

## A THANK YOU FOR ASKING

I ran into an acquaintance on Saturday morning at the grocery store. I knew this person had been going through some struggles over the past few years and took this opportunity to ask them how they were doing. For the next 5-10 minutes we stood in the aisle as this person shared their feelings around this difficult struggle. During the conversation I acknowledged the person's feelings, listened attentively, and showed sincerity and compassion.

After the conversation ended, we each went down different aisles and continued our shopping. A few minutes later this person saw me at the end of the aisle and shouted, "Thank you for asking!" Probably five minutes had passed since our conversation ended when the person said this. Obviously during those five minutes the person was realizing how good it made them feel that somebody took the time to ask how they were doing.

This is something I try to do whenever I run into somebody unexpectedly that I am aware of who has been struggling. I often see these as "God encounters" and respond to His nudge by going over to the person and asking how they are doing. It always amazes me afterward how God divinely arranged for the encounter to happen at a time when the person needed to know somebody cared.

Perhaps we have experienced the same thing as I did on Saturday where God purposely had us run into somebody unexpectedly so we could strike up a conversation with them and bless them by asking how they are doing. Or maybe we have been the recipient of such an encounter arranged by God where somebody we knew took the time to ask and listen to us in our moments of struggle. It is nice to have somebody sincerely ask how we are doing, and it is humbling when we realize God chose us to be the person to do this for somebody in need.

After this person shouted, "Thank you for asking", I began thinking as I continued my shopping if we ever put ourselves in a position to hear these words be spoken to us by God. This may cause some confusion to us at first because we know God never struggles or is in need. This is true. Where my thought process went in this is realizing prayer is the means by which we ask

God for things. One of the prayers Jesus taught His disciples to pray is the Lord's Prayer. In Matthew 6 Jesus taught His disciples to pray like this:

**Our Father in heaven, may your name be kept holy.  
May your Kingdom come soon.  
May your will be done on Earth as it is in Heaven.  
Give us today the food we need,  
and forgive us our sins, as we have forgiven those who sin against us.  
And don't let us yield to temptation but rescue us from the evil one.  
(Matthew 6:9-13)**

There are elements in the Lord's Prayer when we are asking God to do things for us such as providing for our daily bread and needs, forgiving our sins, and helping us not to give in to temptation. In some of the petitions before these in the Lord's Prayer we are asking God to do certain things that will allow His kingdom values to be more prominently on display in our day to day lives here on earth.

For instance, we start by asking God's name to be honoured and used more respectfully rather than in terms of profanity like we hear so often today. We also ask God to bring His final kingdom into being sooner by sending Christ again to destroy all evil and establish the new heaven and earth. Each time we ask for God to do this we are also requesting that while we wait for this day to come, that Christ's reign in our hearts will shine for all to see. When we pray for God's perfect will to be done here on earth as it is in heaven, we are asking for ourselves and others to step up and be obedient doers of God's desires and intentions.

As we discover in these three petitions, when we sincerely pray the Lord's Prayer we are asking for God to allow His name to be revered, for His kingdom values to be on display, and for His perfect will to be done here on earth. Jesus teaches us that allowing this to happen requires asking on our part. How often are we asking God for these things by praying the Lord's Prayer? Is it just once a week at worship? Is it just when we are at funerals when the prayer might be prayed? If more and more believers start remembering to pray the Lord's Prayer with all sincerity on a daily basis, we will begin to see more positive changes happening in our society as a result.

**I cannot help but think we might hear God say to us, "Thank you for asking me to do these things!"**

I can tell you from personal experience on Saturday that people appreciate when we take the time to ask them how they are doing with true sincerity. May we take the time to do this for others when God presents the opportunity. May we also take the time each day to ask God with sincere hearts to answer the Lord's Prayer for us and others too. Both of these efforts will be appreciated by the ones we are asking.

Keep safe and God bless,

Pastor Dean