

Pastoral Letter October 3, 2020

Dear friends,

What kind of world might we have if people were more caring and less hateful and spiteful? What kind of life might we have if our leaders – and we ourselves - put the best construction on things, rather than letting anger, hate and retribution rule our mouths?

After Rev. Charles Simeon (1759-1836) was named pastor of Holy Trinity Church in Cambridge, England, at age 23, he faced years of opposition. Since most members in that congregation had wanted the associate minister to be appointed pastor rather than Simeon, they began spreading rumors about him and rejected his ministry, at times even locking him out of the church.

But Simeon, who desired to follow the Spirit's leading, attempted to cope with the gossip by creating principles to live by. One was, *"Never believe rumors unless they were absolutely true,"* and another was, *"Always believe that if the other side were heard, a very different account would be given on the matter."*

In this way, Simeon followed God's instructions to His people to cease the gossip and malicious talk He knew would destroy their relationships with each other. In the Eighth Commandment, God said, **"You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor"** (Exodus 20:16), and also, **"Do not spread false reports."** (Exodus 23:1)

Think how different our world would be today if more of us, and especially those in leadership positions, avoided spreading rumors and false reports? Think how we could help making family, work and society better by refusing to believe rumors the moment we heard them?

And Rev. Simeon? After enduring years of disrupted services and insults in the street, he remained at Holy Trinity for the rest of his life and his congregation grew large. He became a leader among evangelical churchmen, and was one of founders of the Church Missionary Society, promoting Christianity among Jewish people. When he died at age 77, he had established, with inherited money, the Charles Simeon Trust that continues to fund Christian ministries to this day.

God's Word always directs us better than our words.

In the Master's Service, Pastor Lucero