

HAVING A HOME

Since you have been raised to new life with Christ, set your sights on the realities of Heaven, where Christ sits in the place of honour at God's right hand (Colossians 3: 1).

As I write this message, the Toronto Blue Jays are still looking for a place in which to play their home games for this shortened season starting on Friday. It was this past weekend when the federal government made the decision not to allow the Toronto Blue Jays to play their regular season games at the Roger's Centre. According to their general manager Ross Atkins, the Jays have five plans in the works as to where they will play their home games.

It must be hard for the players as they packed their bags and left Toronto to play two exhibition games in Boston before starting their regular season in Tampa Bay. For this 60-game season these players will be:

- living out of their suitcases each day,
- not able to look forward to heading home after a road trip like they could in other seasons,
- not able to have the advantage of playing in their home ballpark where they are familiar with the bounces that come off the turf, sight lines and lighting,
- unable to have their families to return home to after each home game.

Looking forward to being able to return home is a feeling that is so reassuring to every individual. This feeling is one the Toronto Blue Jays do not have at this time as they seek a new home field on which to play.

COVID-19 has taken away what the Toronto Blue Jays considered to be home during the baseball season. This pandemic may have taken away our feeling and comfort of feeling at home living in this world. So much has changed as a result of COVID-19 and as a result, to some people, it may no longer feel like home living life here on earth since March:

- We are now being required to wear masks when we go into public places.
- We cannot travel to certain provinces or states or even other countries for summer vacations this year.
- We have restrictions on the number of people we can gather together with.
- We do not know yet what school will be like in the fall.
- Not all areas of our province are open in Phase 3.

This world which we call home has changed in so many ways as a result of this pandemic. Even after a treatment is discovered, this will still be a very different world from the one pre-COVID-19. Due to these changes some people may be feeling the same way that the Toronto Blue Jays players do at this moment, that they are without a home because it no longer feels that way.

For Christians we have the comfort in this situation knowing that our true home is not here but is rather in Heaven. Once we become believers and follow Christ, Earth becomes a temporary home for us. Our true home is in Heaven as we read in this passage from Colossians 3:1:

Since you have been raised to new life with Christ, set your sights on the realities of Heaven, where Christ sits in the place of honour at God's right hand.

Because our true home is in Heaven, Paul reminds us what we should be setting our sights on; not the realities of life here on Earth now, but the realities of Heaven. Paul's advice is so important for us during this time when we live in our temporary home here on Earth during COVID-19. If we set our focus solely on the realities of this pandemic happening in our world right now it is so easy for us to become depressed, discouraged, worried and frightened. How many of us early into this pandemic found ourselves feeling this way the more and more we listened to news and reports? Focusing on the realities and changes brought on by the pandemic could leave us hopeless and fearful.

Thankfully, we have an alternative at this time by being able to set our sights on the realities of Heaven. What an incredible perspective this provides us with living during COVID-19:

- Knowing there is no longer sickness, nor death, sadness, or disappointments in Heaven,
- Knowing the freedoms and joys there will be in Heaven,
- Knowing there will be no disappointments there,
- Knowing we will be able to worship together with all other believers around His throne,
- Knowing we will live with certainty rather than uncertainty.

One of the advantages or blessings we have as Christians living through this COVID-19 pandemic is we have the certainty of knowing our true home is Heaven. With this assurance it allows us to take our focus off the realities and hardships caused by this pandemic and put our attention on what awaits us in Heaven. Focusing on life in Heaven as opposed to what is happening now will give us the strength to keep coping and persevering through this crisis. Isn't it so reassuring for us to know we have a home to return to in Heaven when our road trip through earth is over?

In a few days the Toronto Blue Jays will know where they will play their home games. Wherever that is, it will not be the same as playing at the Rogers Centre. We know where we will be playing our home games for eternity. Until that time may we remember we are playing as teammates on Jesus' team in our temporary homes here on earth. May this reminder keep us thinking about the things of Heaven as opposed to the realities of earth.

God Bless & Keep Safe

Pastor Dean