

CAUGHT OFF GUARD BY SOMETHING UNEXPECTED

I have shared in some of my previous messages how it is part of my morning routine to stop into Tim Hortons and get a large double-double coffee. Being a regular, I have come to have these expectations whenever I stop in:

- That at least 2-3 of the employees will make an effort to say hello, wave or smile at me each time,
- That most employees already know what my order is even before I say it,
- That sometimes my coffee has already been made and is waiting for me before I reach the counter,
- That I will see the same group of men each morning gathered to discuss sports, the weather, the news, and ways to solve the world's problems.

I have come to expect these and a few other things whenever I stop into Tim Hortons each morning.

Two weeks ago, I experienced something totally unexpected while getting my morning coffee. It happened while I was standing next in line behind a man who was ordering a coffee and breakfast sandwich at the counter. Two undercover officers suddenly made their way around me in line and arrested this man while he was paying for his order. I stood there in shock as I watched the man being placed in handcuffs.

Being next in line while he was being escorted out by the police, I said to the employee, "I did not expect to see that when I came in this morning." When I went to the spot to pick up my coffee, I looked over at some of the regulars sitting at their tables and could see they too were in shock at what had just transpired. I came home and shared what had happened with my daughter. She said, "Dad, it is no surprise to me that something that unexpected would happen when you were around." She knows me well.

This incident was a reminder to me how sometimes the unexpected has a way of creeping into our familiar routines. When this happens, it can make us stop and think. Naturally this unexpected experience that happened caused me to do a lot of thinking. One thing it got me thinking about was how Jesus would often come into the everyday routines of people's lives and do something completely unexpected.

As I thought about this, I was reminded of stories like:

- when a man came to be healed, but how Jesus did the unexpected by also forgiving him of his sins (Mark 2:1-12),
- when a widow was expecting to bury her dead son that day, but Jesus did the unexpected by restoring her son back to life (Luke 7:11-17),
- when the disciples thought Jesus should send a crowd of people home because there was no food, but He did the unexpected by using a small amount of bread and fish to feed thousands with enough for leftovers (John 6:1-15),
- when the disciples expected to eat the Passover meal with Jesus, and He did the unexpected by washing their feet and showing them how to be a servant like Him (John 13:1-20),
- when the religious leaders wanted Jesus killed and thought they got their wish when He died on the cross, but He did the unexpected by rising back to life.

Stories like these are meant to remind us how Jesus likes to do unexpected things in our lives. These moments from Jesus are meant not only to surprise us in ways that will exceed our expectations, but also to bless us as only He can. We know how important it is for us to become familiar with Jesus in order to strengthen our relationship with Him. What we need to be conscious of as we become more familiar in our relationship with Him, is that we do not come to have expectations of Him that are just ordinary.

Jesus is an extraordinary Saviour who loves to do unexpected things in our lives. If He sees that we are starting to have ordinary expectations of Him, do not be surprised if He comes into an everyday situation and does something that will exceed our expectations. It will be His way of helping us to rediscover a sense of awe and amazement for Him.

Since that incident two weeks ago at Tim Hortons, my morning visits there have gone as expected. If something unexpected does happen again do not be surprised if it ends up in a midweek message.

Keep safe and God bless,

Pastor Dean