

## *Smoky Mountain Reflections, June 2012*

This month I would like to share with you a few quotes of the past that are timeless in nature and very appropriate for our day and age. These caught my attention in my daily devotions over the past few months. As we seek to speak the truth in love to our society, we may feel this to be a hard task, but a task we are called to all the same as members of the body of Christ. That being said, I think these four quotes do a fine job of diagnosing the problem and acknowledging the one and only cure, as painful as it may be. Even though these words are from around 100 and 500 years ago they ring with truth as if they had been written yesterday.

The first is from an early 20th century Frenchman by the name of George Bernanos whose words I found in the Ministers Prayer Book on page 402:

***"Our heavenly Father said mankind was the salt of the earth, not the honey. And our poor world's rather like old man Job, stretched out in all his filth, covered with ulcers and sores. Salt stings an open wound but saves you from gangrene."*** Georges Bernanos (20 February 1888 – 5 July 1948)

The other three are from one of my favorite writers, Martin Luther. This past fall our adult Sunday School class went through the "Witness, Mercy, Life Together" Bible study, which was well received and highly recommended by those who attended. One of the students, Gwen Cody, our volunteer church secretary, was particularly impressed by a quote of Martin Luther from our synod President. He got this quote from "Luther's Breviary" a meditation for each day of the year. Gwen was so impressed that it motivated her to obtain a copy for herself and in the process, she decided to bless me with a copy as well. I have been enjoying the daily insights from Luther and share three with you here.

12 May: *Psalm 109:4 For my love they are my adversaries: but I give myself unto prayer.*

***"I teach the truth! For this reason they should treat me better and support me. And yet they fight against me and use spiteful words to make me into an enemy of the entire human race. What is to be done? They can not bear good deeds so all this must be offered up to God and I must remain steadfast in prayer. Alas, what sort of devout child is the world? It does not want evil, but cannot cope with good. So let me guess: What does this child really want? Hellfire! and the Devil as well! the Child struggles for this, and this will be its reward. And even if no further misfortune came about, would you not say that it was misfortune enough to have a heart that is obdurate, blinded and hardened, a heart that is incapable of seeing and hearing?"*** Obdurate, I had to look it up (stubbornly refusing to change one's opinion or course of action.) Harsh words but true in light of our society's stubborn determination to call good evil and evil good!

4 May: *Psalm 130:5 I wait for the LORD, my soul doth wait, and in his word do I hope.*

***"There are many people who wait to show God their particular goal, stipulate the time and the scope, and they do not hesitate to tell Him exactly how they should be helped. And if everything does not go according to the plan, they despair and seek help elsewhere. They do not wait on the Lord. God is supposed to wait on them and be immediately ready to hand and to help them only in the exact way they had so carefully mapped out for themselves. On the other hand, those who do wait on the Lord, ask for His mercy. But they still leave it to the good will of God as to when, how and where and by what means God should help them. They have no doubts as to whether they will be helped or not; nor do they give a name to the kind of help they want. They leave everything to Him no matter how long they may have to wait on His help."***

6 April *Psalm 119:9 Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word. "Oh, how uneven our treatment is of that poor crowd of boys who have been given to us to guide and to instruct. And we shall have to answer as to why we do not introduce them to the Word of God. My advice is that nobody should ever entrust their child to an institution where Holy Scripture does not hold sway. Any institution that does not preach God's Word incessantly is doomed. Our Schools should form people who are pure and learned, so that they will become bishops and pastors and take lead in the fight against heretics and devils and the whole world. But where can such an institution be found? My great worry is that our schools will become the great gates of Hell, unless Holy Scripture is diligently practiced in these places and communicated to our young people."* Martin Luther (10 November 1483 – 18 February 1546). Wow! Try words like that in a school board meeting and you will be tarred and feathered.

Well, I hope you have enjoyed these hard-hitting words of truth from the past. Have a blessed summer.

In Christ, Pastor Portier