

*Smoky Mountain Reflections*  
*February 2013, Fifth & Sixth commandment stuff or "sixers"*

“Note the article appeared 2 years before the Super Court decision to create a new thing called Gay Marriage”

In the month where we celebrate St. Valentine (so that the candy and flower companies can peddle their wares), I thought it might be interesting to discuss marriage...the basis and building block for natural families. When families are healthy, then the civilization they are a part of is also in good shape. This is not just my opinion—it is a clear truth that history, social sciences, and even those with an agenda to the contrary must acknowledge if they want to be heard as an intelligent voice in the conversation.

That being said, one of the loudest voices in this conversation does not care about facts. That voice would be the media and entertainment industries. They so often say they are just producing what sells, but even in this, they are dishonest. Because if they were concerned with the bottom line, not their message (which always contains something other than the traditional family), then they would produce more of the films and other products that are most popular. In 2011, only 18 G-rated films were produced even though G films make on average three to five times more than R-rated films.

We as Lutherans believe and teach that the sixth commandment is about fidelity in marriage (chastity for all married or unmarried). These are two concepts that our society and many of us do not fully comprehend. Adultery is sexual activity of any kind with anyone that is not your spouse. Marriage is and has always been defined by every major successful culture and religion to be one man and one woman. Scripture records bigamy, polygamy, and all other forms of amorous activity outside marriage. It also clearly condemns them all as a violation of God's plan for sex. Our society has separated this act from God's plan for reproduction, and that leads to some of the crazy ways some are trying to define marriage today. How long will it be before people start trying to marry their pets, or children, or multiple people, or their favorite piece of interactive electronic entertainment? If we redefine marriage...where will it stop? ....or will it ever stop? If you call an apple an orange, does that really change it?

Oh how I would love to say yes all the time! Any good parent knows that saying no is unpopular and will often be responded to with great rebellion and anger. But we as the church, as Christ's bride, must speak the truth in love to our neighbor and that sadly means telling unrepentant sinners no, you must not do things that God forbids. It is not healthy for you. We don't do any favors for those who say their favorite sin is not sin, if we just smile and nod. We must smile and say let me help you deal with this in a God-pleasing way. It would be great if all the people I know and love would be on the same page with regard to this topic, but the truth is we all know and love people who are on the wrong side of this discussion either in word or deed. If we all were of one mind and agreed about important things like the intrinsic value of life, then the womb would be a safe place to live. If we all were of one mind and agreed about the importance of providing for and protecting natural marriage, then this most important building block of civilization would be safe. But the truth is this institution is under attack. The sad truth is we are not all on the same page and in agreement on these and other important topics and out of respect and concern for all the people in our lives that are at risk, it is best to be honest and upfront about who you are, what you stand for, what you believe, and why you believe it.

Now if you start speaking the truth in love, many will dismiss "your truth" as one among many and tell you to be tolerant of their position while they are being intolerant of yours. We should seek to avoid conflict or confrontation, but it is also important for us to share the truth and seek to reconcile ourselves and others to God's will. Our modern world, with our nation at the center, worships at the altar of the rights of the individual. All other positions, philosophies, and world views must take second seat to the self-determined wants and needs of the individual. When proclaiming His truth, we will sometimes have to point out that there are times when people want what is not good for them or others. For asserting such a truth, you can expect to be called a "bigot" which according to Webster is *a person who is obstinately or intolerantly devoted to his or her own opinions and prejudices*. With this name calling, they are seeking to marginalize you and the truth you stand for, while completely avoiding the topic at hand. We do not and should not hatefully fight for our opinions but, we must

stand with and for God's truth no matter how angrily the word "no" is received...it is still sometimes the most loving and concerned caring thing to say.

In Christ, Pastor Portier