



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

God's Dream

--- and Fear!

I can remember many times when I've been told "Don't be afraid. Many people have done this and it's very safe." Right.

I think it is part of God's dream that we live in safety – actually that we live safely. That we are in fear very often points to the sin of crime in this world and the sin of distrust. I have written before about how I don't trust all those who work on the planes I find myself having to use with fair regularity. That's just a matter of knowing that people are not perfect and can make mistakes – errors.

But that we fear in certain areas of the world is a matter of sin – and not just the sin of those who wish to harm others, but our sin, in that we have not brought to the world the joy of peace and justice. We have not brought to the world the wonder of God's grace. We have not brought to the world the goodness of gentleness or the peace of neighborhoods.

I keep thinking about old Wyatt Earp. You know my thinking is a little strange by this time if you have been reading these lines each week! Anyway, as this country expanded, crime was rampant. Greed followed the gold seekers, those who worked the fields or drove cattle, those who just tried to live a new life in a new land. Greed was compounded by culturalism (the Swedes and Norwegians in Minnesota couldn't stand the Germans, and they didn't get along with each other too well, either!

Then along came Wyatt Earp. OK, he didn't "save" the west, but he made people realize that if things were going to improve, they had to pitch in. The world doesn't stop the Jesse James' and others of their ilk by us hoping it will all go away. Even as we came into the 20th century, we realized we needed an FBI to help subdue the rampant crime in some areas of the country.

Each step some of these well-known people have taken has helped bring a more solid sense of peace to those of us who live very common lives. But we always need more folk like that in our community.

The problem is, not many of us are "confronters" by nature. We have a tendency to walk away from trouble rather than step in to a difficult situation – except when it involves children – children we know well and whose parents we know well. Each of our neighborhoods has people in it we wish would move – and that's about as confrontive as we get. It doesn't solve the existing problem, but we haven't been hurt either. It's all a very difficult, emotional and a vexing problem.

Fear not! Yes, that's God's word to us. He also knows that we do walk in a world that is in the grasp of sin. But that's not the fear he was talking about. If we come to the point that we need to make a point, we do not have to fear that the result can damage our relationship with God. Jesus did some confronting – and look what it got him! I'm not advocating dying for a cause **all** the time, but we have to remember there are times when we need to stand up and be counted – and Fear Not!

TAK

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