

EXCITED ABOUT AN OLD FRIEND

I am excited that an old friend has come back into my life this week. My old friend is not a person but rather the **RRROLL UP 2 WIN Contest** at Tim Hortons. Monday marked the beginning of another season of this popular contest at my coffee shop. Since COVID, Tim Hortons had us participate in this contest by playing it on our phone app instead of being able to RRROLL UP THE RIM on our actual cups. I understood the reason why they had to make this switch, but I am so excited that this year we can once again roll up the rim on our coffee cups.

For me it is like having an old friend come back into my life. As I take my last sip of coffee from the cup, I look forward to rolling up the rim to see if I have won anything. I usually come away seeing the message, "Please Play Again", but being the avid coffee drinker I am, naturally I have won a few free coffees and donuts in my time. I have never won any of the big prizes over the years, but I was present when one person rolled up the rim and won a barbeque. I also enjoyed playing this contest with my daughter when she was younger to see her excitement whenever she rolled up the rim on one of my cups and won something. Now that she drinks coffee just like her dad, it will be even more exciting to share in this contest with her. It has been four or five years since I last rolled up the rim on a Tim's coffee cup to see if I won or not. It is exciting to have this old friend back in my life for the next month.

I felt the same way about having an "old friend back in my life" this past Sunday at church. For the two previous Sundays we had to cancel our services due to inclement weather. We still offered a service online, but it is a different experience than worshipping in person. When I started the service this past Sunday it felt like being back amongst old friends seeing everyone's excitement at being able to worship in person after a two-week hiatus. (I may get a few complaints from some of my congregation members referring to them as "old" friends.)

One of the "old friends" who was gathered with us during worship was God Himself. We recognize God's presence with us when we are gathered to worship, but for some people it might be surprising to refer to Him as a friend. One of the first times we see God referred to as friend is in His interactions and conversations with Moses:

Inside the Tent of Meeting, the Lord would speak to Moses face to face, as one speaks to a friend. (Exodus 33:11)

To have a friendship with God like this was a true privilege for Moses. Imagine how encouraging it was for Moses to have conversations with God just like close friends do. These conversations helped Moses to wholeheartedly rely on God's wisdom and direction as he guided the Israelites through the wilderness toward the Promised Land. Jesus reminded us that we have been given this same privilege to be friends with Him.

I no longer call you slaves, because a master doesn't confide in his slaves. Now you are my friends, since I have told you everything the Father has told me. (John 15:15)

Even though Jesus is our Lord and Master, He chooses to call us His friends. Jesus made the first step in choosing us to be His friends and leaves it up to us to accept His invitation. We can have friends who are part of our lives just for a certain season, others who we have lost touch with and reconnected with after a period of time, and still others who remain a constant. Jesus' friendship with us is a constant as revealed in the Great Commission: "**I am with you always, even to the end of the age.**"

While Jesus' friendship toward us is a constant, perhaps we have allowed our relationship toward Him to wander and drift off. If this is the case, let's take this season of "RRROLL UP 2 WIN" to **reconnect with our dear friend and Saviour, Jesus**. Grab a coffee and talk with Him just like we would with a friend. Roll up our interest and commitment levels toward Jesus again and discover what He wants to share with us. Keep going back to Jesus over the next month, like I will with my Tim Hortons, and make a friendship with Him a **daily habit**.

Two days into the "RRROLL UP 2 WIN" and I have won nothing yet. My daughter is on a winning streak, however. Hopefully she will win a few free coffees for her "old" dad.

Keep Safe and God Bless,

Pastor Dean