

For the week of July 3, 2016
Preacher: Nolan Sharp

How the Cross Decodes the World

Colossians 2:1-15

The crucifixion is not only the place where we each find forgiveness, but also a public event in which the rulers and authorities of this world were disarmed, exposed, and even mocked. The biblical picture of these rulers and authorities is at first a challenge for us to grasp but ultimately shows us how the Gospel changes both individuals and societies.

Discussion Questions:

1. What do you usually think the “powers and principalities” are when you read them in the New Testament?
2. Go around and have one person at a time read these verses: Col 1:16, Romans 13:1-3, 1 Cor 2:6, Col 1:20, Col 2:15, Eph 6:12, Eph 3:10, Eph 1:10. [It’s a lot, but listen for the different roles for the powers mentioned.] Do we need to expand our understanding of the powers and principalities?
3. Roman crucifixion was not just an execution but also a very specific procedure that destroyed the honor of the person being crucified (by exposing them, making them cry out, and ridiculing them.) In what ways did Jesus’ honorable behavior before and during his crucifixion confound the expectations of the powers that crucified him? In what ways were those powers then themselves put to shame?
4. If the powers and principalities also refer to the spiritual patterns in all institutions, and they tend towards demanding absolute loyalty and refusing to acknowledge Jesus’ Lordship, what are some of the powers at work today in Palo Alto and Silicon Valley?
5. What can it look like this week for you to trust that Jesus in you can confront and expose the powers at work in your workplace and community?