

Victory of the Lamb – Origins – Social Injustice – Genesis 6 – 9
October 9, 2022- Pastor Bill Limmer

During the summer of 2020 I was in a zoom meeting with about 50 leaders from the Milwaukee area and we began to talk about race. It was during that call that I was totally blown away when I learned about red lining.

Redlining is a term that describes the discriminatory practices of denying minority populations access to equal loan and housing opportunities. Emerging in the 1930s, redlining was embraced in the real estate industry for decades and shaped the social landscape of [numerous American cities](#), large and small including Milwaukee.

Corruption is when things are not right, when things are not the way God intended them to be. For example: how can Haitian child go hungry in a world full of food. How can a Rwandan woman have her land taken away from her because her husband died? How can a Milwaukee family live on the streets? Corruption.

Corruption usually happens when people are striving for either power, wealth, or comfort.

Today we are continuing our series Origins, a study of the first few chapters of the book of Genesis. Today we are going to answer the question **what is the solution to systemic corruption?**

Genesis 6:11,12 Now the earth was corrupt in God's sight and was full of violence. ¹² God saw how corrupt the earth had become, for all the people on earth had corrupted their ways.

The people were corrupt. Corruption is a pretty scathing word. When we think of this word we may imagine wicked sinners who are guilty of many terrible things. Corruption is when those in charge work the system or make the system work or be an advantage for them. We hear the word corruption and we think of bribery, extortion, and blackmail. We think of a worker not getting paid her fair and appropriate wages. We think of times when the innocent is charged and found guilty.

But God's definition of corruption goes much deeper than anything we may associate with it. **The word corrupt means "to change from what is solid and**

good to something that is . . .decaying." It speaks of something that was once whole and well...but isn't any longer because its begun to decay and rot. This is how it starts. Corruption is the disregard of God and his truth not only in theory but in action. Corruption is It is redefining and replacing God's truth Psalm 14:1 **The fool^[a] says in his heart, "There is no God." They are corrupt, their deeds are vile; there is no one who does good.** Corruption is not only doing bad things, but it is also not doing the good things.

That was the way it was back in Genesis 6 and that is the way it is today. Pretty scathing. Know anyone who is corrupt?

Examples of systemic corruption revealing itself in our lives looks like this. **I win you lose.** There are resources that we are competing for. I got mine. I earned mine. I worked hard for mine. I made the right choices, the smart moves. I deserve what I have. I haven't taken advantage of anyone else. I have taken responsibility for my own life. I'm not relying on the government or other people. Everything I have I have earned my power, wealth, and comfort. I can't help it that you don't have. If you would have worked harder, made better choices, made the right moves you would probably have good things too.

Another way systemic corruption continues is with the growing awareness that we are interconnected people, many have transitioned to a **win-win** scenario. In win-win people are willing to help in individual situations. So win-win really means – I will help right now if it works for me. You will get some help and I will feel good about it and myself. I have plenty to spare for now. But this is all going to stop if it costs me too deeply.

What is the solution to systemic corruption? It is not: I win you lose or even win/win.

So what is the solution to systemic corruption, the corruption that lives inside of you and me? Some of you will remember that the setting of Genesis 6 and following is the flood. And how God made a covenant with Noah that he would never again use a flood to destroy the whole earth. A sign of this covenant is the rainbow that we see after every day time rain shower. No matter how old we are, we typically are enthralled when we see a rainbow. Genesis 9:14 ¹⁴ **Whenever I bring clouds over the earth and the rainbow appears in the clouds,** ¹⁵ **I will**

remember my covenant between me and you and all living creatures of every kind. Never again will the waters become a flood to destroy all life.

But God has an even better covenant with us. It is a covenant that is made through literally hundreds of promises in the Old Testament. The promise of a Savior from our sin of corruption. The Savior didn't come with empty solutions like I win you lose solution, a win-win solution.

Let's look at what Jesus did. Close your eyes and picture in your mind your dream home. It is an extravagant home. Imagine it. What kind of furniture is in your living room? What kind of pictures and decorations are in this room? What kind of flooring does it have? Imagine going into your elegant dining room with a big table. What color is the table? What color is the tablecloth? Your dining room table has china on it. It is amazing. Picture the kitchen. What color are the appliances? The cabinets? How many bedrooms are in your beautiful home? How big are they? In your whole house, everything has a place, and everything is in its place. Everything is wonderfully perfect. What do the front yard and back yard look like? The garage is huge. And it is clean. And you have your brand new cars in it. You have everything. And I mean everything.

Now imagine giving it all up. Not selling it but giving it all a way to go and live a homeless life. Why would you do that? How do you feel?

Open your eyes. You know who left his dream home for you. As the Son of God, Jesus had everything, and I when I say everything, I mean everything. As the Son of Man born in a shed and laid in cow's food bowl and finally as the Lamb of God crucified on a tree, he gave up more than anyone could imagine let alone match. **Philippians 2:5-8 In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: ⁶ Who, being in very nature^[a] God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; ⁷ rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature^[b] of a servant, being made in human likeness. ⁸ And being found in appearance⁸ as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death— even death on a cross!**

This is not a I win you lose or a win win, this is a **I sacrifice you win** solution. This is Jesus. This is I sacrifice you win. And this is the kingdom value of meeting people where they are at. Jesus didn't succumb to favoritism, greed, love of power, or comfort. He treated people with sacrificial generosity, and moved toward the

down trodden and hurting, the poor, the homeless, the marginalized. He met peoples' deepest needs. He was misunderstood, mocked, taken advantage of, and rejected. He took up the punishment for sin sparing guilty people, even people guilty of corruption. Mark 10:45 **For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."**

What is the solution to systemic corruption? Jesus sacrifice equals our win over systemic corruption.

In all this, he is first our Savior from our sin of corruptions and secondly our model for what we are to do with our blessings and opportunities. We are blessed so that we can be a blessing not so we can reflect the love of God on to the people Jesus came to save. Philippians 2:3-4 **³Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, ⁴not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.**

Rather than fighting over rights and responsibilities Jesus calls us to serve others in love, love hurts and at the same time love is joyful. Hebrews 12:2-3 **For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. ³ Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.**

I sacrifice you win. In this lifestyle we don't just give to fill an immediate need, we change our attitudes and actions so that our whole life is about giving grace and generosity.

Take homes:

Being religious won't cut it. Our world needs Jesus and his Kingdom Values – love not of self but others – God working through you. We must move from the building to the streets and from our homes to the streets, that can also be the digital highway. **Instead of power there is servant hood** – let me serve you. **Instead of wealth there is generosity** – all I have is from God so I give to those in need. **Instead of comfort there is sacrifice.** I am willing to give up the good life if it means making life good for others.

Later this month and into the early part of November we are going to hold a food drive. Based on what we learned about Jesus today, What will collecting for the food drive look like for you?

Thanksgiving is coming up. If you know you know. If you don't know you don't want to miss it. Based on what we learned about Jesus today, How does using that offering look like for you? Street Angels, Guest House, come to mind. Who are the marginalized in our society? The poor, those lacking education, special needs. How are you going to show the love that Christ showed you?

Author and theologian Andy Couch says: **“The most transformative acts of our lives are likely to be the moments when we radically empty ourselves, in the very settings where we would normally be expected to exercise authority.”**

Sometimes the smallest step in the right direction ends up being the biggest step in your life. Here is your first step: Follow Jesus' steps.