

The Quarter

Lewis and Clark State Park is a recreational area located at the Western end of the Columbia River Gorge. It abuts the Sandy River on one side, Interstate highway 84 on the North and is the starting point for access to the Columbia River Scenic Highway. The town of Troutdale, itself a blossoming municipality, is directly accessed from this starting point. As a result of this location, Lewis and Clark State Park gets considerable usage by the fishermen, swimmers, picnickers, hill climbers, and tourists who are traveling along either Interstate 84 or the Columbia River Scenic Highway. Understandably, the restroom at this busy park gets considerable use. Therefore the septic tank for this restroom is large (7000 Gallons) and needs to be pumped frequently. When it is pumped, the tank pumper usually takes the fluid level out completely; so much so, that for several years of my tenure at this park, I have been able to see a quarter at the bottom of this tank. That quarter has stayed there for years, during several periodic pumping episodes. It appears to be as shiny as the day it was minted. I would assume that the biochemical action of the sewage in the septic tank was responsible for the polishing action on the coin. It had become affixed by the aqueous material between the coin and the smooth surface of the tank thus holding it fast when the powerful suction of the septic tank pumper ensued.

Just like that quarter, mankind is awash in a sea of sewage. Only the sewage we are awash in is one of sin. God created the magnificent splendor of the entire universe, of which the awesome spectacle of nature called the Columbia River Gorge is only a part. He then has seen fit to inhabit this planet with human beings, created in His image[1]. Man has overcome some of the most hostile environmental conditions in order to make his situation more accommodating to his life and thus make it more comfortable. Unfortunately, in the process man has fallen short of the Glory God originally intended us to have[2].

This falling short has manifested itself in some of the most horrendous forms of behavior. These forms of behavior have expressed themselves in unspeakable horrors from the Holocaust to the Atomic Bomb detonations over Hiroshima and Nagasaki. I am only 59 years old and I am unable to think of a time when there has been peace over the entire world. A brief reflection through history tells us that sin is running rampant in the flock of God's most heralded and supreme[3] creation. As a result, God has revealed His wrath against mankind[4] and the sinful nature of man has visibly expressed itself [5].

Even though we are surrounded by the most beautiful reminders of the presence of God, Satan has taken the "quarter" that is man and flushed it down the toilet of sin. Man has remained co-operative in the process. Now, however, if mankind is to be salvaged from the septic tank, we must somehow be extricated. The Old Testament Law merely pumped the tank and removed the sewage of sin....We need to be removed.

Enter Jesus Christ. His Death burial and resurrection is tantamount to jumping into the septic tank and putting the quarter into His pocket and jumping out again....Then putting the quarter to good use in life. The result of this is that even though we were in sin and thus deserved to stay "in the tank" and be destroyed, we were recycled, as it were, and given a new "lease on Life"[6]. This new lease on life positionally places us in the situation where our behavior now can express itself by letting the fruit of the Spirit of God, through Jesus Christ, exude outward from within rather than letting the sewage of sin soak in from outside.

[1] Genesis 1: 1-31

[2] Romans 3: 23

[3] Genesis 1:26

[4] Romans 1: 18-32

[5] Galatians 5: 19-21

[6] Romans 6:23