

GETTING GIFTS

Last Wednesday night I stopped into a Tim Hortons to do some work after I dropped my daughter off at the gym. The Tim Hortons I stopped at is usually busy during the daytime, but I did not expect it to be that way at 8:00 p.m. on a Wednesday. Naturally I got my large double-double and sat down at a table ready to work on a new sermon.

As I was working away, I started to notice a steady stream of people coming in. What surprised me was that these people were not ordering coffee or any food but instead were buying gift cards. Some customers were getting \$15.00 gift cards while others were buying \$25.00 ones. I could not understand at first why there was such a demand for gift cards until I remembered that Thursday would be the last day of the school year. It made sense to me then why so many moms were coming into that location to buy gift cards. I told my daughter about this when I picked her up at the gym and she shared how earlier that day, while she was working at Shoppers Drug Mart, they actually sold out of gift cards for Tim Hortons at her location.

It seems like Tim Hortons gift cards are the preferred choice of most parents to give to their child's teacher. For a moment I was envious of some of these teachers getting gift cards from my favorite coffee establishment. The former accountant in me started doing some quick math and discovered if I taught a class of 30 students and each parent gave me a \$25.00 gift card that would work out to 333 free coffees. With my passion for coffee that might last me 100 days at most.

This experience from Wednesday night reminded me of the years when I coached basketball and how the players and parents would often get me gift cards at Christmas or at the end of the season. While I always appreciated receiving these gifts, what touched me the most was opening a card in my second year of coaching with a personal message from each of the players. They shared how much the season meant to them and the impact I had on them as a coach. I still have that card and open it from time to time to reflect.

The end of another school year last Wednesday resulted in many parents thinking about gifts for their child's teacher. This Wednesday we will all be thinking of the gift we have been given living in this great country we call

home. This gift we have of being **Canadian** is one we have God to thank for. Hopefully we will take time this **Canada Day** to thank God for the gift we have of living here.

Another gift God gives us is similar to that which teachers give to their students. Through the pages of Scripture as well in the example of how Jesus lived, our Heavenly Father also teaches and guides us to become more Christ-like. As I reminded myself of this, I began thinking of what gift we can give to God showing our appreciation for how He teaches and guides us, just as parents were doing the previous week for their child's teacher. The gift that came to mind that would please God greatly is found in these words from **Micah 6:8**:

O people, the Lord has told you what is good and this is what He requires of you; to do what is right, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God.

Just as a teacher wants to positively impact a student's life through learning, ***God desires that our lives be changed by His guidance and instructions for us.*** The goal of His teachings is to transform our hearts in a way that we ***consistently*** show our love ***toward Him and others.*** By giving these three gifts to God, our hearts will begin to transform in these ways:

1. To consistently do what is right in His eyes.
2. To be fair, just, and merciful toward others just as He is with us.
3. To walk humbly with Him in the way Jesus did as He walked this earth.

As we examine these gifts it naturally causes us to ask ourselves whether we are presently giving God any or all of these gifts that are pleasing to Him? If we truly want to express our thanks to God for how He has shaped us, then may we put the effort into transforming our lives in these ways.

A trip to Tim Hortons last Wednesday to enjoy a large double-double coffee while I did some work resulted in a reminder that God is pleased when we give Him this triple-triple. He is always teaching us wherever we go, even at a Canadian coffee shop.

God bless and enjoy Canada Day.

Pastor Dean