

ILLINOIS LUTHERAN CONFERENCE

Topical Bulletin, February 2021

Recently there has been a change of leadership in civil government here in the United States of America as a new president was inaugurated and other newly elected officials entered their respective offices. Furthermore, a number of days earlier, a rather violent event occurred at the nation's capital as people stormed the building, breaking windows and the like. Therefore, it's appropriate to consider as a subject of interest what is taught in Holy Scripture regarding the behavior of people within a country. Accordingly, this month's topic for consideration is a pertinent passage taken from the Holy Bible: **"Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people." (Proverbs 14:34)**

In the foregoing Scripture verse the term "righteousness" refers to uprightness, justice, and moral virtue. The phrase, "sin is a reproach," refers to sin being a shame or a disgrace. The word "sin" refers to any offense in missing the mark concerning what the Lord commands in His holy Law, for the Holy Bible declares: **"Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law." (1 John 3:4)** Thus, it behooves ALL people to recognize the fact that God in His Word correctly specifies what behaviors are good and right, and what behaviors are wrong and sinful, for, **"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works."** (2 Timothy 3:16-17)

Proper, Christian, God-pleasing behavior is sorely lacking in these times as we draw nearer to Judgment Day. Sadly, a number of people from – or supporting – either of the major political parties have displayed a lack of righteousness, which is not surprising since the apostle Paul by inspiration of God writes: **"This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away. For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts, Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith. But they shall proceed no further: for their folly shall be manifest unto all men, as theirs also was. But thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, charity, patience, Persecutions, afflictions, which came unto me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra; what persecutions I endured: but out of them all the Lord delivered me. Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived."** (2 Timothy 3:1-13) *Things are surely growing worse! Repentance is necessary!*

The violence which included destruction of property and wounding of fellow human beings in the uprising at the capital, and the disrespect shown to the offices held by civil government officials, was certainly sinful and disgraceful, for Holy Writ clearly states: **"Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to**

themselves damnation. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil." (Romans 13:1-4) **"And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these."** (Mark 12:29-31) *Thus, it is right that the insurrectionists be punished. Repentance is necessary!*

Sadly, the newly elected president and vice president have actually condoned sin and promoted sin by the very platform upon which they ran for office; therefore, they are themselves sinning and disgraceful in holding their positions. For example, the president supports so-called gay-rights, trans-gender rights, and abortion rights, all of which are actually wrongs— abortion being the murder of babies. Holy Scripture clearly states: **"Thou shalt not lie with mankind, as with womankind: it is abomination. Neither shalt thou lie with any beast to defile thyself therewith: neither shall any woman stand before a beast to lie down thereto: it is confusion."** (Leviticus 18:22-23) **"The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman's garment: for all that do so are abomination unto the LORD thy God."** (Deuteronomy 22:5) **"Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God."** (1 Corinthians 6:9-10) *Cross-dressing effeminate are trans-gender folks; abusers of themselves with mankind are homosexuals, all of which are unrighteous and headed for hell, not heaven. Repentance is necessary!* **"As thou knowest not what is the way of the spirit, nor how the bones do grow in the womb of her that is with child: even so thou knowest not the works of God who maketh all."** (Ecclesiastes 11:5) *Note that the unborn is rightly called a child, and is therefore a human being and not merely a fetal blob of flesh. All abortion supporters need to repent!*

When viewing the newly elected president place his hand on a Bible while being sworn into office, it made one wonder if he has ever seriously read a faithful and reliable translation of the Holy Bible, such as the King James Version, and thereby really taken anything God says to heart. Sadly, it seems safe to say that he has not, for when the new president joined together with other elected officials from both major political parties in a Catholic mass which included joint prayer, it was plainly evident that unionism was being practiced by him and those other persons, which is certainly sinful and disgraceful in the eyes of the Lord, who says in His Holy Word: **"God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth."** (John 4:24) **"To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them."** (Isaiah 8:20) The media also reported that a prayer was rendered to Saint Augustine, and yet, **"...it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve."** (Matthew 4:10) *Hence, there are big problems as sin is running rampant among our elected officials in civil government, regardless of the political party to which such persons belong. Repentance is necessary!*

We Christians need to pray for ALL of our civil governmental leaders. We Christians need to pray for widespread repentance throughout our nation by all its citizens and visitors, for the Holy Bible instructs: **"I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time." (1 Timothy 2:1-6) "Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device. And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead." (Acts 17:29-31) *Note well: we are to pray FOR ALL MEN, NOT WITH ALL MEN! Unionism and ecumenism are sinful. Widespread repentance is required!***

We will consider some more Scripture passages regarding the importance of righteousness.

"Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. The ungodly are not so: but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. For the LORD knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish." (Psalm 1:1-6)

Comment: It's pretty clear that righteousness of life, following the dictates of God's holy Law, is quite important. Furthermore, the perfect righteousness personally obtained by God-given faith in Jesus Christ is even more important, yea vital if one would have eternal life, for, "we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin. But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." (Romans 3:19-26) And, "without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." (Hebrews 11:6)

Thus, as good and beneficial as civil righteousness is, and is to be prayed for and sought after in our nation, the truth remains that the righteousness which avails before God is even more important. Accordingly, we need to pray for all people, that they would sincerely repent and turn to the Redeemer, Jesus Christ, in heart-deep trust and confidence for the forgiveness of sins and the strength to live a truly

godly life, "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." (Ephesians 2:8-10) Indeed, the Lord Jesus Christ says in no uncertain terms: "I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing." (John 15:5) Everyone needs Jesus if they would do anything truly good in God's sight!

Consider another Psalm.

"LORD, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in thy holy hill? He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart. He that backbiteth not with his tongue, nor doeth evil to his neighbour, nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbour. In whose eyes a vile person is contemned; but he honoureth them that fear the LORD. He that sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not. He that putteth not out his money to usury, nor taketh reward against the innocent. He that doeth these things shall never be moved." (Psalm 15:1-5)

Comment: Observe that people are truly blessed when they are believers in the Lord, and they show their faith by being fruitful in the same in upright living, righteousness of life. Hence, our nation can again be truly blessed if its unbelieving citizens sincerely repent and come to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ who is the only Savior of sinners, and whose Holy Word is the only reliable guide to holiness and godly living. We ALL need to pray for our fellow citizens, that they would hear the Word of God – God's Law in its full sternness and the Gospel of Christ in its full sweetness – and believe on Jesus Christ as their personal Savior and Lord, because only when hearts are changed will actions be truly changed for the better. Pray that our outreach efforts by means of our Illinois Lutheran Conference website would bear fruit with the Lord's blessing, for He promises: "as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it." (Isaiah 55:10-11)

Let us never forget the truth: **"Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people." (Proverbs 14:34)** Let us regularly petition the Lord Jesus Christ to forgive us and our fellow human beings of all of our sins, and to make us Christians better witnesses for Him to others, touching more hearts with His Holy Word. Always remember: **"Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the LORD imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile." (Psalm 32:1-2)** **"Blessed is that man that maketh the LORD his trust, and respecteth not the proud, nor such as turn aside to lies." (Psalm 40:4)** Let us all daily and sincerely repent of our sins, as we cling to Christ Jesus in heart-deep faith as our personal Savior and Lord.

m.e.l.