



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

Move>>Compassion!

Have you ever wondered how someone learns compassion? We often misunderstand exactly what some words mean and how we are commanded by God to do/use them.

To be compassionate means to put yourself in someone else's shoes as much as possible, identify with them and use your resources to bring as much comfort as possible. Sometimes this becomes a spur of the moment thing, unthought-of, just done. Other times we are appalled by the newscasts we see and hear and we feel drawn into that situation.

When we get into the shoes of another, we begin to feel their pain and know what is needed for relief. We look around and begin to understand why they are not lifting themselves up by their own boot straps. Sometimes there are no shoes there for straps to be attached to. And we know that we not only have the boot straps, but we have the wherewithal to get them where they are needed.

How do we learn compassion? We learn as we receive. I suspect it starts with the first fall, bump or pain we have as a small child. If we are picked up, held, comforted and given some kind of relief, we know that feels good. We know when we receive good things. We don't learn that this is compassion until we become older and learn the word. But we learn the "how". We learn as youngsters to give to others, share toys, enjoy the time of gifts and begin to

understand that this is something that others enjoy also. We learn we are not alone in this world.

As we get older, we come to know that loss and need is not only next door or even around the corner. We learn about the world and know there are good people in this world who daily struggle because there has never been compassion in their lives – given or received.

If you are like me, there have been times when we have offered what we feel is an appropriate gift given in compassion and we have received no “thank you”, no “that helped a lot”, no comment to indicate that any kind of effect has been given. Quite frankly, if you are giving for the sake of receiving thanks, forget it. Compassion comes out of responding to need, not so that we can receive thanks. On the other hand, if that’s why you’re giving right now, keep it up! One day compassion will hit!

Compassion comes because we have a genuine identification with those who are in pain. Jesus’ compassion was plain when he couldn’t stand some of the pain he saw and felt as he moved around the countryside. He healed, when he could have let the situation remain. He fed when there were other ways around the work. He loved when many were left alone and unloved. He worked miracles because the pain he took on himself hurt so much he had to “fix” it rather than endure it.

So it is with us. We give to others, sometimes because giving gifts can be fun, but sometimes we give in compassion because of the needs of others. We have been blessed and we are, more often than we know, a blessing for others.

TMK

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