Power to Save – Sermon for Palm Sunday – at Acts Community Church

Joke – anger management. Anger can escalate. When it does, it can even become contempt

Introduction – Contempt

When a judge says to someone – either stop or I will hold you in contempt – what does he mean by contempt?

You are seriously dishonoring a honorable office

You are disrespecting the court and the judge

The original word meant to despise, to scorn, as in the act of spitting in someone’s face – in contempt

Eli’s wicked sons had contempt for the Lord’s offering

So it’s more than just dishonor – that’s not a strong enough explanation

Contempt is more vile – it’s spitting in the face of someone, in contempt

When David sinned with Bathsheba, Nathan the prophet went to David and told him

**2 Samuel 12:14 (NIV)**
…”by doing this you have made the enemies of the LORD show utter contempt”…

He enabled the enemies of the Lord to show utter contempt – to scorn and mock the Lord – spit in his face

Who are the Lord’s enemies? (hating; an adversary :- enemy, foe.)

Those that would truly want the Lord to be scorned, mocked, ridiculed, hurt

Chief of whom, then, would be Satan, the devil, and his fallen angels

There is clearly a concerted effort by the enemy to discredit God for choosing mankind as God’s chosen sons, chosen to inherit the earth, the kingdom

The book of Job gives us a powerful picture of this effort of the enemy when Satan shows up in heaven with the good angels and the Lord said to Satan, where have you come from and where are you going – Satan said, from roaming the earth.

We find out in 1 Peter 5:8 that he roams the earth seeking whom he may devour.

How does he devour us?

Through tempting us into sin and therefore out of right relationship with God, and ultimately death (Remember what God said to Cain - sin is crouching at the door, it desires to have you, but you must resist it.

James says, resist the devil and he will flee from you

God gave Satan permission to strike everything Job had, because Satan had claimed that if he did, Job would curse God – sin.

Cause Satan, the accuser of the brethren, had argued that the only reason Job was serving God was because of the blessings that Job got from God – implying that there was no real love, no real relationship, just selfishness – serving God for what he could get, not for who He was

But Job proved Satan wrong when he did not curse God and sin – and though he was tempted to curse the day of his own birth, because he was so miserable, when Job saw God and heard him speak, he repented even of that – saying that he, Job, did not understand the power and the glory of God.

Job demonstrated a willingness to serve God, even in his desperate state of trial

And God was honored, glorified, and Satan plan was spoiled – Satan’s accusations were proved wrong –

Job did not enable Satan to scorn the Lord, to have contempt for God, to spit in his face, saying, see, I told you so – these stupid weak humans – I told you God you made the wrong choice when you made them your children

Instead, Job brought God pleasure when he did what was right, even when it was hard

I am sure the angels, the good ones, rejoiced, and the bad ones cursed

**Luke 15:6-7 (NIV)**
6  and goes home. Then he calls his friends and neighbors together and says, 'Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep.'
7  I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent.

And so if we fast forward to Jesus after He became man, the Spirit led him into the wilderness to be tempted of the Lord, but Jesus would not bite on these temptations – so Satan left him, it says for an opportune time.

That opportune time came in the Garden of Gethsemane – when Jesus, like Job, but even more, was facing terrible pain – even more- insults, mocking, beatings, - and crucifixion.

Jesus could have stopped it all

He could have saved himself

But then he would not have been able to save us

Instead he willingly took it

**He took the contempt that our sin enabled**

The enemy was there, spitting in his face, along with those people that the enemy had also caused to have contempt for the Lord

The enemy, though, was there mocking, Saying, see, the sins of these people are killing you

These humans that you created, are mine, and they will do my bidding now, to scorn you, spit on you, and kill you, for me

But, I need to see, that - The devil’s contempt was fueled by my sin – enabled because of me

Remember what Nathan said to David – your sin has enabled the enemies of the Lord to show utter contempt

When we sin, we enable the devil and his demons to show utter contempt for the Lord, mocking, spitting

Yet, the Lord looked out, through the ages, and looked at me, with the spittle running down his beard, and held his arms open for me – and said, Father, forgive him.

Jesus forgave me, even though I was one of those that put him there, my sin enabled the enemies of the Lord to show utter contempt, spit in His face

Yet Jesus forgave me, he forgave you – That’s the story of Good Friday

The story of the cross

Transition – the power to save

Jesus had the power to forgive, the power to save - he’s the only one that did

He earned that power

He lived the perfect life – the way mankind was supposed to live – the way God knew we could

So when Jesus said, it is finished, the enemy that thought he had won, discovered that he lost

Where did Jesus go when his physical body died? Where did his spirit go?

Into hades, where the souls of all the departed were kept, unable to leave and enter heaven, because of the power of death and hades that the devil controlled

But then, when Satan tried to hold Jesus there, he discovered he could not.

Instead, Jesus preached to those spirits

And then – up from the grace he arose, with a mighty triumph from his foes

He led captivity out of hades, and like a train up in the sky, into heaven itself.

Opening it now, for the first time since man’s fall in the garden.

By his precious blood

But He rose a conquering king –

 that’s my king

He is mighty to save

Conclusion – Honoring God today

In all I do, I honor you