

Polly's Pondering

"Let everything you say be good and helpful, so that your words will be an encouragement to those who hear them." Ephesians 4:29

Words have always held power for me. Early on I learned how words can hurt and harm. Sometimes it was because the words were sweet but the actions spoke hurt into my life; like the elderly man next story who liked to play games with children. Sometimes the words came from friends, who no longer chose to be so. Or the sharp words uttered by my music teacher that said I had no musical abilities when my heart longed to sing. Sometimes they were words spoken in a father's drunken rage calling my mother names I still can not bring myself to say.

But words can speak healing as well. Like the words spoken by the woman whose name I no longer remember but whose expression of kindness eased the anxiety caused by the alcohol fueled monologue spewed out by the dark shadow in the door way of my bedroom earlier that evening.

Sometimes healing words can be spoken by the very ones who have hurt you before. Like the words of my father who said "leave her alone when she finds some one, he will be the best"; and 40 years later he still is. Then there was the power of the words "I DO" that began to erase all the destructive work of the words that told me I would never be good enough.

Sometimes the power of words is contained in black ink on parchment; sometimes loose leaf like love letters in the mail or messages on cards. Sometimes they are on paper bound together with purpose and intention. Like the words of the scripture:

"For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans to prosper you and not to harm, plans to give you hope and a future." Jeremiah 29:11

"You have kept count of my tossings; put my tears in Your bottle. Are they not in Your record? Then my enemies will retreat in the day when I call. This I know, that God is for me." Psalms 56:8-9

"I will not leave you orphaned; I am coming to you. In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me; because I live, you also will live." John 14:18-19

"Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account, Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you." Matthew 5: 10-12

Sometimes the hurtful words come out of my mouth. Sometimes they are intended to hurt, more often they are thoughtlessly uttered without harmful intent. Regardless, their destructive damage has been unleashed.

So, the words of Jesus breathlessly spoken, "Father forgive them for they know not what they do" speak hope that I am included in his forgiveness too. And, of course, I am so grateful that when I was young, I was taught "For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him." John 3:16&17

Today, I share these words first spoken by Blaise Pascal:

"Knowing God without knowing our own wretchedness makes for pride. Knowing our own wretchedness without knowing God makes for despair. Knowing Jesus Christ strikes the balance because he shows us both God and our own wretchedness. Jesus is a God whom we can approach without pride and before whom we can humble ourselves without despair."

Join me in speaking aloud these prayerful words: I thank You Father God for speaking words into my life; words of hope, healing, and salvation. And I also thank You Almighty God for speaking corrective words, convicting words, and teaching words into my life. Thank You for allowing me to be humbled without despair. And thank You for the Word spoken in syllabus of flesh and bone, Jesus Your only begotten Son, in whose name I pray. Amen