

Series: destiny

September 9, 2018

Title: Ransomware

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Text: Ephesians 1:7-12

Ransomware

WannaCry:

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It only took four days in May of last year to immobilize over 300,000 computers in 150 countries. A cryptoworm named WannaCry infected computers running the Windows OS, encrypted their data, and demanded a ransom of \$300 -- \$600, paid in bitcoin. Talk about getting hacked!

The WannaCry attack was just a recent example of *ransomware*. The first such attack came way back in 1989 when we were all using floppy disks! Now, ransomware attacks have hijacked the data of airports, cities, hospitals, and even the British health system. Want your precious data back? You'll have to pay big time. And even then, 25% of the time the thieves don't bother to restore your data.

It's enough to make you wanna cry.

Encrypted identity:

Just this week the Justice Department accused a North Korean agent of masterminding a series of disastrous cyber-attacks, including the WannaCry ransomware attack of May 2017. The attack was just one part of a long-term attempt to disrupt commerce and governments around the world.

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But an infinitely more vicious attack has been going on as long as humans have been on the planet. It is an attack aimed right at the human mind and soul itself. Genesis describes it as beginning with the temptation in the Garden of Eden. Since then, each one of us is *born* with infected software already on board. Our true identity as humans made in God's image, has

been encrypted so that we cannot access it. And the ransom price has been set far beyond what any one of us could ever pay.

In order to rescue His Creation, including you and me, God had to devise a strategy to recover our identities from the hijacker and neutralize the malware once and for all.

Redeemed!

Redeemed:

What did it cost for God to ransom you and me?

Paul explains:

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Ephesians 1:7-8 Phillips

*It is through the Son, at the cost of his own blood, that we are **redeemed**, freely forgiven through that full and generous grace which has overflowed into our lives and opened our eyes to the truth.*

To “redeem” means to “buy back.” When someone in Paul’s time wanted to set a person free from slavery, they had to first of all pay the slave owner the price set for the value of the slave. Only then could the benefactor set the slave free.

Paul says that this is precisely what Jesus did for you and me: He paid, at the cost of his own blood, for our redemption, so that we could be set free from the slavery of sin and death.

Kill switch:

The WannaCry attack of 2017 could have been far worse if it hadn’t been for the discovery of a “kill switch” embedded in the malware. Once activated, the malware shut down, bringing the attack to an end.

Jesus came to this world to be the Kill Switch for the malware of Sin and Death. Paul says that when Jesus died on the cross:

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2 Corinthians 5:21 The Message

God put the wrong on him who never did anything wrong, so we could be put right with God.

In other words, all of our malware was downloaded onto Him, and died when He died. Three days later, when He rose from death, the malware was nowhere to be seen. The world now witnessed the very first human being who was virus-free – forever.

Restored!

Lost and found:

Ever lose a file? You hit a key or swipe a screen and all of a sudden everything is gone. Yikes! Where did it go? It has to be in there somewhere!

I remember a week or two ago trying to show my wife a picture on my phone. I tried to zoom in on it and inadvertently hit the trash icon. Boom. Gone. Nowhere to be found. After a frantic search I finally found the Trash button on a drop down menu and: There it was, along with all the pictures I had deleted over the last 60 days.

Paul says that God launched His so very costly recovery mission – with Jesus as the Ransom for us all – so that all of the identities hijacked and encrypted by Sin could be unlocked and restored. He puts it this way:

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Ephesians 1:9-10 The Message

He thought of everything, provided for everything we could possibly need, letting us in on the plans he took such delight in making. He set it all out before us in Christ, a long-range plan in which everything would be brought together and summed up in him, everything in deepest heaven, everything on planet earth.

All the data restored. All the encrypted identities unlocked. All because Jesus was willing to be our Ransom.

As He Himself said:

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Mark 10:45 NIV

"For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

Restored:

Ransomed, redeemed, set free! That is what God wants for you more than anything else. And you will only find that true unlocked, unencrypted identity in Christ. It doesn't exist anywhere else.

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Ephesians 1:11-12 The Message

It's in Christ that we find out who we are and what we are living for. Long before we first heard of Christ and got our hopes up, he had his eye on us, had designs for us for glorious living, part of the overall purpose he is working out in everything and everyone.

Jesus is not only the Ransom for our very selves, He is the key to our very selves. *He* is our new identity. We find ourselves *in Christ*. When we live His story, and identify with His identity, all the broken pieces of our lives and our world begin to come together – the way they were always meant to.

So, look no further than the cross on which Jesus died for your ransom. He paid the full price to set you free. And look no further than the Lord who conquered Death for your true identity. He is our Redeemer.