

## STICKER SHOCK

On Monday morning I pulled into the grocery store in search of the marked down items I typically find after a weekend. I have a reputation to keep up as you know. As I walked across the parking lot, I happened to notice a man staring at his grocery bill standing beside his car. It was obvious by looking at his facial expressions that he was surprised by the amount. When I saw him shake his head in disbelief, I realized that he was suffering from "sticker shock." It is very common to see people like this man experiencing sticker shock at the grocery store.

My search for discounts at the grocery store has helped me a bit with this matter, but some days I too come out having experienced sticker shock. It is not just at the grocery store nowadays that I experience sticker shock. I am constantly in shock when I hear how much a house is being listed or sold for. I am also in shock when I hear how much people are willing to pay for concert tickets to see performers like Taylor Swift. My daughter has also been in shock at how much some girls have been willing to pay for dresses for the upcoming prom at her school. "Sticker shock" is a reality we experience in these days and times of inflation and rising prices.

Seeing this man in "sticker shock" on Monday morning got me thinking how believers can experience this feeling during the seasons of Lent and Easter. It is at this time of year when we remember the journey Jesus took toward the cross. He was fully aware that it was the Father's plan for Him to suffer and die for our sins and He spoke about this several times with the disciples. The exact moment when our sins were placed on Jesus was when He cried out:

**My God, my God, why have You abandoned me?" (Mark 15:34)**

When Jesus gave up His spirit and died on the cross for our sins, the sticker that was placed on it declared "**FORGIVEN!**" This sticker cost us nothing, but it did cost the Father something as we see expressed in **John 3:16**

**For God loved the world so much that He gave His one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life.**

God the Father paid dearly to cover the cost of our need for forgiveness so that we could experience eternal life as a result of our belief in Jesus. Being reminded of this amazing gift of love paid on our behalf leaves us in "sticker shock" in a positive way of how loved we truly are by our Heavenly Father.

As I thought about this on Monday morning I began to wonder if our Heavenly Father is in "shock" at times that people still have not embraced the love He has shown on the cross as shared in **John 3:16**. I began to wonder if our Heavenly Father is shocked:

- that so many people have not yet made a profession of faith in Jesus as their Saviour,
- that some people are still not willing to forgive somebody despite knowing the price Jesus paid for our forgiveness,
- that some believers are not fully committing their lives to following Jesus despite the sacrifice made on the cross,
- that some people may still be questioning God's love and faithfulness even still after the cross.

Hopefully God is not shocked at how we are living our faith because He is seeing that we have been showing our appreciation and love for Him as a result of His placing the sticker of "forgiven" on the cross. If we have not been showing our true appreciation for this incredible gift, then hopefully the shock of this realization will be a turning point for us to make the necessary changes to our faith journey so that our love for Him is truly evident to our Heavenly Father.

We will continue to see sticker shock on people's faces at the grocery store. Hopefully this Easter we will see expressions of joy on people's faces seeing the sticker of forgiveness and God's love on the cross.

Keep safe and God bless,

Rev. Dean