

TIME OF REFLECTION

Sin “is a deep interior dislocation in the very centre of human personality, and that you can never, as they say, ‘make people good by Act of Parliament.’”

~Dorothy Sayers (1893-1957), English writer, in *Creed or Chaos*

“Underneath human anxiety is the reversal of identity in which the finite attempts to be infinite.”

~Jackie Hill Perry, poet, author and hip hop artist

“It is the way of God: he humbles that he may exalt, he kills that he might make alive, he confounds that he might glorify.”

~Martin Luther, as quoted in *The Rare Jewel of Christian Contentment*

“...looking back on one’s life, it’s one of the things that strikes you forcibly – that the only thing that’s taught one anything is suffering, not success, not happiness, not anything like that. The only thing that really teaches one what life’s about – the joy of understanding...what life really signifies – is suffering, is affliction....”

~Malcolm Muggeridge (1903-1990), journalist who brought Mother Teresa to popular attention, from a 1980 interview

“Suppose you eliminated suffering, what a dreadful place the world would be. I would almost rather eliminate happiness. The world would be the most ghastly place because everything that corrects the tendency of this unspeakable little creature, man, to feel over-important and over-pleased with himself would disappear. He’s bad enough now, but he would be absolutely intolerable if he never suffered.”

~Malcolm Muggeridge (1903-1990) in his book *Jesus Rediscovered*

“The greatest misery of all is for God to give you up to your heart’s lusts and desires, to give you up to your own counsels (Ps. 81:11-12). [When visited by various trials and difficulties] think thus: ‘Lord, you have laid an afflicted condition upon me, but, Lord, you have not given me the plague of a hard heart.’”

~Jeremiah Burroughs (1599-1646) in *The Rare Jewel of Christian Contentment*

“When I am in the cellar of affliction, I look for the Lord’s choicest wines.”

~Samuel Rutherford (c.1600-1661), Scottish pastor and theologian

Worship through the Word

SERMON – “I Am the True Vine. Abide in Me.” – *Pastor Don Willeman*

SERMON PASSAGE – *John 15:1-11 (ESV)*

John 14

²⁵ “These things I have spoken to you while I am still with you. ²⁶ But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you. ²⁷ Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid. ²⁸ You heard me say to you, ‘I am going away, and I will come to you.’ If you loved me, you would have rejoiced, because I am going to the Father, for the Father is greater than I. ²⁹ And now I have told you before it takes place, so that when it does take place you may believe. ³⁰ I will no longer talk much with you, for the ruler of this world is coming. He has no claim on me, ³¹ but I do as the Father has commanded me, so that the world may know that I love the Father. Rise, let us go from here.

John 15

¹ “I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. ² Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit. ³ Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you. ⁴ Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. ⁵ I am the

vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. ⁶ If anyone does not abide in me he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. ⁷ If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. ⁸ By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples. ⁹ As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love. ¹⁰ If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. ¹¹ These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.

¹² “This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. ¹³ Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends. ¹⁴ You are my friends if you do what I command you. ¹⁵ No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you. ¹⁶ You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you. ¹⁷ These things I command you, so that you will love one another.”