



Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church *Terry's Treasures*

Living the love of God -- Think Again

There are those in this world who will tell you they live the love of God – and by this they mean they spend a lot of time in worship, they do daily devotions, they pray before every meal, they keep “bad” (by their definition) books, movies, TV and the like, out of the house. They teach their children good morals, and make sure they behave properly in public. In other words, their life has the proper veneer of someone, even a family, which is “holy”.

To me, all that is mostly wearing one’s faith on the sleeve. What looks good doesn’t always reflect the faith of one’s heart and soul.

We all have a tendency to judge people by their looks – a first look is often very telling. But as we get to know folk, we realize that looks very well may be deceiving.

Think about wee babies. Except when they are uncomfortable – nasty diapers, upset stomach, a new “owe-y” – they are usually smiling. Somewhere along the way, as we become “socialized” we lose a lot of that smiling way. We learn that people act in certain ways if they want to be liked and accepted. And we adapt. That’s too bad. I don’t think we need to become “un-socialized” but let’s try to look a little happier as we move in life. That’s something to think about.

Now, if living the love of God isn’t all about that stuff in the first paragraph – and that’s all good, by the way – what is living the love of God? Mostly it comes down to relationship – our relationship with God. When that relationship is secure, our faith is deeper.

Deeper than what, you might ask. Really, deeper than outward appearances. Deeper than “good” English usage, deeper than anything that can be measured.

I have been blessed in life to know some people who personify this deep faith. It certainly doesn’t come from “showmanship”, but rather from deep inside a person’s being. And once that faith is there, there is a relationship that helps a person talk easily with God as they would with a good friend. It helps a person look at those around them as other children of

God. And that faith is passed on to others easily and in different ways by each person who has this deep faith.

In my first parish there was a man named Jerome. He was never called “Jerry”, although his grandson who was named after him was Jerry. He was a builder, not by trade but by talent. When it was time to re-do the inside of the church building the statement was – ask Jerome what he thinks.

Jerome managed to encourage the congregation to cut cedar in the forest, get it sawn and dried, finished and put on the walls. It was a two year project which also included another member building (his trade) an expansion to the church.

One time a neighbor came in and saw the men working. “Why are you putting that old cedar over that good paneling” he asked. I was told by my husband that he could see Jerome’s blood pressure rising and he wondered what he would do. What did he do? He quietly took a short walk outside, calmed himself down, came back in and continued working. His faith kept him solidly grounded – and he was a person to be trusted!

TMK

-- *Week of January 22, 2012*