

Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church

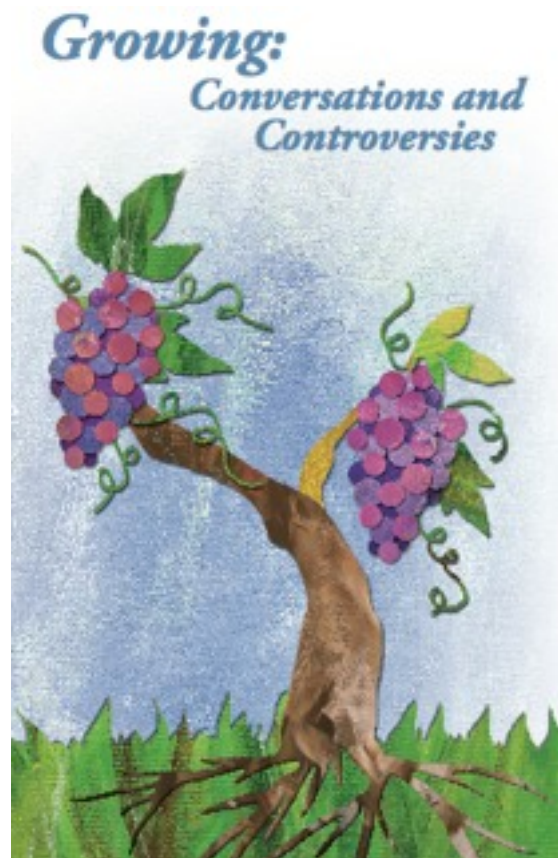


Weekly Sermon Series

Conversations and Controversies

As a young girl, I remember my mother talking with me about who to associate with. It was easy in my early years because we lived on a farm. My playmates were our neighbors and country school classmates, our relatives, and our church friends. My circle was not very wide.

When I went into the city to high school, I needed to decide which friends to choose. Most of the time, I chose people that shared the same interests and activities. My cousin was in my class, and she was my best friend and a reliable companion. We never had to worry about each other saying anything negative or false. But we soon learned that many other people did not follow that commitment, and I was shocked at the gossip that went on behind other people's backs.



Jesus, in Luke 12, is warning of a similar situation. Even among church-goers, we will find hypocrisy. Words and actions can be used against us. Jesus gives us a great back-up, telling us that if we acknowledge him and stick by him in public, he will have God's angels on our side.

Do you know what kind of power and protection that provides? Does that support make it easier to acknowledge that you are a follower of Christ? Have you ever had someone challenge your faith in Jesus? What would you say in your own defense?

Jesus goes on to say that if we disown him in public, we will be forgiven. But if we deny God's Holy Spirit, and speak falsely against the Holy Spirit, we will not be forgiven. And those who have challenged us in that way will have the power to throw us into hell.

We need to be faithful to our own hearts and souls, and we need to stand by our commitment to Jesus when we are confronted in public places. We need not fear what we will say, because Jesus promises us that the Holy Spirit will give us the words when we need them. Further we must remember that God knows and loves us, even down to the minute details of our body and soul, even the number of hairs on our head.

In previous generations, a person's faith and beliefs were considered a private matter. Acknowledgement was unnecessary. But I find that contradictory to this portion of Luke's gospel. What do you think?

Lord Jesus, accept my belief and help my unbelief. Give me confidence to be your hands, your words and your feet in the places I find myself. Help me to witness and acknowledge you to my family, my friends, and new people I encounter. Amen.

-- Week of March 14, 2010