

## REACH OUT AND UP

Friends of our family texted us last week asking if we were comfortable getting together during COVID-19. I was surprised at first by the text in that we typically get together with them just once a year. To receive this text when we did, made me think this was more than just a social visit. The minister in me began wondering if God was behind this visit.

We arranged to meet on Sunday afternoon in our pool area. Our friend's teenage daughter is the same age as Coral, so they swam as we visited. During the course of the conversation I began to realize the purpose of the visit was they needed to reach out to us. Their teenage daughter was having a very hard week as a result of not having a proper Grade 8 graduation and recounting other losses from COVID-19. It was a week of tears and sadness at times for this young lady.

Her mother realized she needed to help her daughter reach out to somebody at this time and her first thought was Coral. As Coral and her friend swam in the pool you could see a smile return to this young woman's face as well as a lot of giggles and laughter. You could see her mom smile too realizing her daughter was uplifted and doing better by reaching out to a friend.

To them this may have been a moment of just reaching out but to me it was a moment of both **reaching out and up**. The reasons why I say this is because I felt and sensed that this visit was of God's doing. As I said earlier, it is rare that we get together with the friends since they live in a different city. They also have a lot of friends and people they could have reached out to at that moment. When we received the text, I had that strong sense from God that it was His time and doing. After hearing how difficult the week was for this teenage girl and seeing how uplifted she was spending time with my daughter Coral confirmed to me this was a moment of reaching out through the help of reaching Heavenward.

This experience is a reminder to us that when we are struggling it is so important to reach out to others. As we do so it is important that we reach up to God at the same time, to lead us to experiencing the best source of help we need. A woman in *The Bible* who suffered from a chronic bleeding problem discovered the importance of both reaching out and reaching up.

For 12 years this woman suffered from chronic bleeding. In the culture of that time her condition would have made her considered to be ritually unclean and as a result she would be excluded from most social contact. Besides experiencing isolation and loneliness she was also experiencing financial hardship as she had spent all her money on various treatments to try and cure this chronic illness. Up until this point she had only reached out to doctors for help. One day she decided to take the approach of both “reaching out and reaching up” for help.

Jesus had just arrived in her village. A large crowd of people had already gathered around Jesus. She had heard about Jesus and the healings he had performed. In Mark 5:27 -28 we are given insight into the moment she decided to “reach out and reach up”.

**“She had heard about Jesus, so she came up behind him through the crowd and touched His robe. For she thought to herself, “If I can just touch His robe, I will be healed”.**

You can just envision her **reaching out** at that moment and trying to touch Jesus’ robe. When she touched it, she was **“reaching up”** as well based on who Jesus was – GOD WHO CAME TO US IN THE PERSON OF JESUS CHRIST. As soon as she **“reached out and reached up”** immediately the bleeding stopped, and she could feel in her body that she had been healed of her terrible condition.

We have all had our share of suffering during the terrible conditions brought on by COVID-19. Perhaps, like Coral’s friend, you have experienced your own moments of loneliness, sadness and tears through this pandemic. Maybe your suffering has been with worries and fear caused by all of the difficult news we have been hearing with COVID-19. Or maybe you are suffering from grief and disappointment as a result of some loss you have experienced. Whatever suffering you have been experiencing during this pandemic it is so important that you reach out to others.

But before you do, let’s make sure that you have learned from this woman’s example that it is so important that you “reach up” to God first and ask Him to lead you to the right ones to “reach out to”. She had reached out to doctors time and time again only to come away disappointed and in financial hardship. It is only when she reached both out and up that she

experienced the healing and comfort she needed. In our times of suffering the best way for us to experience uplifting is to reach up first to God in prayer and ask Him to guide you to the right person to reach out to.

God knows you best and knows your situation and suffering best of all. God also, being all-wise, knows who the perfect person for you is to reach out to in order to find the comfort you need. God did this 2000 years ago for a woman who suffered from chronic bleeding. God did it again last week knowing the best person for this teenage girl to reach out to in order to be uplifted was my daughter Coral.

Our journey through COVID-19 continues. There will be more days through this when you will find yourself struggling emotionally. On those days may you remember to “Reach Out and Reach Up”. Why suffer when God in His infinite love can lead you to the best person to reach out to?

**God Bless and Keep Safe.**

**Pastor Dean**