam of God's love blew a gaping hole of escape in the stronghold of Satan and his demonic principalities— v.8, None of the rulers of this age understood it, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.)
 2. The Cross made rescue from the captivity darkness available to all believers— Col 1:13-14 (ESV), He has delivered us from the domain of **darkness** and transferred us to the **kingdom of his beloved Son**, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.
- C. God dealt personally with sin—the cause of human sorrow—by suffering our death penalty! (Evil may have nailed Him there, but His love for us kept Him there, until He could say, "It is finished!")
1. Wrongs inflicted by evil people and policies or wounds suffered from evil events and situations, makes us long for justice. (That longing for what's fair and right is built into us by God Himself.)
 2. God is love and light; His love is so intensely committed to the light of truth that His response to the lying nature of sin can only be described as 'holy wrath.' But as the God of truth, His desire to be true to His own nature as the God of love is so **passionate**, that He "so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son..."

TRANS: His Cross destroyed demonic dominion by (v.7) "God's secret wisdom, a wisdom that has been hidden and that God destined for our glory before time began." [In The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe, when Peter protests the Witch's claim on the traitor Edmund, she cries, "do you really think your master can rob me of my rights by mere force? He knows the Deep Magic better than that. He knows that unless I have blood as the Law says all Narnia will be overturned and perish in fire and water." When Aslan offers to die in Edmund's place, the Witch is thrilled. But after she kills him, Aslan returns to life and explains to the children, "though the Witch knew the Deep Magic, there is a magic deeper still which she did not know: Her knowledge goes back only to the dawn of time. But if she could have looked a little further back, ...before Time dawned, she would have...known that when a willing victim who had committed no treachery was killed in a traitor's stead, the Table would crack and Death itself would start working backwards."]

III. This Secret 'Deeper Magic' of God is Still at Work in Us

- A. Until Christ returns, sin and sin's effects are still causing suffering.
1. Satan still controls people with sin's deception and fear's power. (Reacting to suffering with unforgiveness hostility, bitterness, or revenge, fortify his dark stronghold within the human heart.)
 2. Ultimately, Satan tries to use suffering to get us to turn against God [as he did with Job]; and God often allows this, [as He did with Job, so that Job would be justified and Satan would be defeated]. (Without a Book of Job, Job couldn't see this, but we do have Job's story!)
- B. Jesus showed us how to find victory in suffering — Jn 16:33, "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world." (While suffering both emotionally and physically, He prayed 2 prayers that are the keys to victory: 1) "Not my will, but Yours be done." and 2) "Father, forgive them, for they don't know what they're doing.")

CONCLUSION:

—**Christ's Cross destroyed demonic dominion.** As members of His Body, the Church, we can confirm Satan's defeat in the way we bear our own personal crosses. When we consecrate our sufferings to Him, we connect them to His victorious Cross, and God's power is released— Col 1:24, Now I rejoice in what was suffered for you, and I fill up in my flesh what is still lacking in regard to Christ's afflictions, for the sake of his body, which is the church. Facing suffering as Jesus did affirms God's Kingdom of love and light. And somehow, in a mysterious way, it joins our sufferings to the work of Christ on the Cross in **destroying darkness** in human hearts.