

FOCUSING ON THE NAILS

During this past week some people have been focusing on my fingernails. It began with my wife noticing a bit of discolouration in the nails on my pinky and ring finger. Two days later I was having coffee with a fellow minister, and he noticed the same thing. Both my wife and this minister are aware of some added stresses I am going through currently and they were worried that the discolouration was an indication of poor circulation. It was a fair observation on both of their parts.

I had to be honest with them that the discolouration of the two nails was not health or stress related, but rather due to my age. I confessed that the discolouration was a result of dying my hair. I have shared in these messages lately that I am turning the same age as Tim Hortons this year. Greying comes naturally to me. Looking like I am still in my mid- to late- 40's or early 50's takes some effort and colouring on my part. Both my wife and this minister were relieved that the discoloured nails were not from poor circulation due to stress.

These incidents got me thinking how we sometimes focus on nails. I noticed at church last Sunday one woman who had green nail polish on as part of her celebration of St. Patrick's Day. Whenever I go to the mall and walk by one of the nail salons I am always amazed how busy they are with clients. I also notice at times how long some women's fingernails are and marvel how it does not seem to affect them with texting or other tasks necessary with our digits. I have also seen how angry and upset some women become when they break one of their long fingernails.

With spring fast approaching I know some people who are very anxious to get some dirt under their fingernails and spend time again in their gardens. Spring will also see some people focus again on their toenails, preparing to wear sandals again. We focus a lot on our nails, but it is also that time of year again when we begin to focus on the nails on the cross.

Good Friday is still just over a week away as we read this message. Not everyone who was sentenced to crucifixion was nailed to the cross. Sometimes the person condemned was tied to the cross by ropes. Regardless of which method was used the impact was the same for that individual as they would die through suffocation. Scripture reveals to us that Jesus was nailed to the cross:

Then the soldiers nailed Him to the cross (Mark 15:24)

Just as we learn things when we focus on people's fingernails, we also discover things gazing at these nails. By so doing we might reflect upon:

- the Father's grimace at the sound and sight of those nails being driven into Jesus' wrists and feet, and Mary's reaction too,
- the fact that Jesus did not withdraw His wrists or feet at that moment even though He had the power to do so,
- the inner strength Jesus displayed by enduring what He did on the cross being affixed to it that way,
- our sins that were being covered by the blood caused by those nails,
- the incredible love being shown toward us by Jesus by having those nails affixed to Him as opposed to us.

These are just some things for us to ponder as we take time to focus on the nails during the days leading towards Good Friday. Hopefully by focusing on these nails, our love for Jesus will grow and we will be strengthened through the power of the cross.

I imagine many of you reading this might focus on my nails if you come out to church during Holy Week or watch online. It is very likely you will see a bit of hair dye on my nails. Sixty is approaching but I am not there yet.

Keep safe and God bless,

Pastor Dean