

DEPOSITING PATIENCE IN ME

Last week I questioned at times whether I was experiencing what I refer to as "Adlam bad luck", or if God was testing me with respect to remaining patient. This question was a result of my experiences at three different banks. On Monday afternoon I entered our church's bank to deposit Sunday's offering and pay the utility bills. There were two customers being served when I entered, and three in line. I knew right away this would not be a quick trip. I stood patiently, waiting my turn, and noticed the one teller had a sign on display that she was in training. I hoped when my turn came that I would get the experienced teller but that was not the case. I patiently stood as this new teller did her best to deal with my transactions. Normally it takes less than 5 minutes for these three bills to be paid and to count the deposit. It took over 30 minutes on this occasion. The teller thanked me for remaining patient as I left, but if I am being honest, it was a test at times.

From there I had to go to our personal bank to make a deposit. When I entered this bank there were 5 people in line, but 3 tellers on. It seemed everybody's transactions ahead of me were taking a lot of time. Because of this, the line behind me got quite long. I stood in line 20 minutes before I saw a teller. Just like at the other bank, there was a sign indicating this teller was new. All I could do was smile when she told me it was her first day. Once again, it took a lot of time to process my deposit. When I was finished, I looked behind me and discovered the line had all been served by other tellers while I was dealing with this new one. It was 45 minutes in total I spent at this second bank, and I was the last customer to leave before they closed for the day. This teller thanked me as well for my patience.

On Tuesday morning I had to stop into a different bank to make a deposit for our Presbytery. Once again, I encountered a long line. When I finally got to the teller there was a sign saying she was "in training." One can imagine what I was thinking at that moment. I had to start off Tuesday as I had ended Monday with being patient at a bank. I probably spent a total of two and a half hours at banks last week. Now one can see why I was questioning if this was simply "Adlam bad luck" or God testing me. As I have had time to reflect on this question, I am leaning towards these experiences being God's way to gauge how well I am doing at developing patience and being Christ-like as He calls us to be with others.

Scripture is filled with many examples of God testing and developing the gift of patience in someone. Noah's patience must have been tested as he

awaited God's timing to be able to safely leave the ark after the flood. Abraham's patience was also tested as he waited upon God's promise and timing for him and his wife Sarah to have a child of their own. As these two examples show, **God testing us with respect to our willingness to wait patiently upon His promises being fulfilled helps us to see if we truly trust Him.** God will also test the degree of patience we might display in certain situations to show us as well how much progress we are making in patterning His love. Patience is a virtue or aspect of love that Paul identified in **1 Corinthians 13:4** when he wrote “**Love is patient, love is kind.**”

Upon reflection, I believe God was using these situations to show me whether I was indeed including this attribute in showing His love. Our interactions in these kinds of situations reveal how well our love for God is written onto our hearts. Not everyone shows patience towards people in customer service situations. When my daughter interviewed to be a customer service representative at the post office at a Shopper's Drug Mart location, the owner told her it was the hardest position to work in at the store because customers are typically not very patient with the staff serving them. It would be wise for us to reflect upon whether we are showing patience toward staff everywhere we go. God might be using those moments to remind us that we still have some growth to do when it comes to trusting Him, witnessing for Him, and showing that His love has changed our hearts.

Later in the week God put me in another situation where I dealt with somebody new to their job. This time it was at a Tim Hortons. I stopped in for a coffee at 4:01 p.m. and I could tell right away that the employee was new. I asked him if it was his first day. He replied, “**It is my first day, my first job, and you are my first ever customer!**” I could not help but smile at how God placed me in this moment to be able to show patience and love toward this employee serving his first customer ever. I was pleasant and kind to him and thanked him for serving me. I am glad I did not have to wait 30-45 minutes in this situation because I am more patient at a bank than having to wait that long for my coffee.

Hopefully we all pass God's tests of showing us whether we are truly well along the path to displaying patience and love.

Keep safe and God bless,

Pastor Dean