

## AFFECTED BY LOSS

When I pulled into my driveway on Saturday morning and got out of the car, I could hear somebody laughing. I looked across the street and discovered it was my neighbour laughing and pointing at me shouting, "ha, ha, ha." I knew right away why he was laughing at me. He is a Chicago Black Hawks' fan and the day before they beat the Toronto Maple Leafs in overtime. There I stood taking some ribbing from him because my hockey team lost.

The Leafs were in Pittsburgh Saturday night to play the Penguins. I saw part of the game but was not able to watch the end to see who won. So before going to bed I asked "Google" who won. My wife Nadine was on the couch at the time and when Google told me the Leafs had lost it was her turn to laugh at me.

Being laughed at when the Leafs lose has become a reality for me. If the Leafs should lose to Boston, Ottawa, Chicago, or heaven forbid Montreal I can always count on somebody laughing at my expense. The irony of this is that I experience the consequences of a Leaf loss even though it's beyond my control. As I thought about this, I began thinking how some losses we experience in life are beyond our control. For instance:

- losing a job may be of no fault of our own but be a result of our employer downsizing or restructuring,
- losing a dear friend in our life may come about as a result of them moving away or passing on which is beyond our control,
- losing our good health can sometimes be a result of hereditary factors that are beyond our control,
- and just think of all of the losses we endured, and still do at times, due to COVID which was truly beyond our control.

Loss is a reality in our lives whether it is of our doing, or from circumstances that are beyond our control. We often struggle physically, emotionally, and spiritually when we experience loss. When we go through a series of losses in our lives, we naturally desire for a win to come along in order to change the momentum. Scripture provides us with the solution for how we can

experience a win after battling a loss. We find the solution in these words from John's first letter:

**For every child of God defeats this evil world, and we achieve this victory through our faith. And who can win this battle against the world? Only those who believe that Jesus is the Son of God. (1 John 5:4-5)**

John points out how the best way to overcome any loss we may experience living in this fallen world is by ***putting our faith and trust in Jesus, the Son of God***. We are entering into the season of Advent when we celebrate the arrival of Jesus, the Son of the Most High God, coming into the world to be our Saviour. Perhaps many of us are still struggling due to some losses we have experienced during 2023. If this is the case, may we once again during this season of Advent journey toward the stable in Bethlehem and focus on reaffirming our belief and faith in our Saviour. As we spend time doing this, we will be reminded how ***Jesus helps us to win the battles we experience as a result of a loss by granting us lasting hope, peace, joy, and assurance***.

I know that by being a Leafs fan I am going to have people make jokes at my expense, especially when they lose to the teams I mentioned earlier. This is beyond my control while I remain a fan. What is within my control however is handling other losses I may experience by turning to Jesus for help.

***Keep safe and God bless.***

***Pastor Dean***