



Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church
Pastor Terry's Thoughts of the Week

Tablets of Stone

My mother had tablets of stone – but there were only three numbers: one, two ... and three. If she got to “three” her tablets of stone became a hairbrush on my backside. I learned, early on, that getting to three was not a good thing.

The bad thing about God’s commandments is that there seems to be no punishment for breaking them. We sin, say “God, I’m sorry” and all is well again. At least that’s what we like to believe.

But we really know better. Sinning is all too easy. We sin because our attitude is moving in the wrong direction. If our attitude is good, usually our move through life will be good.

Most of us have enjoyed watching “our” Rocky develop. From a most unrepentant puppy, he has developed into a well trained dog. It hasn’t been easy – just ask his trainer. But training means constant supervision. It means repeating again and again the same commands, being consistent, giving rewards (good boy) when the actions are good and disciplining when there needs to be improvement.

Many of us look at young people today and wonder what their parents are teaching (or not teaching) them at home. There seems to be no discipline, at least the kind WE got when we were young and the kind we gave OUR kids – who were always so well behaved! But remember, it is OUR kids who are raising this new generation we think is so undisciplined. What’s the saying? What goes around comes around. Maybe we didn’t do as well as we thought we did! Becoming disciplined, being a disciple is difficult work. There has to be a pattern established that we are willing to abide by. Of course there are unusual circumstances when the pattern must be bent, but we need to acknowledge that we need patterns. If we are going overboard in one thing, we must

recognize the need to cut back on that activity and possibly put our energy to better use in another area.

Sometimes as we get older we fall into different patterns of behavior because of changes that happen in our lives. Some grandparents are back raising their children's children. Some are suddenly left alone and find that they are at loose ends without someone else in the house. Some find "aleness" a lonely time and others find that this "new" time is there to be filled with wonderful acts of love and beautiful times of quiet meditation that wasn't possible at other times.

A good guide for discipline is re-reading and studying the Ten Commandments. Using Luther's catechism helps us remember some of the limits that are placed on our lives so that we not only do not harm those around us but that we also come to understand that our lives are important as well.

Are the 10 commandments laws? Well, yes, but they are for the good of society and the good of God's children everywhere. Civil law reaches out from the initial 10 and begins to regulate even more of our life. Sometimes we find a conflict and we need to know that "disobedience" is sometimes the route we have to follow in order to stay in tune with God. Happy discipline,

TMK

-- *Week of March 15, 2009*