

IT BROUGHT A TEAR TO HIS EYE

While I was standing in line at Tim Hortons on Monday morning waiting for my coffee a man came in to pick up a box of donuts and coffee he had ordered for his coworkers. I noticed that he was wearing a baseball cap that said on it, "hockey dad." Seeing it reminded me how I have two shirts that say "basketball dad" on them.

I got my coffee before him and held the door open as he was exiting because his hands were full carrying several coffees and the box of donuts. When he thanked me for holding the door open, I said to him, "I see that you are a hockey dad." He smiled right away and told me how his son played his very first hockey game that past weekend. He did not share with me how old his son is, but he said, "It brought tears to my eyes seeing him out on the ice."

Most men do not admit when they shed a tear, but this proud dad was more than willing to share with me the tears of joy he experienced this past weekend seeing his son play hockey. I was happy for him, and on the drive home it got me thinking about some of the tears of joy I have shed at special moments in my daughter's life.

So often the tears we shed nowadays are a result of sadness and loss. Depending on the suffering associated with the loss, the tears we have shed may have been plentiful. As much as we may try to hold these tears in, at some point they eventually come out. One of the comforts we have as believers is knowing that God is very much aware of our tears and comes to comfort us. Mary Magdalene discovered this as she cried tears of sadness outside Jesus' tomb. Her risen Lord came upon her while she was crying and turned the tears of sadness into ones of joy. Thankfully God is very much aware of our tears and comes to comfort us and wipe them away just as He did with Mary Magdalene.

We understand why tears of sadness come upon us, but tears of joy are often the result of us becoming completely involved in a situation that brings about true happiness. This was the case with this hockey dad experiencing overwhelming happiness seeing his son on the ice. We often see tears of joy flow from sports fans of various teams when they win a championship because they have become so emotionally invested in the team.

I think it is important for us to remember that some tears of joy are "heaven sent." Mary Magdalene's tears of joy were heaven sent when she realized Jesus had been raised back to life. Mary and Joseph's tears of joy on the night Jesus was born were also heaven sent. I do not know for sure if this hockey dad viewed his tears of joy seeing his son play hockey for the first time as "heaven sent" but that is how I viewed them.

Just as we thank God for wiping away our tears of sadness and comforting us, may we do the same in those moments He blesses us with tears of joy. We do not shed them as often as we do tears of sadness, but one day they will be the only tears we shed. **Revelation 7:17** reminds us that this will be our reality when we are with our Saviour for eternity:

For the Lamb on the throne will be their Shepherd. He will lead them to springs of life-giving water. And God will wipe every tear from their eyes.

It will be so nice one day to only experience tears of joy. Until this happens let's make sure we recognize the moments when tears of joy are heaven-sent so we can thank God for the blessing and gift He has just given us.

Have a blessed and wonderful Christmas,

Pastor Dean