

"Deadly Virus Destroyed!"

Good Friday

1)

1 John 3:5-8

2)

April 10, 2020

May the Lord direct your hearts into God's love and Christ's perseverance. (2 Thess. 3:5)

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

I have a few items up here with me today –

- Sanitary wipes
- Hand-sanitizer
- Face mask

You and I have gotten to know these items quite well. The government and health officials have told us to use these items. They say – “If everyone does their part, we’ll beat this virus.” We’re told to wash our hands for 20 seconds, or use hand sanitizer. We’re told to wear a facemask so that we don’t catch or spread any airborne particles of the virus. And when we return home from the grocery store, you may even use the sanitary wipes to wipe down all of the items we’ve purchased. Have you been using these items in your home? Are you doing your part to prevent the spread and defeat the virus?

Our lesson this evening talks about another virus, one that infects us all. The good news that the apostle John reminds us of is that this deadly virus has been destroyed! Tonight we want to consider how the virus has been destroyed, and why it’s so important for you and me.

First, I’d like you to consider – what is the devil doing? He’s doing what he’s always done. V 8 – ...**the devil has been sinning from the beginning.** In the garden of Eden, the devil was hard at work – tempting Adam and Eve to fall into sin. First, he tried to get them to doubt God’s power, his love, his providence. Then he tried hard to get them to think they could be smarter and wiser than God.

The devil is doing the same thing today. Throughout history – in Biblical times and in modern times – we see example after example of mankind falling into sin, making a mess of their lives, becoming a history lesson in how not to do things.

Are our lives any different? God tells us about ourselves through the Psalm writer – **“Surely I am sinful from birth; sinful from the time my mother conceived me.”** (Ps 51:5) We might think we’re good people. We might think we’re doing good things, helping others. But when it comes right down to it – we are all infected with a virus. And it’s way worse than the coronavirus. It has a 100% infection rate. And it has a 100% mortality rate.

In the Bible sin is described as missing the mark. God set the bar at an impossible high level. He tells us, **“Be holy (perfect), as I, the Lord your God, am holy (perfect).** (Leviticus 19:2)

Day after day, we sin. We sin often. We sin regularly. We have angry words. We have lustful thoughts. We have a contemptuous attitude towards others. We lie to others and to ourselves. We hurt others. We steal. We’re lazy. We are not good at a lot of things. And we’re very good at one thing – sinning.

The apostle Paul described the battle that rages within - **For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do. ¹⁸ I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. ¹⁹ For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing.**

²⁴ What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? ²⁵ Thanks be to God—through Jesus Christ our Lord! (Rom 7:15, 18, 19, 24-25)

⁵ But you know that he appeared so that he might take away our sins...v 8 – The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil’s work.

Jesus often talked about the devil’s work – a liar, a thief and a murderer. Jesus said that when the devil lies, he speaks his native language. The job of the devil is like a deadly virus. Except his job is to lure your soul away from Jesus.

Why did Jesus come? Jesus came to put the devil out of a job. He came to take away the devil’s grip on us – with guilt, and fear, and death and despair. That is why Jesus went to the cross. He went there to put the devil out of work.

Isn't it amazing that Jesus even appeared in the first place? From his vantage point, he set aside the glory of heaven to take on flesh and blood. He was conceived and born a human. He accepted the deadly wages of sins consequences.

Jesus was on the job that he never wavered from. The devil tried over and over again to sabotage his mission and prevent him from going to the cross. Jesus made it through suffering – mocked and spit on, crown of thorns pushed into his skull, his hands and feet stretched out onto a cross held up by nails. He carried the weight of the sins of the world on his shoulders.

Can you picture the headline – Deadly Virus Destroyed! We don't know if it will be a month from now or a year from now, but we certainly cannot wait until we read that headline in the paper. We look forward to that day when we no longer have to social distance. When we can visit our parents and loved ones. When we can celebrate Easter and worship with our fellow believers in our church.

On Good Friday, another headline was made – Deadly Virus Destroyed! The devil was defeated and all sin of all time of all mankind was forgiven. **The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work.** Amen.

The peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Amen. (Phil.4:7)

⁵ But you know that he appeared so that he might take away our sins. And in him is no sin. ⁶ No one who lives in him keeps on sinning. No one who continues to sin has either seen him or known him.

⁷ Dear children, do not let anyone lead you astray. He who does what is right is righteous, just as he is righteous. 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.