

VAMPIRES AND ZOMBIES

I used to think that all vampires wore a black cape and spoke with an Hungarian accent,... thanks to Bela Lugosi's role as Dracula, but that is not the case. I think the vampires in the Twilight series are more realistic.

Vampires became a fascination during the middle ages, along with werewolves, horned red devils and other sorts of personifications of evil.

Vampires are nasty. They suck blood. They suck the life out of people; they are like a parasite, but much worse because they are aggressive and they transform the victim as they destroy.

Vampires seem to have an aversion to sunlight, butdarkness happens; we can't avoid darkness. Also, I really don't think the popular repellants really work.

A crucifix doesn't scare them, and garlic is just an annoyance, especially when eaten.

Garlic can be an effect deterrent for humans. I wrestled in high school, and I'd eat a lot of garlic before each match. My opponent was greatly distracted by the affects; however, I would think Vampires already have bad breath.

In some ways, vampires are like Zombies because they are sort of living, but not really. They're existing, but not alive..... at least in a healthy way.

Zombies became a feature in the 1800s in the Haitian Creole sub-culture. They were likely people under the influence of drug that induces a deep stupor. Fear and mystery created a darker creature.

The notion of the dead... existing,... alive, but not really alive was captivating..... in a strange way, and so the lore about them grew.

The zombies we know about, are much like vampires. They consume people, they devour, they destroy, and their power is a real threat.

Zombies and Vampires deny / DEFY what it means to be alive. They deny the consequences of death. They should be dead, yet they function / exist and appear to be alive.

Keep in mind, we humans are truly living when we are interacting, in a productive, sustainable manner with nature, each other and God. When we are growing in our relationships and are interdependent, when we give and receive, and when we have love and all that means,.... then we are alive. That condition is how God created us to be, and that way of being is called "righteousness." We could easily call it "living" as Jesus did.

Vampires and Zombies represent the opposite and worse; they are not only "un-living", but also seek to destroy the living,.... plus they deny what it means to be alive... and seem to exist/ function anyways.

I once found it strange that many younger people, mostly in the counter-culture are enthralled by zombies and vampires, but now I understand their interest. In essence, they are holding a “truth” mirror to the domineering culture. By dressing up like zombies and vampires they are acting out how the world around them really is.

Crazy as it sounds, the dominant culture praises and rewards those who grow stronger making others and nature weaker. The CEO of large extraction corporations gets bonuses in the millions of dollars.... for sucking the life out the environment.

Also, last year, Exxon and other giant oil companies,.... were rewarded by not having to pay any taxes in the US,..... while creation groans and the poor are bleed dry.

Who are the vampires and zombies? Who’s defying what it means to truly be alive?
**Good for those in the counter-culture who mock by dressing like vampires and zombies those who deny / defy what living really is.

In case you’re not sure and for the benefit of the children listening, there are not really vampires and zombies that lurk in the night.

The image of blood sucking and flesh eating, un-dead monsters is just that..... – a descriptive image / a fabrication. They are make believe personifications forsomething that does frighten us.

Vampires and zombies, though not real in physical form, represent what steals life from us and what threatens us.

We humans tend to attempt to separate ourselves from big problems placing blame on others things or people such as “those people”.... or “the bad guys”..... or anarchists....or hooligans.

To avoid confronting our own sins and bad choices, we project the problem on..... something else / someone else.

The break down of civility in Vancouver recently and in Toronto last summer were called *riots*,..... and the fault was placed on those nasty anarchists and the evil protestors.....

Social media..... held the truth mirror up,..... and we saw ourselves / our society saw itself,..... and we didn’t like what we saw.

The living / those truly alive.... enjoy the truth.

The living embrace full disclosure / inspection / questions – the pursuit of truth – the light.

Those who are actually dying fear the light; they hide in the darkness; they prefer myths, lies and deception.

??? Do you detect any parallels to vampires and zombies?

Moreover, is it any wonder why most people did not appreciate the prophets?

The prophets exposed unrighteousness / they illuminated those who were in the darkness ... those who we not truly living.

The prophets pointed the problem and the consequences,...AND... they highlighted the journey / what was required to get healthy / to get in a right and healthy relationship.

All that revelation made most people uncomfortable. They didn't want to accept the reality of their situation, and they certainly did NOT want to learn that the path to peace and wholeness required repentance / change... and work.

We'd much rather blame vampires and zombies for our blight, and dream of being instantly and painlessly rescued.

In our OT passages, Jeremiah questioned Hananiah's appealing prediction that God would "break the Babylonian king's yoke"... and return the Hebrew home with lots of bounty.

Hananiah was speaking to victims who were waiting to be saved, yet they didn't understand salvation.

Jeremiah commented that he liked that notion of being miraculous rescued, yet doubted the validity.... because life just doesn't work that way.

It just isn't that easy to kill vampires and zombies, and problems just can't be destroyed; they must be solved.

War is doing the ugly myth of problems can be destroyed and that the problem is "them" –those bad guys.

The real Prophets reveal that we are in the problem / because life is a relationship. And, if things are not working, then we are part of the problem.

In the NT text, Paul did not conjure up images of vampires and zombies. He just called it sin.

Sin is what separates us from God / what hurts our relationship with God,.... with each other and with God's creation.

Sin is much like vampires and zombies because sin destroys. Sin sucks the life out of us, and makes us non-living.... though still seemingly functioning.

And, sin is much more than breaking the rules and not behaving correctly. Paul notes that "the law" can reveal a problem, but not fix it.

Dwelling on getting the correct answers / not breaking letter of the law can often be an individual endeavour—done for self,..... and life is in relationship.

So, if how we are living is not building / nurturing healthy relationships, then passing the test means nothing!

Through emails and phone conversations, I was invited to help prevent a marriage falling apart in Kansas. I frequently heard rationalizations, such as “I did this noble thing”.... or “I had a right to respond that way because of what she or he did.” ...or.. “It’s not my fault.”

Again and again, I responded, “What you did looks good on paper, but did it get the results you wanted?” How did it play out? Did that action build or hurt the relationship? How was it received?”

Relationships usually bleed to death when one or both start focussing on the “me” / self.....instead of “we.”

It could be said that most sins arise from individualism / from the obsession with self and self interests.

We live by interdependence / by interacting with the world in a nurturing, growing, sustaining and loving manner.

If we isolate ourselves, reduces the interaction, then we begin to die.

For example, creation gives us food to eat. If we refuse to engage / to eat or devour without planting, then we will die. We take in air to live. If we stop breathing or poison the air,... we will die. We live in relationship with the world.

The same dynamics are true with each other and with God.

CBC radio recently reported that the 3% of the riches people in American now own more than all the rest of the 97%.

No wonder why their society and economy are crumbling,... and we are headed in that direction, too. No longer do we value cooperation, collective agreements and fair wages and compensation. Our culture’s mantra is now “economic develop so “I” can get rich.” It’s about the individual and not the whole,..... and that is the process of dying. Paul called it sin,..... and sin enslaves because it’s full of lies and deception. We are lead to think that it’s not our fault; that others are to blame for all the woes.

We are keenly aware of those struggling with addictions. We easily recognize the sin in those situations.

Those stuck in the poverty mind set or with physical addictions feel as if they are being overwhelmed by a vampire. They are victims... hoping / waiting to be freed from the fangs of their monster.

Salvation is not a unilateral event / not done alone. It can’t be... because salvation is a return to wholeness / to healthy relationship with all.

So, nobody / nothing is coming to the rescue to do it all alone.

The prophets said that repeatedly.

>We are part of the solution – the redemption.<

That is why it is extremely difficult to overcome being a victim... because a victim is a one person place; it is separation– aloneness.

Part of the success of the 12 step program is the demand of being in a group.... returning to doing healthy relationships,.... and that step begins with truth – confession of being a part of the problem.

There are other sorts of sins that turn people into vampires and zombies.

Many are sins that are denied and with consequences that people try to defy.

Focussing on self and hurting relationships alters humans into beings existing without living... like a zombie.

Consider the results of judging others....

Consider the impact of draconian laws with harsher punishments.....

Is that nurturing..... or hurting relationships?

Consider how we are treating the environment?

What are we doing to help that relationship?

Consider our tradition of being the quiet in the land while billions and billions are spent on destruction.

How's our relationship with the people in Libya ... or Afghanistan,...and what about those who suffer when social assistance programs are cut in order to buy more weapons?

Consider how we label and regard people who are not like us?

Do we believe that “those bad guys” or “anarchists” are the problem.... or the police?

Are

we blaming or building?

Consider the pursuit of financial security or having a nice retirement nest egg?

How does that individualistic focus build interdependence and trust in each other?

Consider the amount of passion and time we spend nurturing our connection with God,..... our neighbours,.... our partners.... and our children.....and all children?

And, we wonder why there is a sense of dullness and dismay?

We feel the isolation, and then wonder why is individualism so lonely?

Why the disconnect and discontentment?

Vampires and zombies defy the reality / the truth of what it means to live,..... and they are parasites,..... and I don't believe they are content.

I don't think they are basking in joy and love either.
Of course not,..... they are NOT really living.

Vampires and zombies are make believe / personifications of sin... and demonstrative of a very human problem... which is being in the destructive trap of existing at the expense of others, and thus not really living. Or as Paul puts it, "slaves to sin."
The same is true with victims.

So, if garlic and a crucifix doesn't work, then how do we put that stake in the heart? How do we overcome the monster?

Grace.

Grace can't be merely a pardon because that is nonreciprocating. A pardon is one side doing all the work. So, Grace is about doing relationship.

Grace is not just mercy.

So,..... what is grace?

Well, we could say Grace is truth and love..... and Grace is being accepted and understood.
We could say Grace is being forgiven and the restoration of wholeness... which requires confession and repentance.... by all.

We could say Grace is God sending Jesus to show us the way to be alive and in right relationships and...it's the gift of God's Spirit.

We could say Grace is gentleness, benevolence and kindness to ourselves and each other.

We could say Grace is open trust and vulnerability.

And, we could say Grace is a spiritual resolve to live – to love and be loved.

.....

Or in other words,..... Grace is being welcomed home and welcoming home.

We are in this together..... We live together..... or we die alone.

Praise be to God..... we are invited to be home.