

The Power of the Cross

Public Display of Darkness

We live in a society that tries to sanitize our lives.

It is no longer sufficient to wash our hands with soap.

It now has to be an anti-bacterial soap.

There are as many sanitation products as food products in the grocery stores.

Personal hygiene products are rampant.

Our sanitizing is borderline insanity.

We have waged war on the germ world.

Did you hear the joke about the germ?

Never mind, I don't want to spread it around.

We cough and sneeze differently.

One gentleman went to the washroom and read the sign over the sink that said, "Employees must wash hands". So he waited and waited and waited and finally he decided to just wash them himself.

Sanitizing has moved beyond the threshold of the germ world.

It has spilled over into the spiritual world.

There is a proliferation of products that promise to sanitize the spiritual world.

There are natural remedies to inoculate us against sin.

These remedies claim to fix our spiritual diseases.

The demon of lust is labeled an addiction.

The demon of hopelessness is labeled depression.

The demon of selfishness is labeled looking out for number one.

What used to be considered the fruit of sin is now a syndrome.

The world is diagnosing these problems by its own wisdom.

We have accepted the world's solution.

Take a pill, join a support group, hire a counselor.

Watch a talk show on TV like Dr. "Pill".

Attend a self-help seminar.

I'm not saying that the health professions are adversaries to God's work.

Far from it!

Listen to this advice from the apocryphal book of Sirach.

"Honour a physician with the honour due unto him for the uses which you may have of him: for the Lord has created him. The Lord has created medicines out of the earth; and he that is wise will not abhor them." (Sirach 38:1,4)

But our society attempts to negate sin and demons from its streets.

Surely demonic activity doesn't exist in a civilized society.

An "enlightened" mind does not fall for that superstition.

Demons roamed the world in less sophisticated days.

The acknowledgment of demons is now considered a fanciful imagination.

Demons are now fictitious characters.

We have reverted to the thinking of the ancient Greeks.

The Greeks made up god myths to explain life's phenomenon.

These made-up gods weren't real but the stories helped life make sense.

We do the same with demons.

When evil prowls we create demons like vampires, werewolves, mummies.

But we know these aren't real, they are fiction.

And so we protect ourselves from evil by making it fictional.

We sanitize evil right out of the spiritual world and into the pretend world.

What does this move to sanitize the spiritual world do?

It places us in direct conflict with the **POWER OF THE CROSS**.

It says that Jesus was only a sacrifice.

He was a helpless victim pinned with nails to a wooden beam.

Is that how Paul described Jesus while dying on the cross?

This is what I read, **"He disarmed the principalities and powers and made a public example of them, triumphing over them on the cross of Christ."**

Jesus was not just a passive sacrifice, bound and rendered helpless.

He was not immobilized by the nails.

The cross was the place of war and ultimate victory.

On the cross Jesus stripped the powers of evil of their hold.

He mastered them, stripping them of all their armour and authority.

He made a public spectacle of them.

He put them on display before the universe.

He triumphed over them.

Whatever power they had was now weakness and beggarly.

He defeated the hosts of evil.

He displayed His own unvanquished strength.

We are still in a battle with enemies that the world cannot master.

The Gospel is our only hope.

Jesus alone reigns victorious over the demons of darkness.

All the forces of the universe are now subject to Him.

He is their Conqueror even if they refuse to acknowledge Him as Master and Lord.

And when we are in Christ we too are conquerors.

" in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor power, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Rom. 8:38)

It is amazing that those who are persecuted for Jesus are never defeated.

To die for the faith was victory.

Stephen, the first believer to die for Jesus, did not lose.

He saw the glory of Jesus.

"As they were stoning Stephen, he prayed, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit" (Acts 7:59).

He understood the words of Jesus.

"If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. Remember the word that I said to you, 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you." (Jn. 15:18-20)

James said, **"Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance."** (James 1:2, 3).

When we know that Jesus is Lord, we serve no matter the conditions.

Stephen served with pure joy.

"count yourselves blessed every time people put you down or throw you out or speak lies about you to discredit me. What it means is that the truth is too close for comfort and they are uncomfortable. You can be glad when that happens—give a cheer, even!—for though they don't like it, I do! And all heaven applauds. And know that you are in good company. My prophets and witnesses have always gotten into this kind of trouble." (Mt. 5:11-12)

That is the power of the cross - it makes a public display of evil.

Jesus doesn't come to sanitize us spiritually.

He died on the cross to transform us by defeating sin and death.

The cross was where righteousness and evil collided for the last time.

Jesus, the Righteous One vanquished Satan and his evil manifestations.

The kingdom of evil spiraled into a tailspin, while the Kingdom of God soared.