



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

Rebel

Let's try it out. Re'bel or Re bel'? There is a difference, you know. A re'bel is one who re-bels'. Are you confused? So am I. The point about today is that John the Baptist was rebelling against the staid people of his day.

Remember the brouhaha when young people began to wear slacks and jeans to worship service? We finally got through that one by reminding people that at least they were in worship. Let's not worry about what they're wearing. Now it seems to be at the point of "anything goes". Maybe that's not so good either - but at least we are all together in worship. Things change, but now without some friction. The trouble is, once rebellion has "succeeded" all the fun is gone!

But rebellion is not easy. Being a rebel puts us on the wrong side of the fence at the beginning and we have to take a lot of flack. At that point we need to decide if all the fuss is worth it or if we will "give up" and acquiesce and join the majority again.

What is the result? In the "revolt of the colonies" as it may be called across the pond, the revolutionaries took great chances, particularly those who were in leadership positions. The result ended in a war that finally provided us with independence - a time we remember with thanksgiving. However, most of us have forgotten the pain and sacrifice of those days and we celebrate our independence with picnics, barbeques and baseball games.

The Civil War in our country was "brother against brother" in the bloodiest war in our national history.

When we visited Gettysburg last year we didn't stay as long as we had planned. Being there reminded us of all the death, injury and horror from that

time and it impacted us to the extent that we could only take so much of it at once. We left, but the horror of those times is still strong in my psyche.

Times of rebellion are tough. But there are times when we need to rebel against thoughtlessness and the misuse of times and things we cherish.

This time of Advent impacts us with the waiting time that is often essential for the celebration of a big event. Let's rebel a bit and not make that event the coming of Santa Claus, but rather the coming of God into the world. The coming is a time for rejoicing and we will do that. We want everyone to rejoice and so we help gift giving for the poor and bring extra food gifts for those in need. The trouble is, for some people this has become a time to "do the rounds" and collect as much as they can during this time of the year.

Let me tell you, there are only a few of those folk. Most of those in need recognize the fact that they are not alone in their need and they are grateful for just the bit that can make their lives a little lighter.

Be a rebel. Help someone else be a rebel. Rebel against the music of the world which sings "Angels we have heard on high, tell us to go out and buy"! Take this time to take your saved dollars for great gifts and give at least one of those gifts to someone who can't give you anything back. God loves us. He is coming. He wants us to have a great birthday party in his honor. Let's make sure everyone is welcome!

TMK

-- Week of December 6, 2009