



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

## **Tenderness for TOUGH TIMES**

Have you ever said a cheery “Good Morning!” to someone only to have them say “Whatever you say.” Something like that can take you down from an up.

Sometimes the person is kidding, but we need to be alert to the times when that is a real feeling. We need to be ready to listen if there seems to be a problem in that person’s life. We need to put our own needs aside and be willing to listen to the pain and hurt that may be happening inside that person.

Now, I’m not saying that’s an easy thing to do. Rather, it’s the “God is love” thing to do.

There is not one of us who hasn’t come awake in the morning not wanting to get out of bed. Our beds can be our “cave” – warm, dark, comforting, protective – while it seems the world around us is in turmoil. We drag ourselves out and move around in the world that day, but we’re really not with it. We could use a lot of “God love” on a day like that.

Today we live in a society that has a lot of touch times going for it. TV has us looking at spewing oil every day. The economy has seen better days. Some of our neighbors have their homes up for sale for various reasons. Some of our neighbors – sometimes the same ones – are out of work and wondering where their next dollars are going to come from.

At the neighborhood center we are seeing more new people – folks who have never been in before. There are folks coming who are ashamed to ask for help, but they are assured that everyone has their tough days and that’s why we’re here.

Moments and words of assurance may seem like very little but they mean a lot to people who feel as though no one has a good word for them. When we “pass the peace” in our worship service, it takes forever because there are so many people we want to make contact with. It is a good thing.

When I say “the peace of the Lord be with you” and you answer in the same way, sometimes those are the very words I need to hear at that time. They may be the very words YOU need to hear, also. God’s peace is a great strength for us in tough times.

Sometimes we think of tenderness as something we see when a mother holds a small child or someone cleans a cut or hurt. But tenderness is not something that is put on hold until a pain is obvious. Tenderness is a way of life, an alertness to the needs of others, an ability to be with others and “feel” a need there. Tenderness is being ready to listen confidentially so that another has the ability to “spout off” and release some of the tension in their lives. Tenderness is the strong love of God that is in us from the time of our baptism. It comes to the fore when another of God’s children is hurting.

Are you in tough times needing tenderness in your life, or are you doing OK? The world is filled with those in need, so if you feel like you’re going OK, take that OK-ness and open up so others can find healing in your strength.

God is good. We are in his hands. Let’s show others how strong those hands are as we live our lives.



*TMK*

-- *Week of July 11, 2010*