

## “The Disease (and the cure)” John 16:5-15 Cantate 2021

He is risen! He is risen indeed!

Grace, mercy and peace to you from God the Father and Christ Jesus, our Lord.

Do you know what the number one sexually transmitted disease in the province of Ontario is? It is the same one in all the other provinces and territories of Canada. In fact, it is the same disease that is spreading uncontrolled throughout the world, and has been since shortly after the world began.

Sin.

Since even before there was ever an adulterous act of any kind—straight, gay, or otherwise—sin has been a sexually transmitted disease. Why? Because ever since the first man and woman created by God despised Him by ignoring His presence, doubting His Word, and disobeying His command: “You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.”

It is not that sex is the original sin. The original sin is that referenced by Jesus in our text: “they do not believe in me.” So why, then, are sexual sins such a big deal? Because, since both man and woman sinned in the beginning, they became the host bodies of death. In the day they ate of that which God commanded them not to eat, they became infected with the disease of sin, and thus carriers of the most communicable and deadly disease of all.

Since then, every child ever born of the union of a man and a woman (the only way any child is ever born is by such conception,

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whether in utero or in vitro), is infected with that sin. As Paul writes to the Christians of the Church at Rome:

“...sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned.” Romans 5:12

So we see that sin is not only the number one killer disease, it is so highly contagious no one is immune and everyone is a carrier in his own body. If that was not enough, it is impossible for man to diagnose. Because the disease itself is unbelief, man ignores, rejects, and ridicules the Great Physician Who alone can diagnose and cure this fatal disease. Thus, Paul again addressing the Christians at Rome writes at the very beginning of his letter to them:

Claiming to be wise, they became fools, 23 and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things.

24 Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, 25 because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen.

26 For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature; 27 and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error.

28 And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done.

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The ultimate result of the sin of unbelief in God and His Word is a total worship of self. And how better to express, and experience, and enjoy that worship?

We have seen it throughout history, from Sodom and Gomorrah and the fertility goddess worship, and temple prostitutes of the OT and ancient cultures, to King Herod in Jesus’ day, to what Paul references in Rome and Corinth, to the Roman empire of Nero and Caligula, to our Canadian culture today. Sex becomes the ultimate expression sin and rebellion against God and His Word—to the point of becoming the very definition of love and personhood.

Thus, as we have seen again recently thanks to the sports and entertainment world, the height of sin today is to actually call sin what it is. The idol held up for all to see and admire is the one who has publicly declared that he has exchanged the truth about God for a lie, and boasts of his dishonorable passions [and] relations ... that are contrary to nature”—that is, contrary to the created and commanded order of God.

The words of the prophet ring out. “Woe to those who call evil good and good evil.” Isaiah 5:20

There is only one cure for such a raging disease of depravity. And it begins with diagnosis. 13When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, ... 8And when he comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment: 9concerning sin, because they do not believe in me; John 16:13, 8

Because man has rejected the Word, the Holy Spirit convicts the world of sin by the natural consequences, i.e. the Law that sin causes death.

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20 Now the law came in to increase the trespass, but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more, 21 so that, as sin reigned in death, grace also might reign through righteousness leading to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. Romans 5:20-21

Thanks be to God, He doesn't leave it at that. He doesn't just convict, that is convince and set the world straight as to what sin is. He also comes to convict

10concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you will see me no longer; 11concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged. John 16:10-11

Having destroyed the glory of sinful, depraved, diseased man, the Holy Spirit glorifies and lifts up the sinless, holy, righteous Man as the cure for sin and sinners.

For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous. Romans 5:19

He has suffered for the sin of your unbelief. He has died for the sin of your unbelief. He has risen from the punishment for the sin of your unbelief. He has taken the disease of your sin into Himself to be killed and buried. And He has risen from it to be your righteousness with the Father.

And He now is ascended to the right hand of the Father to deliver you from the sin of your unbelief by sending His Holy Spirit here today, and wherever His Word is spoken and poured over heads, and given to eat and drink, to judge you righteous with Jesus in the kingdom of heaven and keep you in the one true faith—that is, following Jesus in the kingdom of His Father.

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In these things the Holy Spirit delivers the truth to you just as He did to and through the disciples. You like them are following Jesus in His suffering, in His death, in His resurrection, and in His ascension. You are following Him all the way to the Father, where He has prepared a place for you, and where He has already raised you up with Him, and where He is drawing other people to follow with you in the Spirit of truth as you live in the judgment that forgives all your sins, declares you righteous in Christ Jesus, and gives you eternal life—in the name of the Father, and of the + Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.