

EXPERIENCING JOY WITH MY COFFEE

Usually, it is my daughter who gets an Advent calendar at this time of year. She still enjoys getting one of those calendars that you can open each day and find a chocolate inside. Last week it was my turn to experience joy from opening an Advent calendar each day. While I was shopping at a store that sells pods I can brew in my Keurig machine, I noticed they had on display Coffee Advent Calendars. I looked closely at the cover of the box and saw how they were advertising it as the "24 days of coffee." Each day during Advent one could experience a different single serving of flavored coffee. Some of the flavours of coffee in the box included peppermint candy cane, gingerbread, maple syrup, cinnamon bun, chocolate brownie, and many more.

I thought it was a brilliant idea when I saw it, but the cheap side of me hesitated. There was another woman in the store at the time who was carrying a young baby. I commented to her that it was great to see she was introducing her child to the joys of coffee at such a young age. She smiled and said, "I just love my coffee and enjoy it so much." I could relate. A few minutes later she spotted this same Advent calendar. She was debating about buying it just like I was. When she decided to grab one of these "24 days of coffee" Advent calendars, I was convinced to do the same. I am looking forward to trying some new flavors of coffee in the days leading up to Christmas.

My experiences of joy surrounding my love for coffee did not finish there last week. During one of my many visits to Tim Hortons last week a new employee I have come to know was disappointed my daughter was not with me. After handing me my coffee she said, "I want you to tell your daughter that I said hi." I shared this with my daughter afterward and it brought her such joy knowing she was thought of. The very next day this same employee was on when I went in for my morning coffee. I shared with her how my daughter loved hearing that and that she was planning to come in with me one day soon to chat with her. The biggest smile came across this employee's face and then said, "You don't know how much joy that brings me." My love for coffee seemed to be a common factor when it came to experiencing joy last week.

This week at church we will be lighting the third candle in Advent which represents joy. Sometimes we get joy confused with happiness, not realizing they are two very different things. Our happiness often comes about as a result of pleasant circumstances, and it only lasts as long as our current situation remains that way. This is the reason why our happiness tends to be temporary, unpredictable, and fluctuating. Joy however is lasting and can be maintained regardless of the circumstances we find ourselves in because it is based inward on our trust in Christ and knowing Him. The apostle Paul understood this truth when he wrote in Philippians 4:4:

Always be full of joy in the Lord. I say again - rejoice!

Paul was telling people to be full of joy even though he was in prison at the time. Paul understood that his inner attitude did not have to be adversely affected by his outward circumstances which allowed him to be filled with joy because he trusted in the Lord completely regardless of what might happen to him. Paul knew many other believers at the time were becoming discouraged and losing joy because of unpleasant circumstances they were going through. That was why several times in this letter Paul reminded these believers to remain joyful by looking at life from the same perspective he did by trusting in the Lord no matter what.

We need constant reminders how to remain joyful despite the circumstances we may be going through at the time. Last week for me that constant reminder came through my love for coffee. This week it is Paul's words and the Advent candle we will be focusing on in church that provide me this reminder. Coffee may still provide me with a reminder of joy this week as well. Remember that I have 7 different flavors of coffee to try this week with my Advent calendar. I am hoping that some of them will bring some added joy to this coffee lover.

Keep safe and God bless,

Pastor Dean