

## A Few Thoughts for the Hunkered Down

Tuesday, November 24, 2020

# We Are Being Lied To!

*You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies. Yet because I tell the truth you do not believe me! .... He who belongs to God hears what God says.*

—John 8:45-46, 47

*The thief comes only to kill and steal and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.* —John 10:10

As I was driving through Lancaster the other day, I saw a most amazing bumper sticker. On a plain white background were large block letters proclaiming “Depression lies.” It took me a moment to take it all in, and I soon felt that I would love to meet the owner of that car that we could discuss this profound and timely declaration. This was a needed commentary on depression, and much more.

Depression has been described as a pervasive sense of sadness and hopelessness. It is a very real illness of mind, body and spirit, and it manifests itself in all levels of severity. To speak of the depressed may refer to those driven to despondency, and it can also mean the whole bunch of us as all are given to times of sadness. The bumper sticker was a reminder of depression's reality and prevalence, but it also spoke a bold truth about this terrible malady: it is a lie! When we are depressed, we fall for a lie. We fall for the lie that our future is bleak and that hope is faded. Our beautiful and gifted young people in droves fall for the lie that they are ugly and stupid. Struggling families start to believe that they have no future. Folks of all ages start to believe that they are all alone and no one cares. These are the kinds of lies which depression tells. In these days of lengthening nights, of continuing COVID, social distancing and isolation and doom-saying it is especially easy to fall for these untruths. Add to this that the enemy is relentless in his assaults.

How are we to counter these attacks? My friend with the bumper sticker is onto something! We can start by calling out the lies for what they are. Jesus called out the author of lies and by this witness encourages us to do likewise. Having called out the enemy for being so deceptive Jesus gladly revealed himself as the truth and the path to life. Jesus is the One who came the whole way from heaven for us, became our Good Shepherd, laid down his very life and promised that none of us who are His sheep shall ever be taken from Him (John 10:14-17, 27-30). We like sheep may not always

act wisely and are given to wandering, but in spite of our waywardness we are safe in the grasp of the Good Shepherd. These are words of truth!

The next time you begin to feel defeated, worthless, forgotten or without hope, don't just stand there. Call out the lies for what they are! Ask God for the power to see through these deceptions and to grasp firmly the truth of life in Christ. Let it be said that depression is not an easy foe to defeat and I do not mean to imply that anyone can so simply erase this formidable force. It is an illness of body, mind and spirit and for the many for whom this is a continuing struggle medical and psychological care is often necessary. If you have struggled long and hard with depression, do not consider yourself weak and a failure. Life is a battle and the enemy is tireless, and Jesus understands and cares.

Pointing out alleged conspiracies of lies is nothing new. We often hear such accusations made about the government, big businesses and other powerful organizations. I have no comment on the veracity of any of these accusations, but I do know that there is a conspiracy of lies out there. We also know that the Savior is the Truth, and that the Truth promises us hope and life. As the days shorten and COVID continues it is all too easy to fall prey to depression. Let us not give up the fight, and let us begin that battle with a simple and bold truth: Depression lies!

Blessings,

Pastor Jim

*Lord, give us weak eyes for things which are of no account and clear eyes for all your truth. —Soren Kierkegaard, 1813-55*

*God, make me single and sincere; take away all that is not true, all that hinders thy work in me; for only so shall I serve thee. —A Saint Francis Prayer Book*

*Almighty God who hast sent the Spirit of truth unto us to guide us into all truth: so rule our lives by thy power that we may be truthful in thought and word and deed. May no fear or hope ever make us false in act or speech; cast out from us whatsoever loveth or maketh a lie, and bring us all into the perfect freedom of thy truth; through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

—Brooke Foss Westcott, 1825-1901