

HOW QUICKLY OUR OUTLOOK CHANGES

One of the things I was reminded of watching the recent American League Division Series between the Toronto Blue Jays and the New York Yankees is how quickly people's outlooks can change after a setback or loss. There was so much enthusiasm after the Blue Jays won the first two games of the series and headed to New York for Game 3. The Blue Jays started off Game 3 in a positive way with an early lead, but New York came back to win. After the Blue Jays lost Game 3, fans started worrying about the team's chances of winning Game 4 considering it would be pitched by the bullpen. People thought the Jays would surely lose Game 4 and wondered if they could win Game 5 if the series went that far.

It can be our human nature to be this way after a setback, but I also wonder if the Toronto Maple Leafs have something to do with this pessimistic view we are seeing after a Blue Jays loss. Toronto Maple Leafs fans like me place a lot of hope in our team each year, but we can quickly turn pessimistic during a losing streak in the regular season, or after a loss in the playoffs.

One would think after the Blue Jays won Game 4 in New York that fans would not be as worried the next time the Jays lost. There was a lot of optimism among Jays fans prior to the start of the American League Championship Series against Seattle, but that changed quickly after Sunday night's loss. With the added loss on Monday the Jays fans seem to be very pessimistic about their chances of coming back in the series.

This pessimism was evident in reading my paper on Tuesday morning and listening to a sport's radio station while in the car. If I am being honest, I share in their pessimism of the Jays' chances after these two losses. It comes from being a Leaf's fan as I mentioned earlier. My pessimistic feelings during this current Jays series and the past one, took me back to a radio interview I heard with then Blue Jays General Manager Pat Gillick during the 1993 World Series. The person interviewing Pat on the radio commented how worried and anxious he was after the Jays lost the game the night before. Pat Gillick said to the radio host, **"Don't worry. We have this all under control."** Pat Gillick was right in saying that as his team went on to win that series.

After remembering this comment from 1993, it got me thinking about how Jesus expressed this same thing to us 2,000 years ago. Jesus knew how it tends to be our nature that whenever we experience a loss we tend to worry. One of the things He taught in His Sermon on the Mount was how we can prevent worry

from controlling our emotions whenever we experience a setback or loss. He started His advice off by saying:

That is why I tell you not to worry about everyday life-whether you have enough food and drink, or enough clothes to wear. Isn't life more than food, and your body more than clothing?

Jesus then encouraged people to examine examples from everyday life such as how God feeds the birds, and cares for the wildflowers so wonderfully. By focusing on these things, Jesus reminded His listeners that we can rest assured He will do the same for us because of how valuable and precious we are to Him. Jesus followed this advice up with sharing other things we should focus on in order to prevent worry from dominating our thoughts and feelings after experiencing a loss:

Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and He will give you everything you need. So don't worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring its own worries. Today's trouble is enough for today. (Matthew 6:33-34)

Jesus' advice makes complete sense because **"seeking the Kingdom of God above all else"** means we should be putting God first and foremost in our lives, filling our hearts with His desires, and taking on His character as our pattern for living each day. By doing these things, we will maintain hope and a positive perspective because we will be assured God will give us everything we need.

Just as a radio host was assured by then Blue Jays general manager Pat Gillick not to worry, our Lord and Savior tells us the same thing when it comes to our own losses in life. I have not heard the current general manager of the Toronto Blue Jays say something similar, but manager John Schneider said after Monday's loss, **"I have not lost hope in this group."** May we express these same words after our losses, because we place our hope in the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Keep safe and God bless,

Pastor Dean