



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

Dirty Little Secrets

Did you hear? Did you know that .....? I wonder who that man was who came to visit so often. Have you noticed how often he goes out and his wife has only been gone 6 months? What do you think is happening?

When my husband and I were first “seeing” each other, one of his friends asked him “How do you date the pastor?” His answer was, “very carefully!” My neighbors were “very interested” in how long he stayed and visited and what time he left – was it still day light or not? And the time I borrowed his car and it was in my driveway overnight.... Well, the gossips had a ball!

And it doesn't only happen to pastors. One of my neighbors at that time had had the same gossip happen when her “friend's” vehicle stayed in front of her home all night long. No one believed the truth: his car had refused to start (it was midwinter in Minnesota) and he had taken hers to his house.

We love gossip. We love to dig up dirt about others. Luther knew that and in the commandment about do not kill his explanation includes the line about our neighbors “put the best construction on everything he does”. Don't gossip because it's just like killing a person. Words DO hurt. They hurt relationships and they hurt individuals. And good words build a person up and keep them strong.

Then there is “good” gossip. That's what the disciples were trying to get hold of. The word was that Jesus was dead and his body had been stolen. Then he “came to dinner”! Could this be true?

It took a while, but they were finally convinced that Jesus was very much alive. What he had told them about defeating death was no bit of gossip, but more like good news! Basically he was saying, “I was dead by now I'm alive and

the good news is, this is my father's gift to each of you". This was a bit of information they had thought was only gossip, the hope of a few of Jesus' followers. But now they found out it was true!

Sometimes we treat this good news like gossip except we don't pass it on. Come on. This is good news, good gossip, the best thing we can share. We are more than willing to pass on every little tidbit of bad news we hear, so let's pass on the good stuff, too.

We are so easily led by anything we receive on the internet or what we read in the newspaper, but when it comes to things of faith, we fail to give them the same acceptance. Yes, it is difficult to believe in life after death. Yes, it is difficult to believe that God's spirit is here with us day after day. I have those moments and I'm sure you do, too.

Then I come and gather with this wonderful family of God. OK, there are some of these wonderful people I have a problem with, but, for the most part, there is a great deal of love and caring here. There is a great deal of God's love abounding. And I am often surprised to receive "The Peace of God" from the most unexpected places. And the good news comes alive. It is alive because of your faith and mine joined together. Where I am weak, you are strong and vice versa. It is only together that we make the good news gossip real!

*TMK*

*-- Week of April 26, 2009*