

Daily Meditation 12/18/2021

On Display January 6: Lies, Not Masculinity

Good morning.

In today's meditation, we're picking up the theme of the opposites of healthy masculinity.

Yesterday, we remembered a now-new ancestor, Bell Hooks. And in my essay for today, I invoke her when she says, "Lying is one of the most powerful weapons in this arsenal to maintain dominance over women."

And so, lying is part of patriarchal consciousness, she's saying. "Lying is one of the most powerful weapons in this arsenal to maintain dominance over women."

She says that boys are taught to lie early, as boys, about their feelings, for example. And this habit of lying expands as we get older.

And Hildegard of Bingen had some strong words in our essay today: "It is through the evil of lying that all injustice and all sin rise up." The evil of lying, that all injustice and all sin rise up.

So, this is strong language about the habit of lying, the vice of lying.

Now in the same book in which she says that, she talks about the words of people who are lying with their thinking. And this is what she says:

"Who speaks everything truthfully? If I were to speak truthfully to others about their prosperity, I would offend myself."

(Notice: envy is part of lying.)

"For lifting up another makes me fall down."

(You see, envy--plenty of that going around today--as there's plenty of post-truth going around.)

"I prefer to speak puffed up words that will give me honor. What I cannot have in one hand, I will demand with the other. For if I were to be truthful, I would not be able to acquire all the things I want.

When I attend to my business, I discover things that are unsuitable to me. And so I say whatever I want to."

That is language in quotation marks from Hildegard, from lying people, some of whom are very visible in our world today. And then she has Truth responding to these words of the person indulging in falsehood.

"With serpentine and hellish tongue. you are without any of the greenness of the grace of God. You bring forth the flames of injury and deception. No amount of evil is sufficient for you since you sprang from evil. You're the daughter of the devil. Your ways are unjust, and you do not know where you are going. The murmuring and deceptive suggestions of the devil are like breast for your sins, and you yourself suck the breasts of a harlot, for whom you receive some of her wages, so that you can rid yourself of honor and blessedness and honesty.

"I, however, Truth, am like a pillar in all the ways of the Lord. I'm a good trumpet sounding the justice of God. I count all God's works, what they are and how many they are. And I reveal his works with Truth."

"Indeed," Truth says, "Heaven and earth and all the other creatures are truthful."

Heaven and earth, and all the other creatures are truthful.

"The water that flow under heaven and on earth as moisture, perseveres in truth. You, however, oh perverse one, are the worst vermin. You will be trampled underfoot, like stinking dirt."

So, those are her hard words about those who are committed to falsehood and lying. She doesn't exactly hold back!

In another place, she says, "For falseness does not rejoice in the truth, rather it exaggerates what does not exist. And it cannot exist with exultation and unjust delight. It does not place any value on the Truth, but speaks strange things with lies that people are unaware of. It is anxious to do these things against God and His Holy One to whom God has done marvelous things.

"This sin of lying is inhuman. When man sins as a result of the desires of flesh, he is human. But when he lies, he is inhuman. For lies cover themselves with lies just as a serpent hides in its hole."

Very interesting that she acknowledges that sins of the flesh are normal and human. But lies, these are something beyond human, they are inhuman.

And the results, of course, are severe for a culture and a community, because it cannot endure based on lies. And of course, in our day when the lies are whipped up and exaggerated by very, very powerful and rich media companies, and spread out and spewed out, like poison, like a virus that poisons the body politic, then you're really in a severe situation.

And this is where we are. Unholy masculinity, and also some very unholy circumstances.

Thank you. We'll see you tomorrow.