

What Our World Needs from Us Right Now!

“So now I am giving you a new commandment:

Love each other. Just as I have loved you, you should love each other. Your love for one another will prove to the world you are My disciples” (John 13: 34-35).

I was in the grocery store last week and when it came time to check out, I was in the line of a cashier I had not seen in the past several months. As I unloaded my groceries onto the conveyer, I said to her **“I haven’t seen you in such a long time”** She told me that she had been off work during Covid-19 and this was her first day back.

She then proceeded to tell me the reason why she took time off was not because she was afraid of catching COVID-19, but rather she didn’t want to deal with the angry customers all the time. She explained how on the day she had enough, it seemed like every customer that came through her cash register was angry. It wasn’t just her register as all the cashiers were experiencing the same anger from customers. One customer was so upset that they actually threw their money at her. That was the tipping point that resulted in her taking several months off work.

After hearing her story, I welcomed her back and told her I was sorry she had to go through that and finished by saying “At least you have had one kind customer to start off your first day back”. She smiled and thanked me for taking the time to listen and care.

People displaying their anger at a grocery store. We have probably all seen this type of behaviour when we have been out shopping whether it be getting groceries, at the drug store or elsewhere. Some where else I have noticed this change in behaviour is driving. It used to be when I would slow down and let somebody move over into my lane the person would then wave as a gesture of thank you. Time and time again I have done this over the past few months and rarely if ever does the other driver acknowledge with a wave. I am finding the same thing holding open a door going into the coffee shop or convenience store. People rarely if ever say thank you.

It is not only more anger and more people not showing thanks of late that I am noticing since COVID-19, as I am also seeing signs of people becoming

more selfish too. A neighbour around the corner from us had to go for a COVID-19 test recently. They registered and got an appointment that same day. The technician told them that many people right now are making appointments not just in Brantford but at sites in Hamilton, Woodstock and other nearby areas. Whatever site will give the earliest appointment to them is the one they go to. The problem is they don't cancel the appointment they made at all the other locations. Some sites are reporting 70 cases a day of people making an appointment but going elsewhere and *not* cancelling the other tests they arranged so that someone could be tested. It is sad that we are seeing people act selfishly in these times. We saw examples of this in the early stages of this pandemic when people hoarded toilet paper and other items.

This pandemic has been hard and challenging in so many ways. One of the things we are seeing happen from this is attitudes like anger, a lack of appreciation, and selfishness becoming more prevalent. I would hate to see these behaviours become the new accepted norm coming out of this pandemic. Now more than ever, I think this world needs what Christ calls us to offer: "LOVE TO OTHERS". Jesus actually commands us to do this as we discover in John 13.

After Judas left the upper room to betray Him, Jesus gave this new commandment to the other disciples:

"So now I am giving you a new commandment. Love each other, just as I have loved you. You should LOVE each other. Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are My disciples."

To love others was not a new commandment as Jews were instructed to do so in *Leviticus 19:18*. What was new about this commandment is now we are to love others as much as Christ loves us and others. Jesus' love for others was not just having warm feelings toward others. Christ's love for us and others was revealed in His actions:

- Helping others even when it was not convenient,
- Devoting time and energy to others' welfare rather than His own,
- Taking on hurts from others without complaining or fighting,
- Noticing people off to the side and speaking to them,
- Making sacrifices for others as seen in the cross.

Jesus' new commandment was to show love to others the same way that He shows it. He also revealed the purpose and desired outcome from this new commandment:

Your love for one another will prove to the world you are My disciples."

Loving others in the same way Jesus did, will not only reveal to others that we are His disciples, it will help bring unbelievers to Christ as well.

One of the things we are seeing happening right now is people's moods and behaviours are becoming more angry, less appreciative and thankful toward others, and more selfish as well. None of these behaviours reflect love. What this world needs now more than ever is for Christ's disciples like you and I to fulfill our Lord's commandment and start spreading His love to others. This is what I tried to do with the cashier at the grocery store last week. I showed her Christ-like love by speaking to her and showing interest and concern for what she went through, welcoming her back and being patient and kind in my dealings with her.

My encounter with her will hopefully be a reminder to her that not every customer is angry and upset. It also provided her with a smile and encouragement on her first day back. Whether she realized it or not, I think it was Jesus' way of showing His love to her by having me, one of His followers, show up at her counter on her first day back. Whether she understood this or not, I did, and it reminded me how Jesus is perfect in control, having me come when I did to be an instrument of His love for others.

It can take so little time and effort on our parts to do acts of love and care like this. We are commanded to do these acts of love as Christ's disciples. The world needs this gift from us right now. Let's make sure we are not the people becoming angrier, more self focused and less appreciative as a result of this pandemic. This pandemic is a critical time for us as Christians to keep showing Christ's love to others so that His love will overcome the anger, the selfishness and lack of gratitude that is on such display. Let's do our part as Christ commanded.

Keep Safe and God Bless,

Pastor Dean