



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

Be nice – LOVE one another

You know, being nice is one thing. LOVING other people is really pushing it! If you love somebody, you put their needs first. And we're just told to love "others" – Jesus should have been more specific. Loving family, loving relatives (well, most of them, anyway), good friends ... neighbors – and then he tells the story of the Good Samaritan, and that was a person outside of the "like" category let alone the "love" one.

Remember in grade school? The big thing was taking turns, not getting in front of someone else in a line. The biggest thing at that time of life, if I recall properly, was being "fair" – and everybody "knew" what "fair" was. One of the biggest lessons I learned as I moved into adulthood was that life isn't fair. Those who are the nicest people sometimes end up with the short stick. Some of the kids who "jumped line" in school used their toughness as adults to grab what they wanted. Teachers, those who develop young people into responsible and educated adults – doing some of the most important work in the community – get paid worse than the business people who print school books! Life is not fair.

I'd like to point out that many of our volunteers, that is people who work for nothing, are doing work in and for the community which would never get done at all if it had to be paid for – and they are happy to do it.

There are those who look at the economic and social unfairness of the world and wonder if it is worth getting training for a job that no one respects. On the other hand, there are those who are dedicated to a type of service and they will learn to do it whether they get paid a lot or not. Most of these are the kids who didn't jump line!

But there's another "unfairness" that we forget about. God is totally unfair. He forgives the worst of us as well as the one who seems saintly to us. He is generous to all his children whether they worship him or not, whether they even acknowledge his presence or not. God gives all of us far more than we need with the hope that our stewardship of his creation will encourage us to share with those the world has treated badly. He continually re-creates what human beings destroy and has built within creation a renewal system that is incredible. We are still (through our scientists) still on the road to discovery of all that he has given us.

Is the world unfair? Yes, because it is the world run by human beings and we are sinful beings who will probably mess up anything we are given charge of. Is God unfair? Yes, because he treats us all as children he loves and cares for. He weeps with and for those who are damaged by the world's unfairness and he cheers with and for those who are generous stewards.

And the love stuff. Yes, we are still commanded to love – even those we have trouble liking. We are to treat them as special people, show them God's love and care and keep at it, no matter how hard it seems. We are to show God's love in the world just as God has shown his love to us. Give it a try. It isn't easy, but at the least, you will have a new experience. God is love. Show it!

TMK

-- *Week of June 28, 2009*