



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

Spiritual Integrity

When The Heat Is On

I look around and want to ask “Is it Easter already?” It seems to me that everyone is having Easter concerts and Easter Programs during this week. And here we are with this Holy Week stuff, feeling sad and awful, thinking about all the tough stuff that happened to Jesus and wondering how the disciples lasted through it all.

What is the point, we sometimes ask, of going through all this every year? Why don't we just hop on to Easter and all the fun times, resurrection and all that?

That is not a stupid question. I worked with a pastor one time who actually became very depressed every Lenten season. He took all the suffering and hard sayings to heart. He put that suffering on his own life and just made himself miserable. Somehow, he forgot that we live Easter lives. We live lives that are jumping in resurrection and because of resurrection every day. So why do we “do” Holy Week?

I have a theory. It's not a church theory and it probably isn't really a very good theory either. But I think that without remembering what led up to the resurrection, we don't realize the glory of that day. Without knowing that Jesus lived a tough life – as tough as ours get sometimes, we won't appreciate the new life that God gives to him and that God promises to all of us. Without Holy Week, Easter would be another Sunday.

Have you ever tried to count the 40 days of Lent? It's confusing because we don't count Sundays – remember, Sunday is always a celebration of that good day so many years ago.

Even so many years ago, the reaction of that pastor to the sufferings of Jesus as we reviewed them during Lent and Holy Week, confused me because there seemed to be no trace of that resurrection in his life during that time. And he is/was not alone. For many people this time of year calls forth all the difficult times in lives and the time of resurrection is forgotten.

This is not to say this is not a good time to review our lives. In fact Lent is a good time for reflection and review. However, we also need to keep the resurrection in mind – we are children of resurrection, we are children of God's promise. We are the best God has and he means for us to enjoy the life he has given us while we have it. That is why there are so many sayings about letting go of old hurts, not going to sleep angry, giving all our hurts and angers to God and let him deal with them, living in the promise of resurrection even when life seems desperate.

Why Holy Week? Why not jump off to Easter? Not because we enjoy suffering and pain, but because beyond the suffering and pain is the promise of life and new life. Beyond this week comes the promise of the everlasting resurrection that is God's gift to all of us from the time of our birth.

Welcome to Holy Week! Take this time, so differently spent by us than by many others, take this time and learn more of Jesus. He came and lived for us and like us. He didn't turn away from the tough stuff. He knew that our lives would be different in many ways than his, but we would still have our hurts and pains. So he lived and showed us how to do it. In Faith!

TAK

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