

## *Smoky Mountain Reflections #169*

We all know the story of the boy who cried wolf. Signaling emergency when there is not an emergency teaches people to ignore or simply become annoyed by the alarm. There is no such thing as a good time for an emergency, even if it is really for an emergency most alarms are pretty annoying. By their very nature they are designed to get your attention, stop what you are doing, and get you to react appropriately to the emergency.

Proper use of drills to keep people on task is a very costly lesson to learn. Regular drills had become common place for the US Navy in the 1930's so when the alarms went off on December the 7<sup>th</sup> 1941 many thought they were just drills that did not concern them and it was Sunday morning, sleep in time. Because of the poor response many lives that could have been saved, had people responded properly were lost. Now all Navy drills have a phrase tacked on the end of the announcement; Either "This is a drill" or "This is not a drill" This may seem to be a simple precaution. But it keeps people from risking their lives for drills and treat it like the training it is and gets people reacting properly when there is a real emergency.

You may also be familiar with the warning sign of a canary in a mine. If the breathable air got too low the canary falling over would be the sign to get out before they too would fall over due of the lack of breathable air. Why all this talk of warnings and alarms? Well I find myself puzzled when I look at our world that overtly rejects the simple warnings of God's truth while labeling those who speak this truth in love and kindness for concern of others are labeled as homophobic, bigoted, hate mongers.

It used to be a live and let live motto in our society, you have your opinions and convictions and I have mine but in the past decade the tone has shifted. What used to be labeled as (PC) politically correct directing what was acceptable to be said in the public square has taken on an aggressive nature, now the PC police are not only regulating acceptable speech they are dictating thought. Freedom of speech and religion has become freedom from offensive speech and freedom of worship. We might like to retreat into our own little world and escape all this madness but we as Christians are called to be in but not of the world. So brothers and sisters in Christ press on!

If you saw a building on fire the loving thing to do is pull the fire alarm. Now there may be people in that building that will be upset and angry with you from interrupting their sleep, maybe the smoke is from a BBQ pit in the wrong place leading to a false alarm. Or it could be that someone in the building is in the middle of robbing their neighbor or harming their neighbor. Some of the people in the building might even yell at you in anger for setting off the alarm. Even as you tell them to get out for their safety they may growl at you in anger saying; That fire alarm is really irritating would you please make it stop and go away. The loving thing to do is to continue to sound the alarm to protect people from burning up in the building, even if they do not like what you have to say.

Free speech and freedom of religion are under attack as never before in our society. Freedom of worship is a new word used to keep you and your faith out of the public square. Feel free to worship as you wish but do not try to live out your faith in public. If the health and human services requires that you and your company help to abort unborn children.....shut up and do as you are told or we will fine you out of business and if that does not work we will imprison your for violating the civil rights of others to not be offended by your convictions. Does that sound like some fictitious communist novel??? Well we are currently free to be faithful, but we need to be ready to take it on the chin for our faith if things continue the way they are going.

Do not despair! There is nothing new under the sun! even as our college campuses post warnings against trigger words, that would be words that are off limits because they cause fear in others. Even as the halls of higher learning shift from teaching critical thinking to PC indoctrination clubs. God is still in charge. He can and will work for your good according to His purpose....I know because His word says so. Have a blessed spring boldly living out your faith in your daily life.

In Christ  
Pastor Portier