

# How the cross redeem corruption?

An Ester message with two perspectives of the cross that have the power to change a corrupt nation.

A message:

*and from Jesus the Messiah, the witness, the faithful one, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth. To the one who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood and has made us a kingdom, priests for his God and Father, be glory and power forever and ever! Amen. (Rev 1:5-6)*

Jesus died on the cross not only to put us upright with God, which often Christians believe. He died on the cross to set us free from all evil and corruption. He washed us poor with his blood to be priests and kings. To rule over the nations and establish his kingdom. To bring justice, peace and wealth to nations. His Kingdom is the best place to be and we are set free to build up this place. This is, what we are called for. But how is this supposed to work? How can the cross redeem corruption?

First, it requires an understanding that salvation is not an event, but a journey. It is idealistic to think that people pray and all the evil will disappear. Redemption is a path that people have to walk. It takes time, energy and courage. It requires training and discipline. It starts small and will become big. It starts in every slight difference people make today. It starts when people start doing things differently. It starts when people start walking towards the cross. It starts where no one sees it, but it grows big and all will see. The blood of Jesus were put out also to redeem corruption and it will happen when people start changing day by day.

To understand how this works, it would be best to first look at what corruption really means.

Corruption is a short-term view. People want to gain money in a quick way. When people start being corrupt, people abuse their position to get something that is not right.

Let us say a policeman stops a car and says people were speeding. The driver asks, but how do you know. The police officer says because I say so. You have to pay \$20 or you have to come straight to the office with me, says the officer. People have to stay there until it is paid. The driver looked in his pocket and found only \$10. The police officer said, ok, 10\$ is enough, but next time it will cost more.

The driver knows he has to be ready next time with \$20 or he will lose a lot of time. He tells his friend how to be prepared. The young police officers have seen it and are starting to do it too. It will become a culture. The police officers do not get enough salary because the state assumes that they have half the income from bribing.

The businessman puts the lost money through corruption on the product because he knows he has to pay for it. The customers have to pay more. The state loses money because half of a policeman's income is not written down. The whole trading slide into the black market.

But is that so bad? It is not just a unique way culture works? One can ask where the problem is behind it.

Let us take an example from another culture. In Europe, it was common for a waiter not to earn much more money because the boss knows he gets a lot of tips. It was different because tipping was voluntary, but both situations are not sustainable.

If a waiter earns a third of his income by tipping. He makes sure he has the customers who pay the most. When someone fancy comes in, he wants to be the first to serve them. He is genuinely nice to them. But if someone normal comes in, he is not interested.

They know from the past who paid more, so they start to focus on those customers. A fight starts and every waiter wants that customer. The atmosphere in a restaurant begins to change. Instead of serving, they try to get the best. Do people want to go to a restaurant like that? No.

Because of this bad atmosphere, customers go to other restaurants. A customer will come back if they are satisfied and have a pleasant experience. But because they have seen that the money game is on, they try to avoid the restaurant. When they go, they are not willing to pay tips anymore. In the end, everyone loses. The waiter, the restaurant and the customers are frustrated. A tourist will leave after a terrible experience and say, in this town people are not nice. Because many restaurants do it that way, it becomes a culture. In the end, the country loses and a nation cannot become a great nation for tourists.

In Europe, this system is no longer the common case. The tips have to be shared with all. It is shared among the waiters, but also among the people in the kitchen: In such a system the waiter wants to serve that the atmosphere will become good in their restaurant. I think that's a much better system, who can keep a good atmosphere.

It is not exactly the same in a corrupt nation. But the emerging atmosphere of what a corrupt system does can be explained very well with this analogy.

Every police officer wants to stop the richest businessman. He tries always to find a way to get an involuntary tip. A fight breaks out among the police officers. It becomes a fighting atmosphere where no one trusts the other. When I can do that then people in a higher position can do it to me. Everybody has to count on and it will become the common culture.

In such a culture, the businessmen will be done in another city, on the black market or in another nation. The people do not trust the officers and the administration anymore. They try to avoid every higher position to do their business.

The black market is not subject to the tax system. Malawi is almost at the bottom of the GDP ranking. It is said that Malawi is one of the poorest nations. But this is absolutely not true because most small businesses are done on the black market and do not fall into the ranking.

Because of corruption and the black market, the nation loses a lot of taxes and has to find another way to get money. But in most cases, the state will not invest in infrastructure and necessary things. Because the money is not there. And if there is money, it goes into their own pockets.

Corruption reduces the GDP. People will not invest the money in a corrupt system. They are not willing to build something if their money is in vain. They will invest in another place or save their money in another country. Corruption is actually theft and keeps a country in poverty.

In such a system, where everyone fights for survival, a country cannot grow. People do not trust each other, and culture will develop in which the strongest survive.

But a prosperous nation can only function if people are not afraid of losing their position. If they can be sure that people will not take it even, they would be able to do it. The strongest cannot just take what he wants. A prosperous nation can only function if people have rights and can be sure that they are protected.

A nation has to break this culture. But how?

### **1. Receive a new perspective of the resurrection**

Malawi needs to move from a purposeful view to a growth-oriented view. It is not about winning or losing, it is about growing. Growing into a healthy nation. Growing into the original image for which humans were created.

The problem in the world is that we are blinded and do not see the original view of the Creator of human beings. Therefore, the solution is to come out of this blindness and see what the Creator sees.

It is the resurrection of Jesus Christ that first has the power to do this.

People know that they must die. In such a view, people want everything in this life immediately. They fight to win. Some will win and some will lose. They can see it with their own eyes. But none of them wants to be on the losing side.

In this view, people are constantly in a fight to win. It is like a football match that lasts for 90 minutes. When the 90 minutes are over, the team has won or lost. So, the players only have a brief time to win. They do everything to get it. With this view, people have to do everything to win. Even if it is corrupt or bad. They are in constant competition to win and survive. It is the view of Charles Darwin who claimed that the strongest will survive. But do you want to live in such a country?

The resurrection of Jesus Christ helps people understand that we are in an eternal game. People do not have to win in their lives. They can lose, but they will win in the end. Because they are on the side of the winner. The kingdom of God is an eternal nation. It is not a football game. People will never see a prosperous nation before they have to die. But they will see it after the resurrection. That is why they know that nothing I am going to do today is in vain. Everything they do in the right way will bring prosperity to the kingdom of God, even if they cannot see it. This view will help people move from a purposeful culture to a growth-oriented culture. Therefore, they are capable of building a great nation. They have the potential to become heroes for their nations. Because they know that nothing they do is in vain. The kingdom of God is a model site. The smallest site ever, but it will become the biggest tree. People do not fight to win after 90 minutes. They have the ability to see into the future and are able to build wonderful things.

I have always followed the principle to rather lose money than trust. My promises must be true, and my word had to be higher than any short-term profit. (Robert Bosch)

Doing it right, according to the principles of the Creator, will build a long-term prosperous nation. The Resurrection of Jesus Christ has the Power to Change Evil Behaviour and Corruption. The only question is whether people believe it or just know it by heart. Believing means doing it, otherwise, it remains just a dream. As John Maxwell used to say: A dream without hands is a nightmare.

## **2. The blood washed the shame away**

But the second look at the cross is even more important to change the evil in a society. History has shown that people are not only good. They mostly look after themselves and their interests. Even they have a right understanding their heart to change is oft the most complicate thing. Evil was always in people and it was hardly possible to deal with it. It is no different today. It always ends badly and is so frustrating.

But Christians understand that the cross can do what people cannot do on their own. Jesus' forgiveness from the cross helped them in all situations. When people could not do the right thing on their own, they knew that the cross could help them. Because they did not only look at their limitations, but they were also able to do things that were impossible for people. They believed that also their evil hearts could be changed.

People could change, even if they were the worst people. Through the forgiveness of Jesus Christ, they were forgiven. They believed that through Jesus Christ broken relationships could be restored and people could be brought back together.

They believed that people needed this renewal of hearts. What other religions could never do; Christianity could.

To understand how this view can transform corruption, it is wise to look to a less corrupt culture.

If people understand the cross, they are free from shame. If they do something wrong, they are guilty. They have to put it right. Then they are free again. But people who do not understand the cross are in shame when they did a mistake. In such a view, paying back or making compensations does not solve the problem. Because the real problem is that they still feel ashamed. This shame remains even after the debt has been repaid.

In the Western world, it means greatness when people can stand by their mistakes. In big companies, they only hire people who have already made mistakes. Greatness is making

mistakes, standing by them, getting up and not making them again. People will learn from their mistakes. If they would hire someone who claims to be perfect and has never failed, you can assume that this person cannot admit mistakes or really has no experience. Such a person cannot take much more responsibility. It would be unwise to hire such people.

In a culture of shame, admitting mistakes means showing weakness. When people do that, they are not good leaders. In such a culture, it is about not being ashamed and not letting anyone know that you have made a mistake.

People who understood the cross follow the great example of Jesus. He went to the cross, humbled himself and was punished like a criminal. He took all the shame upon himself. He overcame the shame by his perfection and was able to kill this great enemy. Taking the shame upon himself was the act of a hero. It is heroic to stand by mistakes and that is what distinguishes the West from other cultures. People who understand the cross can learn from mistakes.

The boss can tell his employees that it is allowed to make mistakes. But you have to stand by them. People probably learn more from mistakes than from good lessons. In a company where people have to hide their mistakes, the company will not grow. They hide problems and the problems will grow.

I heard a story that someone was sent home from the military when he fell asleep during the night watch. The commander was asked if that wasn't a bit harsh. To send a person home just for such mistakes. To destroy his whole career. The commander explained that this was not because he had fallen asleep, but because he could not stand by his mistakes.

What Jesus did in the Western world cannot be applied in a non-Christian society. Jesus was able to take away the shame by dying on the cross and setting Christians free.

The people who have received what Jesus did are free. They do not need to be ashamed and were able to take the shame upon themselves. The Occident was freed from shame, which no other religion was able to do.

The Christian-influenced cultures made the cross visible by creating clear structures of responsibility. It regulated how people had to carry out their punishment. A functioning court that settled conflicts made the cross visible and freed people.

The Lord's Supper always reminded Christians of the cross. In the course of time, this ritual shaped the Western worldview. People became more self-responsible and trusting than in any other part of the world.

The true understanding of the cross can also liberate a corrupt culture. It is the simple understanding that we no longer need to be ashamed. This understanding sets people free and will break a culture of corruption.

When people understand the cross, they can overcome corruption. The blood of Jesus will wash away corruption. It can set people free who stand up boldly against what holds them captive. They are free because they know they have nothing to be ashamed of. They can stand by their wrongdoing and their fear of losing something. They have the potential to change Malawi. But it takes understanding of the cross and it takes courage to function as Jesus did.