



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

Decision or Response

How does it feel to already be chosen? Were you ever the last one chosen on a team at school? How did that feel? What about being told you are no longer needed – even for a volunteer job?!

To be chosen feels great. To be “not chosen” feels terrible. I guess that’s our pride. We can’t understand why someone would reject us.

When we feel the “vibes” aren’t right with another person, there is a feeling of separation. Maybe we just don’t speak when that person is around or they don’t. Maybe we don’t seem to be on the same page of life in our conversations. That isn’t exactly a “not chosen” situation, but it isn’t a great feeling. If we lose that kind of contact with another person, we are less for it, as are they.

But to be one of the chosen ones! Wow! What a great feeling. We feel as though our talents have been affirmed. We feel as though we have accomplished something in life. We feel as if the world is better now than it was before the great choosing! In those cases someone made a decision and caused a response in us. For good or bad, decisions always produce a response. Now on to God’s decision.

God chose to create the world. There was no one around to applaud or be upset by that decision. God created all kinds of plants and animals and people. We have come to understand how God did that and how creation continues. As we become more and more understanding, we come up with a response. Most of us give thanks for these good things and hope that we will be good stewards of these fine decisions.

Early in our lives God also came to us in baptism with promises to love us and care for us all our lives and into eternity. That was God's decision. What has our response been?

Sometimes we react like Martin Luther who, in times of trouble, often proclaimed "I am baptized!" His baptism overcame all the troubles he might have. His baptism meant he was a child of God and that was the most important thing in his life for it meant a good life on earth and promised life for eternity.

Unfortunately, sometimes our response is either half-hearted or not anything at all. We forget how much God loves us and when trials come along we complain to God but forget he holds us in his everlasting promise.

Each time there is a baptism here, at the church, we hear the words again. Listen closely next time. Probably the exact same words were not used at your baptism in the prayers and the introductions, but the exact same words "I baptize you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" are the same. "I" may baptize, but it is God who gives the gift of life and new life.

Sometimes babies are baptized immediately after birth. Their time on this earth is not long at all and we wonder if the "exercise" is "worth" it. It is. When this child is affirmed as a child of God we know that s/he is now a member of the kingdom of God. We remember that the promise is not just for time on this earth, but the promise is for eternity.

"I have been baptized" is a shout of chosenness and the triumph of God's love. This is most certainly true!

TMK

-- Week of October 25 2009