



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

Confidence

I remember 'way back when we were memorizing the catechism for confirmation time. I had a lot of trouble with memorization – unless it's a poem or put to music. We did the meaning to the apostles creed and ended with "This is most certainly true!". This is a statement of confidence, but I think, for us, it meant "the end".

AMEN is also a word of confidence which means about the same – "What we've just said is true", but that has come to mean much the same as "the end". This may just be the evolution of the English language but it is part of the evolution we need to correct in our lives.

Today we hear a lot of cussing and swearing in everyday speech. I've been told it's just the way it is! That's the way people talk today. Get used to it.

I think it's time we began to watch our mouths more. We have language skills, some of which we're losing at an alarming rate because of laziness – cussing is really lazy speech. We need to learn to have confidence in our ability to speak and confidence that what we say will be heard.

But, if we are going to get better at speech, we need to practice. If we want to learn to speak another language, we need to practice daily until we have the confidence to speak to one whose native language it is.

In my college years I took care of three children whose parents first language was French. They had just returned from France when our relationship began. The older girl wouldn't speak to me in English but her mother said, "She understands you. She just won't speak until she feels it will come out just right.

I kept telling her I didn't understand French but maybe we could teach each other. Mimi saw ice cream one day and said "Ooo, glace" I played dumb and she pointed. I said "ice cream" and she repeated it, so we went and got ice cream. She got the point. Soon she was talking English to me, French to her parents and a combination to her twin sisters!

Her mother knew because she had done the same thing in France. Her mother told her that unless she spoke French she could not talk. I hardly believed it but her mother said she didn't say a word for two months and then one morning joined the family for breakfast with "Bonjour, granmere, granpere". She finally had the confidence to use this second language.

We are to have confidence in our faith. There are those who will say "I'm not a good Christian because..." and that's usually followed by a focus on what they consider bad behavior. If that's how you think of your Christian faith, try again. We have confidence in our faith because we have confidence in God's never-failing love. As far as behavior goes, we try and try again, and usually fail in trying to be perfect - don't we? But God doesn't turn away from us. Just as we get upset with our children because they misbehave, I suspect God gets upset with us - but, just as we don't disown our children for misbehaving, God doesn't disown us. He has promised to continue to love us no matter what.

But remember to practice. Speak to God often - in short or long prayers, in doing for others and for offering each other peace and a good life. Have confidence. Remember, Immanuel - God is with us!

TMK

-- Week of December 27, 2009