

Good Friday

In 19th century America there was an organization – a real organization called The Society For the Prevention of People Being Buried Alive. At the time, being buried alive was a rather common fear. Some of the grisly tales of people regaining consciousness in a pitch-dark coffin were true. And Edgar Allen Poe's short story, "Premature Burial" only added fuel to the fire.

Besides physical graves there are other kinds of graves into which we can dig ourselves. We can lock ourselves into a box of isolation from certain others, those with whom we don't or choose not to get along. As we hear Jesus forgive those who crucified him while they were actually crucifying him we are empowered to forgive those who have sinned against us. "To err is human, to forgive is divine." It is very difficult, if not impossible, to forgive without the help of Jesus, which help comes from the cross. When we forgive we unlock the box and free ourselves from the death of isolation.

Both Peter and Judas denied Jesus; Judas even betrayed him. Judas lost hope and buried himself in death. Peter hoped in Jesus' love for him, even in light of his betrayal, and rose to new life through forgiveness. Mary Magdalene buried herself in a life of prostitution. By accepting Jesus' call to holiness Mary was freed from the grave of self-loathing to seeing herself as Jesus saw her. With pornography so easily available on the internet, so many are buried and cannot get away from its almost constant use. What Jesus did for Mary, He can do for us. The wealthy Zachaeus, who obtained most of his wealth from defrauding others was called from the grave of greed to following Christ by the very one who died on the cross without owning anything – even his clothes which the Roman soldiers threw dice for.

Whatever it is that consumes us, whatever it is that robs us of real life can be unearthed from our life by Jesus who set down his own life for all of us. As we venerate the cross in a few minutes perhaps as we come up to kiss or touch or bow to the cross we

could ask that Jesus, who by his death and resurrection to new life, unbury us, free us, for whatever it is that holds us back from enjoying a fuller life with him. Jesus brought back to physical life, the son of the widow of Naim, the daughter of Jairus, and his friend Lazarus. What he did for them He can do for us.

Lord, by your death and resurrection you have set us free.
You are the Savior of the world.