

AN INTERESTING TESTIMONY

Last Thursday I found myself standing in line paying a bill for my mother at City Hall. When I arrived, I went to the back of the line but was told by the person in front of me that she was just waiting for a family member to finish dealing with the customer service representative. I thanked her for letting me know and found myself next standing behind a man a few years older than me, and who was a lot bigger than me too.

In an attempt to make conversation I said, **"I don't want to butt in front of you in the line. You look like the kind of guy that would trip me if I did."** He smiled and replied, **"No, but I might give you a strong punch to the stomach if you did."** Then he went on to share why he has a strong punch at this moment. For the past 90 days he has been doing the Tai Chi chair exercise routine that you may have seen advertised. These ads claim that any person who does these exercises will notice changes in regard to their flexibility, their abdominal muscles, and overall strength in just a week. I asked the man if he had noticed any changes. He replied, "No, I have not lost a single pound. I still have a big belly, but I can sure punch harder."

I found his testimony interesting because I had considered taking up this challenge of late. He went on to say that prior to this he had attended a local gym for 3 years in order to lose weight. He confessed that during those three years he had not lost weight but rather had added another 40 pounds to his waistline. I had been thinking about joining a gym too prior to this but after that testimony I am starting to have second thoughts. After I left City Hall, I thought to myself that neither this local gym nor the promoters of the Tai-Chi chair exercise program would want this man to give his testimony or review.

We see so many examples nowadays where we might be asked to give a review or testimony about our experience. I saw a sign last week at the bank where I could rate my experience dealing with the teller afterward. I will often see at the bottom of some of my sale receipts from places like Shoppers Drug Mart where I can go online afterward and do a quick survey about my experience shopping there. Even when I submit my medical receipts to my insurance provider online, they will ask me if I want to leave a review about my experience with the practitioner or chiropractor.

If we happen to participate in giving a review, we will either give a positive or negative recommendation based on our perception of the experience. This got

me thinking how we are called as believers to give our testimony about what our experiences with our Lord have been like. Jesus reminded His followers of this expectation and requirement just before He ascended back into heaven: **I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this, I am with you always, even to the end of the age. (Matthew 28:18-20)**

Witnessing is not something everybody is comfortable doing but it might be easier for us to give a positive recommendation about the Christian life when things are going well for us. As I reflected upon how we do not leave a positive recommendation when we have a bad experience say at a restaurant, I wondered if we have this same tendency when it comes to God? Do we not speak positively about having a relationship with Him to others when we feel life is not going as we hoped? Something that may help us to always give a positive witness about God even when life is not going as expected is to learn about Joseph. When Joseph found himself in prison in Egypt as a result of a false accusation made against him, he was asked to interpret a dream for Pharaoh's cup bearer and baker and he offered this testimony about God: **Interpreting dreams is God's business. (Genesis 40:8)**

Despite the unfavorable circumstances he found himself in, Joseph still witnessed positively for the Lord. He did so again when he confronted his brothers all those years after they sold him into slavery.

But don't be upset and don't be angry with yourselves for selling me to this place. It was God who sent me here ahead of you to preserve your lives. And He is the one who made me an adviser to Pharaoh-the manager of his entire palace and governor of all Egypt. (Genesis 45:5,8)

Despite all he had endured, Joseph was still able to give a positive recommendation about all God had done for him. Like Joseph, we may not always understand why we are going through negative experiences in our lives. He was still able to see in these moments that God was with Him and working to turn these situations into something better for him and others. May we have this same perspective and understanding so that we are able to positively witness about having God in our lives no matter what.

Keep safe and God bless,

Pastor Dean