

Sow The Wind, Reap The Whirlwind

Pastor John Hicks

First United Methodist Church

A woman was lamenting to her diet club that she had gained weight. She'd made her family's favorite cake over the weekend, she reported, and they'd eaten half of it at dinner.

The next day, she said, she kept staring at the other half, until finally she cut a thin slice for herself. One slice led to another, and soon the whole cake was gone. The woman went on to tell how upset she was with her lack of willpower, and how she knew her husband would be disappointed. Everyone commiserated, until someone asked what her husband said when he found out. She smiled. "He never found out. I made another cake and ate half!"

I don't know about you, but I can relate to this on a number of different levels. How often do we face temptations and figure a little bit won't matter too much. Before we know it, we have nibbled away at the whole cake and then have to do something to try to hide our indulgence. Sometimes that's hard to do. Sometimes we just try to justify our actions.

After all, we all know that there are no calories in crumbs.

A number of years ago, a pastor was asked to be part of a court designed ethics program for a number of politicians caught in a scandal which involved "stretching the truth" among other things. To try to get a clearer picture of what was needed, this pastor made appointments with some of the leading politicians who were not involved in the scandal. One of the senior politicians told the preacher that he was glad the pastor was involved in the program. "We have too much lying in our government. We need to do something. I hardly ever lie myself."

The pastor thought, "Do you hardly ever take bribes as well?"

In our society today, there is a tendency to compare ourselves with others. "What I'm doing might not be all that great, but it's not as bad as what most people are doing."

Political ads overwhelmingly bring out the real or imaginary questionable actions of their opponents, rather than their own positive attributes. When questioned about attack ads, one response I've heard is, "Everyone is doing it", or "Ours are not as bad as theirs." It brings back to mind the comment, "I hardly ever lie myself."

Slice by slice, bite by bite, the cake disappears. What was a small slice of little consequence becomes a whole cake of great consequence. Sin sneaks up and invades our lives big time. Before we know it, we find ourselves taking actions to cover up or justify what we've done – which leads to more sin and more cover-up.

Like the Scriptures say, "When you sow the wind you will reap the whirlwind." "Those who sow trouble, reap it." There are always consequences for our choices. Let's make sure we strive to make the good ones.