

Midweek Messages - 2025

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December 24 - A Better Gift Wrapper Than I Am

Gift wrapping is not my strong suit. My wife Nadine knows this very well and as a result whenever she needs help wrapping gifts, she seeks my daughter's assistance rather than mine. My daughter knows this about me too and can easily spot if the gift she is opening has been wrapped by me.

I don't know what it is with me and wrapping. I cannot tell you the number of times I have cut the paper and pulled the ends across the gift only to discover that it is too short. I am not very good either when it comes to wrapping the ends of gifts. So many times, I find myself having left too much paper at each end and having a tough time making the corners tight. Sometimes I will cut off some excess from each end and end up having made the wrapping job look worse than better.

This year my gift wrapping has not started well. Nadine asked for some help wrapping a gift for one of the clients she cleans for. My daughter was not up yet so I decided to be helpful. Sure enough, my first attempt was too short. The second time the piece of paper was too long. When I tried to fix the situation, I ended up poking a hole in the paper. I decided the best thing I could do was look for a gift bag.

We did not have any of the proper size, so I decided to make a quick visit to the Dollar Store. [Read more](#)

December 17 - Changing Ways

For the past seven years I have often found myself driving toward Ancaster, usually twice a week. The purpose for my trips there had to do with taking my daughter to her basketball practices. Which school gym we were practicing at would determine if I took the back roads or jumped onto the highway instead. Usually, it would take us 25-30 minutes to get there and the same on the return trip. Time and cost-wise, these trips were not too bad over the years.

Starting this past September, I have found myself driving in a completely opposite direction. My daughter started her first year of university this fall and is attending Huron University in London. Instead of travelling east towards Ancaster, I find myself driving west towards London. I do not mind the drive, but it does take a lot longer to do than our drives to Ancaster did. On days when there are no snow or accidents on the highway, I can make the trip in about 65-70 minutes. (That is with a little speeding on my part, of course).

On a recent trip when the weather was bad it took me nearly two hours to drop my daughter off at university. The time involved in making my way to London and back is naturally longer, but it is costlier as well. There is the extra gas that is required for this longer trip, but an additional cost results from my need for a large double-double coffee from Tims on the way there, and on the return trip too. My daughter finishes her exams on Wednesday of this week so I will be making the trip down afterward to bring her back home for the Christmas holidays. Come January I will be back again to making my way to London on a frequent basis.

As I reflected upon this change in the way that I have been driving since September, it got me thinking about the ways people were journeying in biblical times in respect to their relationship with God. [Read more](#)

December 10 - A Journey into My Past

My daughter is finishing her first semester at university in about a week's time. She has been living in residence which includes a meal plan at the dining hall. Before she started her first semester, I tried to give my daughter as many tips as I could from the two years that I stayed in residence at Brock University and ate at that dining hall.

One of the things I did share with her was how in the beginning the food in the dining hall would taste really good, but after a while it would seem repetitive especially if menus did not change too often. For the first few weeks my daughter commented on how good the food was, but since the end of September she has not been giving it rave reviews.

I have been wanting since the start of the semester to try the food in the dining hall at some point. As part of the meal plan, my daughter is allowed to have a guest join her for free four times during the year. I waited patiently for the time when she would invite me to be her guest, and thankfully that opportunity came this past Friday at lunch. I was worried at first that I might be the oldest person in the dining hall. Fortunately, there was another parent having lunch and many of the professors had decided to eat there as well.

After checking me in, my daughter took me around to show me all the options I could choose from. Our first stop was at the coffee area because she knew I would eventually make a couple of visits there. She showed me the dessert options next, and I was glad to see that Jello was not my only choice. Then she took me to get

some of the French fries that she raves a lot about. From there I had to make a choice as to whether I should have one of their hot dishes, a bowl of soup, pizza, a chili dog, or a sandwich from their deli bar. The last thing she showed me was the healthiest choice: the salad bar.

I wish I could still eat the same quantities of food I could when I was in university. I tried quite a few of the selections and loved experiencing once again the environment of eating in a dining hall at university. Many memories from 40 years earlier came back to me, but what I loved the most was sharing this moment with my daughter.

It may have taken 40 years for me to journey back into my past with respect to university dining, but thankfully I get the opportunity every year on Christmas Eve to experience more memories from my past. [Read more](#)

December 4 - It Came Down

I cannot remember exactly when we purchased an outdoor basketball net and placed it in front of our house, but I do know for sure that we had it before my daughter started Grade 7. That was the year when she tried out for rep basketball for the very first time and made the team. That summer, leading up to her trying out, Coral and I spent a lot of time practicing her layups and shooting at that basket. We continued doing this in the years that followed sharpening her skills for her rep teams and high school seasons. If some of her friends from basketball came over to our house, they could be found out at that basket shooting around and having fun. The basketball net became a fixture in front of our house. Many people coming for a visit knew which driveway to pull into based on seeing the basketball net out front.

This net took a lot of wear over the years. One time a truck hit the rim of the basket causing it to become dented. Sometimes, strong winds would put some pressure on the pole causing it to lean slightly. On a few occasions, branches from the tree overhead would get in the way of us shooting baskets so we would have to cut them away.

I came home from a meeting this past Wednesday and noticed the basketball net was leaning considerably. I did not notice this when I left so my first thought was to wonder whether somebody ran into the net with their vehicle. The tilt of the pole was as if it had been hit with considerable force. I tried to straighten the pole but to no avail. The problem was, whatever struck the pole did damage to one of the braces attached to it.

By Thursday, the basketball net was on a worse tilt than the "Leaning Tower of Pisa." We sent pictures to my daughter who was at university at the time, and she was shocked by what had happened to our net. By Friday, the net had tilted so much that anyone could do a "dunk" on the basket without leaving their feet. For safety reasons I had to take our basketball net down on Saturday. It is now lying in my front yard waiting for some warm weather to arrive so that I can disassemble it. It has been sad to see this familiar landmark standing at the front of our house for at least the past 8

years come down. My daughter, her friends, and I all had a lot of fun and created some good memories shooting at that hoop.

Our basketball net coming down as the season of Advent started got me thinking about how Jesus "came down" to be with us. [Read more](#)

November 27 - It's Beginning to Look a Lot Like Christmas

It certainly is beginning to look a lot like Christmas these past few days. Thankfully, it is not because we are covered with snow, but some areas in Ontario might see some snowfall later this week. Staring at the date on my calendar, and seeing it is already November 25th, has been one reminder to me that Christmas is fast upon us. Another reminder came this past weekend when I noticed some television stations were already playing Christmas shows such as "Rudolph the Red Nose Reindeer", and "Year Without a Santa Claus." On Monday afternoon I was reminded again when music started playing on my car radio. For some reason my wife does not enjoy listening to sports talk radio like I do so she had the car radio set to a station she prefers. When I started the car, I immediately heard the song, "It's Beginning to Look a Lot Like Christmas." More reminders of this came when I was walking my dog Daisy around the neighborhood this past week. I noticed many of my neighbors already putting their Christmas lights and decorations up on the outside of their houses. Not that I try to look into people's homes, but I have spotted many of my neighbors already have their Christmas trees up in their homes. All of these things have served as reminders to me that it's beginning to look a lot like Christmas.

When this season approaches, a question I always dread being asked is, what do you want for Christmas? This question was once again asked of me by my mother as I was driving her home from church on Sunday. I always find this question stressful because I do not take a lot of time thinking about things that I want. As long as I get my needed cups of coffee at Tim Hortons each day, I am pretty content. My mother and family find it frustrating that I provide them with very few ideas when it comes to gifts. Coming up with gift ideas for family and friends with this season upon us can be very challenging. Added to this pressure, is once we have the idea, we have to search for that item and hope it is still in stock at the store or will be delivered before Christmas Day. I do enjoy Christmas, but if I am being perfectly honest, trying to come up with ideas for gifts and getting them can be very hectic and stressful.

Having to start focusing on gifts now that Christmas is fast approaching, I got thinking about our attitudes and feelings when it comes to giving our gifts to God. [Read more](#)

November 20 - Something in Common

On Sunday night, as I drove back onto my street after taking my daughter back to university, I noticed something I had in common with many of my neighbors. It was evident how many of us spent time during the weekend raking up leaves and placing the bags out front for collection the next morning. The snow that fell the previous

weekend caught many people off guard when it came to their leaves. When the snow eventually melted many people were out raking up whatever remaining leaves they had. I had 12 bags to place out front of my house. The neighbor beside me had 6 bags while the two living across from me each had 15 and 18 bags respectively. At the one end of my road many of the people had 25 bags or more in front of their homes. I do not know many of my neighbors by name or much about their lives but one thing we all shared this past weekend was a desire to clean up our yards of all the leaves.

It was not just driving down my street that I was reminded how I shared some things in common with others. When I went into Tim Hortons on Friday morning a couple sitting there called me over while I was waiting for my coffee. I had seen them there many times before but had never really engaged in any lengthy discussions with them. They asked about my daughter and mentioned how they shared something in common with one of her best friends. I discovered their grandson happens to be dating one of my daughter's best friends. I was anxious to share this experience with my daughter, so I called her at school and told her about what she shared in common with this couple. The interesting thing was this couple was in Tim Hortons again on Saturday when I went in with my daughter. It was easy for her to start up a conversation with them knowing they shared in common knowing the same person.

Sometimes it is interesting to see what we may have in common with others. We have probably also experienced the opposite scenario with somebody and realized that we have nothing in common with them. And other times we find we have more than we realize in common. I sometimes find it interesting to discover how some spouses and siblings share very little in common with one another. [Read more](#)

November 13 - Looking First

One morning last week I was driving down my street coming back from Tim Hortons when I spotted out of the corner of my eye a boy coming down his driveway with his backpack heading to the bus stop. I slowed down when I saw him and I am so thankful that I did. He did not look before running into the street from his driveway. I easily came to a stop, but when the boy turned to see that he had almost run into an on-coming car without looking, it was quickly evident he was in shock at what almost happened. I waved for him to continue crossing the road, but I think the shock of what just happened made him decide to reverse course and go back onto his driveway and let me pass first.

I wish this was a rare occurrence, but I experience it so often of late. There are so many times in parking lots when I have seen people walk right in front of cars without looking first to ensure it is safe to do so. I was always brought up to look both ways first before crossing. Nowadays it seems to be more of the norm to "go" first, then "look." It is surprising to see this change considering in my day there was less traffic on the roads and in the parking lots. I don't know if the reason why we are seeing this trend has to do with people caught up in their thoughts and not paying attention if they

have their earbuds in and don't hear a car approaching or are talking on their phone and distracted. I am so glad that when I used to be a long- distance runner that I never had ear buds or a smart phone with me. I used to run in many residential neighborhoods early in the morning and I would always be listening for cars being started in driveways and prepare myself to stop ahead in case they pulled out without looking. I do not run like I used to but if I still did, I would not be wearing earbuds so I could look for possible vehicles pulling out from their driveways.

Sometimes we have this same tendency of looking after-the-fact when it comes to God. So often people look to God for help as a last resort rather than their first. [Read more](#)

November 6 - What Time Can and Cannot Change

In the wee hours on Sunday, November 2, 2025, it was time for us to turn our clocks back an hour. Prior to this moment in time, many of us were watching Game 7 of the World Series between the Toronto Blue Jays and Los Angeles Dodgers. With the game going into extra innings, I remember the Blue Jays broadcast showing the clock at the Rogers Centre striking midnight. Blue Jay's broadcaster Dan Shulman commented at that moment how Game 7 had entered into November 2nd. I did not stay up for the conclusion of the game. Once the Dodgers hit the go-ahead home run in the top of the 11th inning, I decided to turn the game off and head to bed. If there was a miracle comeback on the Jays part, I would have to watch it the next morning on the sport's highlight shows.

When I woke up after the time change on Sunday morning, I noticed that it was brighter outside earlier in the morning than I had been experiencing over the past several weeks. I also learned early Sunday morning that the Jays had lost. Up until that point I had been wearing my Toronto Blue Jays watch every day. On Sunday morning I decided to make a change and put on my Toronto Maple Leafs watch instead.

These were not the only changes I noticed on Sunday morning. As people began to arrive at church, I saw a big change with respect to their emotions from the Sunday before. Before, people were positive and excited about the Blue Jays' chances of winning the World Series. This past Sunday, however, it was evident in the conversations I had with people at the door that many were saddened by the disappointing end to the series and ready for a change due to the stress they felt watching the games. In a short time, Blue Jays fans went from being excited to being disappointed; from being full of hope to full of sadness; and from being full of praise for the players to criticizing some for not coming through in the clutch.

This past weekend we not only experienced how time brings about change, but also how experiencing a loss does so as well. Some people do not handle loss and change very well. [Read more](#)

October 30 - So Much Construction

It is almost impossible to drive anywhere in Brantford without encountering some road construction. For anyone who lives in the west end of Brantford, the situation has become worse of late with the reduction of lanes on Colborne Street West and some closures on adjacent streets as well. During the morning and evening rush hours it is not uncommon to see a long line of cars and school buses trying to get through this part of town.

It is not just in the west end of Brantford where I seem to be running into construction of late. I have run into it at times on Highway 401 driving my daughter back and forth from university. Whether it has been during the day or at night there has been lane reductions due to construction activity that slows things almost to a halt. I tried taking a back route home from London recently in order to avoid some construction. I was travelling along smoothly and planned to cut back onto the 401 at County Road 6 but discovered I could not because there was a bridge under construction. I drove another 10-15 kilometers down the road and encountered more construction. This time I had to take a detour that cost me more time in getting home.

I thought it was just me becoming frustrated by all the road work going on lately. I was at a meeting recently with several people who do not live in the Brantford area. Before the meeting started the other people began talking about all of the construction going on in their towns and cities. They seemed to be equally frustrated at how long all of this road construction seems to be taking. I understand the necessity to have these repairs and upgrades done to our roadways, but they are an annoyance and inconvenience while they are being undertaken. I do not know how long it will take for some of these construction projects to be completed but it seems to me that more road work is being started before completing what is already on the go.

Just as a township or city plans to make improvements on the roadways we travel, I was reminded how God undertakes making constructive work within us in order to improve our spiritual journey with Him. [Read more](#)

October 23 - Opening the Door

It was while I was driving my daughter back to university on Monday morning that I began realizing I had no idea what to write about for my mid-week message. I said a short prayer after leaving the university trusting God would provide me with some inspiration. It will come as no surprise to anyone reading this that my inspiration came after stopping into a Tim Hortons in London.

I had already had a large double-double coffee on the car ride to London, but I felt led to enjoy another cup on the drive home. As I entered the Tim's location, I spotted a customer whose hands were full carrying a tray of coffees and donuts. I asked her if she would like help opening the door and she quickly agreed. After doing a good deed, it was my turn to receive one back. My hands were not full as I was only carrying one double-double, but a customer saw me approaching the door to leave

and held it open for me. Naturally I thanked the man for doing this for me, and as soon as I opened my own car door, I realized God had just provided me with the inspiration for this week's message.

Monday morning was not the only time recently that I both helped and needed help opening doors. Nadine and I painted some of the doors in our house just over a week ago. After painting the front and back doors, we had trouble opening both. The problem for us was our dog Daisy was scratching at the door at that moment needing to be taken out. We pulled and yanked as hard as we could at the newly painted doors, but neither was opening. The dog was giving us a worried look, and Nadine and I were giving each other the same expression. Finally, I was able to open the front door after running a butter knife along the painted edges of the door. Daisy was relieved, but it took us about an hour of sanding the edges of both doors before they could be consistently opened.

My mother has been having some problems of late too getting her one door unlocked. It has happened two times recently, and, on both occasions, I received a call to help when I was out of town in London and Innerkip respectively. I had to find other people to come and help her unlock her door both times. Monday morning's incident, along with my mother's and our experience at opening doors, reminded me how Jesus sometimes finds the same thing when it comes to our hearts. [Read more](#)

October 16 - 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 Jay's 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 Jay's 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. [Read more](#)

October 9 - Turning Good Luck into God Luck

The Toronto Blue Jays have certainly been experiencing the support of their fan base and an entire nation this past week and more. It was tense, but also exciting to see them win their final four games of the regular season in order to win the American League East title a week ago. This past weekend was equally exciting to see the Blue Jays win the first two games at home against the New York Yankees.

Something that can happen when a team like the Blue Jays goes on a winning streak is players and fans can become very superstitious about what they wear and what they do. An article about this appeared in my morning paper on Monday entitled, "**Blue Jay fans lean into superstitions to bring team luck.**" The article started off by sharing how the players have been wearing the retro white-panel ball caps during this recent winning streak. The suggestion to do so came from Jay's pitcher Jeff Hoffman who liked these retro caps that were worn by the Blue Jays back in 1992 and 1993 when they won back-to-back World Series titles. His teammates quickly agreed with the idea because many of them believe certain changes can bring about good luck. Naturally if the change results in a bit of good luck, players do not want to switch things up.

Athletes can be superstitious, but the writer of the article shared how many fans of the Blue Jays have also become this way during this recent winning streak. Some fans told the writer how they have been wearing the same retro white panel caps to the ballpark for good luck as well. Another regular season fan shared how she has worn the same outfit to each game because she feels it has brought the team good luck. I can understand fans and players doing this because I had my own superstitions when I used to be a goalie. My superstitious routines prior to a game included having a pregame nap, wearing the same pair of red socks and long johns with holes in the knees, and having my mother change ends in the stands after each period. All of these routines sound crazy 45 years later, but at the time they were important for me in my hopes of experiencing some good luck.

After reading the article on Monday morning in the newspaper I sensed this topic was to be the inspiration for my mid-week message. It came to me after a bit of reflection that by dropping one vowel in the word "good", all of a sudden it turns into "**God luck.**" [Read more](#)

October 2 - Enjoy

I have not been enjoying the first week of my preferred Tim Horton's location being closed for renovations. Usually, I can leave my house and grab my morning coffee in about ten minutes time because it is so close to where I live. For the past week I have had to drive much farther in order to get my morning coffee at a Tims location, and it is now taking me 20 minutes to return home with my beverage in hand.

This added time required to get a coffee has also been cutting down on me enjoying more than just one cup from there in a day. Yes, I am guilty most days of running over to my nearby Tim Hortons during the afternoon or after supper and treating myself to a second, and sometimes a third cup of coffee. I felt a bit deprived last week of this convenience.

I have also not enjoyed that the renovations have been affecting the pleasure I receive interacting with the staff and regulars at my nearby Tims. I am still polite and courteous with the employees at the other location, but I am not as engaged in having conversations with them as I am at my preferred store.

I think God was seeing that I was not enjoying my experiences at this other location, so He drew my attention to something an employee said in order to bring some joy back. Last Thursday when one of the employees handed me my coffee, he caught me by surprise when he said, "**I hope you enjoy it.**" I have had waitresses say this to me when they have brought food to my table, but I cannot recall having somebody at Tim Hortons ever make this comment to me. I was so caught off guard when he said this, I responded by saying, "**Same to you.**"

As I walked out of the store, I realized my response was not appropriate, but his comment got me thinking about how rare it is for me not to enjoy a coffee from Tims.

[Read more](#)

September 25 - Seeking Wisdom

Being a Pastor I realize I am on the clock responding to people's needs 24 hours a day, 7 days a week unless I am on holidays. Most times people reach out to me between the hours of 6:30 a.m. until 10:00 p.m. but there are some occasions when I am awakened in the middle of the night. This happened to me Friday morning around 2:00 a.m. when I was awoken by a text message asking for some pastor talk from my daughter.

I was surprised I even heard the text because I tend to be a sound sleeper. Her text said, "*Dad. Pastor talk with you really quick. How would you describe the 3 Wise*

Men? In the funniest way you can think of.” This is quite a request considering I had just been awoken. My first attempt at humor in the wee hours of Friday morning was to respond, *“Wise with gifts but not directions, or wiser than the three stooges.”* I got a response back from my daughter saying, *“That is okay but who are they in the name of comedy?”*

By this time, I had been awake for at least 5 minutes, so my mind was becoming clearer. I sent these two replies:

They were on the Eastern All-Star Team.

They were the first Amazon delivery people with packages and may have even developed the Amazon smile after seeing Jesus.

My daughter gave me a 10 out of 10 for these responses and complimented me for being on a roll. I liked the compliment and of course had to respond by saying, *“Not bad for two in the morning, but imagine if I had a Tim Hortons coffee in hand right now.”* Getting her sense of humor from you-know-who she replied, *“You should try and slide some of these lines into your sermons.”* I told her I would think about it, but there would be a greater chance this conversation would make it into my mid-week message.

People might be thinking right now that it is way too early to be writing about the three wise men. It is legitimate to think this considering we just started the first week of fall this Monday and still have three months until the end of the year. The more I thought about the timing of being reminded by my daughter of the story of the Wise Men, I realized this is an ideal time for us to revisit their journey . [Read more](#)

September 18 - Dressed for the Vibe

When I attended my movie premiere back in June, my daughter and wife provided me with their suggestions about what I should wear. This past Wednesday night I was scheduled to be in Toronto for a very important event. I know many of you think I was asked to attend a showing at the Toronto International Film Festival based on my acting skills. For some reason, my phone has not been ringing with offers for me to take on new roles.

The event in Toronto happened to be a music concert that my daughter bought tickets for. On the afternoon of the concert, I received a text message from my daughter informing me I had to wear either green or brown to match the vibe and atmosphere of the event. I began looking in my closet to see what I had in those two colors. I noticed pairs of brown and green pants on the top shelf that I had not worn in a while. I tried on each pair and discovered I could not do up the button to either. I did not stop to ponder what message that might be sending to me. I finally found a pair of green pants with an elastic waist that fit. I felt even better when I had to add a belt so that the waistline fit snugger.

I then focused on choosing a top that might fit the vibe and atmosphere. The concert was to be held at an outdoor venue, so I had to consider the weather in choosing my top so as not to be too hot, nor too cold that evening. Thankfully my tops still seem to

fit me better than my pants. I ended up dressed all in green looking like Kermit the Frog, but at least my outfit matched the vibe for the event. When I picked my daughter up at university to drive her to the concert, she too had a lovely green top to match the vibe of the event. Several hours later we found ourselves at Rogers Stadium enjoying the concert. Not everyone was dressed in green or brown, but my daughter was thrilled that we chose our outfits accordingly and she thanked me afterward for making the effort I did.

I admit it is far easier for me to pick out clothes for church on Sunday than for my movie premiere and concert events. The experience I had ensuring I was wearing the right clothes for this event reminded me of the story Jesus told when somebody arrived at a wedding banquet dressed in the wrong clothing. [Read more](#)

September 11 - Given a Warning

I was provided with a warning last week that has serious implications on my mornings in the near future. When I went in for my morning coffee at Tim Hortons one of the staff that I have come to know warned me that the location would be closing soon for renovations. She told me once the renovations start, I would have to go elsewhere for my morning coffee because they would be closed for the next 18 days.

I appreciated the warning because this upcoming change has serious implications for me. The Tim Hortons that I stop into each morning is just a short distance from my house. Now I am going to have to drive further each day for my favorite morning drink. As I have shared in previous messages, I enjoy the staff and regulars I have come to know at my preferred location. I am going to miss chit-chatting with them and asking how their day is going, and how their family members are doing. It will be so different stopping into another Tim Hortons' location in the mornings.

I appreciate that some of the staff warned me about this change, but I also felt God was behind their actions in sharing this with me ahead of time. The reason why I say this is that ever since I heard the news, I have been taking advantage of the opportunities I still have when I go in to show care toward some of the staff who I know will be adversely affected by this shutdown. I have taken the time to ask a few of the employees what they plan to do during that 18-day period. I have shared with other employees how much I will miss them during that time frame. To a few other employees I have asked how their family members are doing and that I will look forward to hearing updates once the renovations are done at the store. I have just sensed over these past few days that God provided me with this warning not just to help me cope, but also so that I could show care and compassion toward some of the employees affected by this change.

This experience from last week got me reflecting upon how God provides us with warnings about the implications that can result from changes or decisions we make. [Read more](#)

September 4 - Took What Was Mine

This past Thursday I ordered two large pizzas online from a nearby location because we were having guests over for dinner. When I arrived, I saw my name and order number up on the screen and that it would be ready in 2 minutes. I waited the 2 minutes and when the sign said ready, I approached the counter to pick up my pizzas and pay. The person at the counter went to retrieve my order but came back empty handed. He informed me that somebody had already come in saying they were Dean, paid for the pizzas and left.

Naturally, I asked how that could happen when the sign said upon my arrival that the pizzas would be ready in two minutes. The employee had no explanation for that. The manager came over after hearing what had happened and I explained the predicament I was now in with needing these pizzas for our dinner guests. The manager promised they would make two new pizzas right away, but it would be a 15-minute wait. What more could I do in this situation but wait.

During that time frame a lot of thoughts went through my mind. Naturally I was frustrated that somebody was willing to lie and have no regard for the time and effort I went to in ordering the pizzas in the proper way. I was equally upset that this person did not care if they inconvenienced anyone else by taking an order that was not their own. I was not upset with the pizza place as I have experienced this before at another establishment I have used.

Finally, the 15 minutes of waiting were over. When I went to the counter I pulled out my credit card like I did the first time to pay. I thought they might give me a slight discount as a result of the inconvenience. Instead, because the other person had actually paid for my order before taking them, they viewed these new pizzas as being replacements and I got them free. I have shared in these messages several times how cheap and frugal I am as a Presbyterian pastor. As annoyed and frustrated as I was earlier, I did receive an unexpected blessing even though somebody took what was mine.

As I mentioned, this was not the first time, and I am sure it will not be the last time somebody at a pizza place takes the order that I placed. This incident reminded me how somebody took what was mine even before I was born. [Read more](#)

August 28 - Reversible

A couple of weeks ago I purchased a new belt at Giant Tiger. I tried it on in the store before I purchased it, but I did not remove the tags when I first got home in case I needed to return it. This past Monday morning was the first time that I decided to wear the belt since purchasing it. Once again, I tried it on to make sure it fit. Seeing that it did, I removed the tags with confidence that I would not need to return it. I went out Monday morning after breakfast to get my coffee at Tim Hortons and it was not until I returned home that I realized I missed cutting the one tag off the belt. I looked down at

the belt and spotted a tag indicating it was reversible. I quickly cut it off, but I began to wonder if anyone at Tim Hortons happened to notice my *faux pas*.

This incident got me thinking about a time when I made a similar mistake back in high school. I had just gotten a new pair of jeans and wore them to school for the first time. I cannot remember exactly what period or class in the day it was, but one student blurted out, "Dean, you still have the store tags on your jeans!" It was an embarrassing moment for this teenager at the time to say the least. It's funny how I remember so little from high school, but I still recall this embarrassing incident.

I may not be good at noticing reversible labels on my clothes, and I am just as bad when it comes to backing up my car in reverse. About 23 years ago I had several vertebrae in my neck that were inflamed. Even though I went to get treatment from a chiropractor I still do not have full range of movement when it comes to turning my neck to the one side. As a result, I have a tough time looking behind me when I am backing up the car. My wife Nadine tends to back the car up for me most times, but if she is not with me then this process can be quite an adventure. Recently I tried backing into my driveway and noticed my neighbor was watching me as I did so. I swerved onto the grass, then compensated by cranking the wheel in the opposite direction, and ended up parking the car totally crooked in the driveway. The neighbor had a good laugh watching my attempts at reversing the car.

All of this thinking I was doing on Monday morning in regard to that reversible tag got me curious what Jesus had to say on this subject. Something the Bible makes very clear to us is that we can reverse the consequences of our sins by repenting and confessing them to the Father. [Read more](#)

August 21 - I Should Have

Even though three weeks have passed since we held a garage sale at our church, there is an incident from that day that I still think about often. At one point I spotted a person I know walking out to his car with a handful of items he had purchased. When I saw him leaving, I thanked him for coming and supporting our fundraiser. About five minutes later I saw this same man come running back in. The reason why he came back in was he started having second thoughts about not buying a certain item he spotted. He hoped it was still available, but during the five minutes he was out at his car somebody else purchased that item. Disappointed that it had sold, he shared with somebody afterward how he should have bought it when he first saw it.

I am sure we have all experienced this same thing at some point. I experienced this recently myself when it came to bags of topsoil. I happened to be at Sobeys one day and noticed they had bags of black earth topsoil on for just \$1.00 each. I only had room in my car to purchase 5 bags at the time, but I planned to return a few days later to buy some more. There was lots of stock, and I was not worried that they would run out. When I returned to Sobeys a few days later all the bags of black earth topsoil had

been purchased. Just like the person at the garage sale, I found myself thinking afterward I should have bought more when I had the chance.

It is not just when it comes to buying things we find ourselves thinking “I should have.” We can also think in these terms when it comes to missed opportunities or an experience, we did not take advantage of when we had the chance. When we find ourselves thinking “I should have”, we are basically acknowledging that our indecisiveness has left us with remorse and regrets. One of the things the Bible encourages us not to be indecisive and be left saying, “I should have,” about has to do with not being properly prepared for Christ’s return.

We see this lesson emphasized by Jesus in a series of three parables He told in **Matthew 25**. [Read more](#)

August 13 - Covered With Answered Prayer

Some Monday mornings I am still unsure about a topic for my mid-week message. Whenever I find myself in this situation I always pray and ask God to reveal to me what message He wants shared for that week. This was the case for me early Monday morning as I was preparing breakfast for the family. Shortly after I finished praying, I opened the fridge door to discover God answered the prayer in a “splashing” way, so to speak. A partially drunk cup of Tim Horton’s tea was sitting on the top shelf of the fridge. This is not a typo I have made here. This was a cup of tea that my wife had not finished over the weekend. If it had been a large double-double coffee, then it would have been finished pretty quickly.

I was trying to be careful as I was reaching for some fruit inside the fridge, but I must have slightly knocked the cup and before I could react, my shorts, socks, and the front of the fridge and floor were covered in tea. As I got down on my hands and knees to clean up the mess covering the front of the fridge and floor, I realized God had just given me an answer to prayer for my mid-week message.

I have come to be known as a messy person by my wife and daughter. It is quite obvious to both of them whenever they, at times, look at food stains covering my shirt and pants. Sometimes they spot remnants of my peanut butter and jam sandwich from lunch having stained my shirt. Other times they will see a coffee stain covering a portion of my shirt because I missed my mouth taking a sip. Last week they also saw a stain on my white shirt from my efforts at making chili. A day hardly goes by when my clothes are not covered with food stains.

It is not just food stains that can cover us but also those that come about as a result of sin. [Read more](#)

August 7 - An Observation Amongst the Suffering

I shared a few weeks ago how my mother recently fractured her wrist after having fallen. Last week we returned to the fracture clinic for a follow-up visit. When we checked in the first thing they had us do was go to the x-ray department. After we finished there, we returned to the fracture clinic and waited to see the doctor. Our appointment that morning was scheduled for 9:30. The waiting room was already full of people waiting for their scheduled appointments too. As I quickly glanced around the waiting room, I saw young, middle-aged, and older people who had suffered fractures and broken bones. A young mother sitting across from us had recently broken two of her toes. Several people were walking on crutches or were being pushed in wheelchairs after having suffered a broken ankle or leg. One lady seemed to be recovering from some broken vertebrae in her neck.

Despite the suffering that each of these people was going through, I noticed so many positive behaviors on display while I waited. Even though it seemed like patients were entering the waiting room quicker than people were being seen, everybody was showing patience that day. It was great to see so much kindness and courtesy on display as well. A lady with crutches who was sitting beside my mother could see somebody standing who was worse off than she was. She got up from the chair and offered it to this person who she felt needed it more than her. I could also overhear conversations breaking out between complete strangers as they waited. These conversations seemed to be very polite and cordial, centering around how they injured themselves. After one couple was finally able to see the doctor, they came back out to the waiting room to share the good news report they had just received with the person they had been seated beside for the past hour. They not only shared their good news but also offered words of encouragement to the other couple. We waited 90 minutes in order to see my mother's doctor that morning. Despite the suffering and trauma everyone there had experienced recently, I saw wonderful attributes and attitudes on display by the people waiting in that clinic.

The experience reminded me how we often see some of the best qualities on display by people in times of suffering. [Read more](#)

July 31 - Finding a Good Home

Over these past two months, I oversaw the collecting and pricing of items for our church garage sale. I have done garage sales on a smaller scale before, but never one with so many items and tables like the one we have at our church. When items were dropped off to our church, my first task was to place a price tag on it which I found could be challenging at times. Sometimes I had no idea what the item actually was, so I had no clue what price to put on it. Other times I realized that the item held much sentimental value to that person who donated it so I did not want to price it so low that it would offend them.

My goal when it came to pricing each item was trying to figure out the right price to place on it so that it would be purchased by somebody and not be left unsold at the end. There were hundreds of items for me to price prior to the sale and often it just

required me to place one of the stickers on it that can be found at the Dollar Store for garage sales. When I came home from the church after spending an hour or more pricing, I would sometimes find some of these stickers still in my pocket and even some attached to my wallet.

While determining a price for each item and finding the right place to display it posed some challenges at times, what I found truly satisfying about the whole experience was seeing some of the items find a good home at the end. I did not expect to have this reaction when we started organizing the garage sale. As items were purchased, I found myself saying so many times to people buying it, **"I am so happy to see it find a good home."**

One instance in which I said this, was when a collection of china horses was purchased. I knew the collection held a lot of sentimental value to the person who donated them. [Read more](#)

July 24 - Almost There

It was not until 3:15 p.m. on Sunday when I was able to stop by Tim Hortons to get a coffee. How I can make it past a morning on a Sunday without stopping into Tims for a coffee, but not on any other day during a week is a mystery I think only God can explain. When I ordered my first large double-double for the day, one of the regular employees I have come to know looked very tired as she took my order. Seeing how tired she was, I decided to ask her if she was almost done for the day. When she replied, "I am almost there" naturally I asked if she finished work at 4:00 p.m. I was shocked when she replied, "I actually get off work at 8:00 p.m. today." I smiled when she said this knowing she still had 4 hours and 45 minutes before her shift ended. Seeing my smile she too realized at that moment that she was not quite "almost there" yet when it came to her shift being over.

When we hear somebody say "They are almost there" we assume they are very close. Sometimes we are the ones wanting to know if we are "almost there." In our youth, if we ever asked our parents from the back seat of the car, "Are we there yet?" we were hoping to hear them say we were very close. As adults we tend to wonder if we are almost there yet when it comes to enduring a crisis or challenge in our lives. One of the things we want to know in the midst of an adversity is whether we are "almost there" when it comes to having our life return to normal or experiencing more pleasant times again. Examples of this desire to know might include:

- Am I almost there in winning my battle with cancer?
- Am I almost there in overcoming my grief?
- Am I almost there in experiencing more better days than worse days?
- * Am I almost there in having my suffering be behind me?

*

Even if we discover the answer is that we are very close to being "almost there", the reality is we still have time to wait and put in until we arrive at the point of "there."

[Read more](#)

July 17 - Something in Common Regardless of Age

During the first 94 years of her life my mother avoided fracturing or breaking any bones. In her 95th year, however, she experienced a fracture for the very first time. After she fell, I took my mother for an x-ray which revealed her wrist was fractured. She was not happy to learn this and actually accused me of not praying hard enough. I was praying, however once I learned of her fall, that if there was something seriously wrong, that God would reveal it. I saw the x-ray showing the fracture as an answer to prayer even if my mother thought otherwise. Off to the emergency room we went and after a few short hours my mother returned home wearing her first cast ever.

A few days later I went into Tim Hortons for my morning coffee, and I saw at one of the tables a young boy around the age of 5 also wearing a cast covering his wrist. I wanted to go over to his table and ask him if this was his first cast and share with him about my mom at age 95. Unfortunately, the family got up and left before I had the chance to do so.

I began thinking afterward how interesting it was that a boy so young, and somebody of my mom's age (notice I did not say so old) were experiencing the exact same thing regarding their wrists. No matter what end of the spectrum we are at when it comes to our age, experiencing adversities with regards to our health is just one thing we can share in common.

Regardless of the kind of adversity someone who is young or old may be going through, something else they can share is noticing their strength is weakening in the midst of it. [Read more](#)

July 11 - When Dreams Come True

One of the sayings people will see when they visit Walt Disney World is "It is a place where dreams come true." This slogan serves as a reminder to visitors to this theme park that they will create unforgettable memories with their loved ones. When my daughter was younger, we visited the Walt Disney theme parks on at least four different occasions and still carry many fond memories from our experiences there. I was reminded this past weekend how a person's dreams can come true in other places too. My daughter has turned me into a fan of F1 racing. We enjoy watching, together, each race during a F1 season. This past weekend F1 drivers and teams were at Silverstone for the British Grand Prix. Since he was 8 years old, it has always been a dream of British driver Lando Norris to win his home grand prix race.

This past Sunday Lando Norris' dream came true as the fans were standing to cheer him on as he crossed the finish line in first place. Lando Norris came on to the team radio immediately afterward and said, "**This is a dream, winning at home. It's beautiful. Thanks for the moment. I will remember this memory always.**" After Lando got out of his race car the joy he was experiencing seeing his dream come true

was evident in the hugs and embraces he gave to his parents and members of his racing team. When it came time for Lando to sign the winner's champagne bottle, he wrote the words, "Dreams do come true." As a fan of F1 racing, it was truly touching and moving to see Lando Norris' dream become a reality.

As I reflected upon this on Monday morning it made me think of our Heavenly Father's dream for us. [Read more](#)

July 3 - Getting Together

It has been several weeks since the film I was asked to play a supporting role in won first place. I have been settling back into my normal job as a pastor ever since just staying patient until my next role comes along. Last week one of my co-stars in the film reached out to see if I would like to go for coffee with him. Thinking this is naturally what actors do during a break in filming I said yes.

We were originally going to meet for coffee last Wednesday, but I received a message during the day that he had to reschedule. Friday was the next available day on our schedules. On Friday morning I received a message from him that he was at the hospital and was unsure if we could meet. Around noon he messaged me again and said he was home from the hospital now and would like to still get together but he did not have access to a car. I had a meeting already arranged for 1:45 on Friday afternoon so I let him know I would come pick him up sometime after 3 when it was over.

Naturally we two actors ended up at Tim Hortons for our coffee and discussion. Over the next hour we talked about a variety of topics including our upcoming plans for the summer and fall. I had to cut our conversation off after that hour because one of my parishioners was trying to reach me by phone. Remember, I still need to keep my day job because my acting career is still relatively new. When I dropped my fellow co-star off at his home, we agreed that we should make plans to get together again either at the end of the summer before he heads off to university in the fall or when he comes home for Christmas holidays.

This experience from last week got me thinking about how we often make comments to somebody about getting together for coffee and a visit. While our intentions are often sincere when we make this promise we do not always follow through. [Read more](#)

June 26 - Remembering My Masks

I saw a commercial last week that showed four men wearing their CPAP masks and one who was not. One of the men wearing his mask asked the man who was not, why he did not have his on. This person went on to explain a procedure he went through that no longer requires him to wear his mask at night in order to get a restful sleep. I smiled at the end of the commercial recognizing myself as one of the four who has to

wear a CPAP mask each night. I have been wearing this mask for about four years now. I can't honestly say in my case that I wake up from my sleeps more rested, but I can say my wife no longer complains about my snoring keeping her awake.

I adjusted pretty quickly to wearing this kind of mask four years ago. I wonder if part of the reason why I adjusted so quickly is because of the various masks I have worn over the years. I have worn goalie masks since the time I started playing organized hockey around the age of 6 or 7. I am glad I did not play goal in the era of Johnny Bower because I can recall many times when pucks hit the cage on my mask before I could get my glove up to prevent it.

I also recall one or two years when I wore a mask as part of a Halloween costume. I think one of the masks I wore was Pierre Elliott Trudeau when he was Prime Minister. In case anyone is wondering, I did not get a Justin Trudeau mask during the years he was our Prime Minister.

Naturally we all became familiar with wearing masks during COVID. I remember my daughter actually having to get used to wearing a mask while training for basketball during that first year of COVID. Her practices would last two hours. I do not know how my daughter and the other players were able to practice with their masks on for that length of time. I have found it interesting during these past few weeks the number of boxes of masks people have donated to our upcoming garage sale as I have unpacked their donations.

When it comes to CPAP masks, hockey masks, and medical masks, their purpose is meant to protect or help us. Halloween masks might serve to complete a costume's look, but they can also be used to hide our identity. While we do not wear a Halloween mask to hide our feelings and emotions, I am sure there have been times when we have masked the pain we are really feeling in order not to worry those around us. Sometimes we try to mask our true feelings by conveying the message we are okay or everything is good, but inside we are struggling greatly. [Read more](#)

June 19 - Is Anyone Listening?

Because our property backs onto bush, we tend to get various animals roaming around our yard. We just love seeing deer make their way onto our property. Sometimes we spot them, but other times we are aware of their visit by the tracks they left behind. One night we actually spotted a mother and father skunk leading their little stinkers from the front of our property into our back bush. We enjoyed watching this display from inside the safety of our house as opposed to coming upon them unexpectantly outside. Since COVID we have also been aware of some coyotes around our property. I have not seen them myself, but I hear their howls close by, and my neighbour spotted one coming out from our backyard early one morning. We see our fair share of squirrels, rabbits, and chipmunks and on one occasion a flock of wild turkeys.

Recently I spotted a very large racoon in my car port. I was in the kitchen making a bowl of cereal for my bedtime snack when I heard a loud noise outside. I looked out my side door and sure enough spotted a big raccoon trying to get into my shed door where I keep my garbage. I banged on the window in order to try and scare it off, but it did not move at all. I decided to shout at it next hoping that my booming preacher voice might scare it off. That did not work either. I guess I should have added some fire and brimstone to the tone of my voice. Finally, I opened the door which got the raccoon's attention. It scurried around the side of the house and returned into the bush. I went outside shortly afterward to secure the door to our shed and made sure there was no way it could get into the garbage if it made a return visit that night.

The next morning, I began thinking about the raccoon not listening and responding to me banging on the window or shouting. I could not blame the raccoon for failing to listen because it has been suggested by one of my family members that I am a selective listener. I think it is something that all husbands come to be known for. I don't blame my parishioners either if they do not listen to every word in my sermons. Before becoming a minister, I sat in the pews and found my mind wandering during a sermon or two and as a result missed hearing certain key points. I am sure teachers at this time of year understand when their students may not be listening too attentively with the end of the school year fast approaching. We understand why people may not listen carefully in these and other situations.

As I journeyed down this thought process I was reminded how we see in the Bible that David at times questioned whether God was listening to him. [Read more](#)

June 12 - The Expression I Am Seeing the Most

Over the course of the past few weeks the expression I have been seeing a lot of from people is yawning. I know what some might be thinking that I am referring to my congregation while they try to stay awake during one of my sermons. I do see a few yawns from those in the pews from time to time, but I have not heard any snoring which is a good sign.

To be honest, it has been while I have been out and about of late when I have been seeing so many people yawn. I have seen several employees at my preferred Tim Hortons doing this. I understand many of the yawners working there have started their shifts early that morning. Some of the employees I catch yawning tell me they just started their shift a few minutes earlier. I often say to them it is a good thing there is lots of coffee around to keep them awake. I have even noticed a lot of people yawning while I have been in some grocery stores of late. Sometimes it is fellow customers I see doing this, and other times I spot some of the cashiers yawning while waiting for the next customer to come to their check out. Naturally when I drop my daughter off at high school each morning, I can always count on seeing a few students yawning as they make their way to the front door. And I have also seen a lot of people yawning in their cars while waiting for the traffic light to change so they can proceed. I have been

aware of people yawning before, but I am seeing it more frequently of late. At least this is a better expression to be seeing on people's faces than anger.

Boredom may explain why people yawn during my sermons, but other factors that can lead to it include having a poor night's sleep, staying up too late, being awakened by thunderstorms, having a loud snorer in the house, or experiencing sleep apnea. When I first considered doing my mid-week message about seeing all of this yawning, I thought God might have me focus on how we can overcome our tiredness. [Read more](#)

June 5 - Playing a Supporting Role

I shared with everyone a few weeks ago that I had been asked by my daughter and some other students in her film class to play the role of a grieving father in their production. Filming finished a couple of weeks ago and it was edited and submitted to the teacher. He was very impressed by the final version and sent an e-mail to my daughter and her other colleagues complimenting them on what a great job they had done. The teacher did not send me an e-mail about my great acting contribution, but I just assumed he did not have my contact information.

The film was then submitted to the Cross Cuts competition to be judged against other submissions. In the days leading up to this competition, I began asking my daughter what I should wear to the night of the event. I thought a tuxedo might be in order just like we see people wearing at the Oscars, but she did not think that was a good idea. I thought about wearing a flowing scarf instead, but she said no to this suggestion as well. My daughter and wife insisted they would pick out what I should wear.

When I arrived at the Cross Cuts event, I immediately sought out one of my fellow supporting actors and gave him a big hug. Isn't this what actors and actresses from a cast do? We sat together once inside but, unfortunately, we were not seated around tables like what is seen at some award shows. We sat through many films in the first hour and then broke for intermission. During this break, we actors began to ask each other what each thought of our competition and our chances of winning. Isn't this what actors and actresses from a cast do as well?

Finally, intermission ended, and we watched more films. When our film came on my daughter nudged me to let me know. I don't think I was asleep when she did this. [Read more](#)

May 29 - Staring Into My Future

This past Monday I found myself staring into my future so to speak. It began with me running into a neighbour at the grocery store who had retired last week. It was the first time I had seen her since I learned of her retirement, and I took the opportunity to congratulate her on achieving this new stage in her life. After I left the grocery store naturally my next stop was at Tim Hortons to grab my large double-double. As I was

about to enter, out came a man I know who retired last fall. Since he retired, I have run into him a few times at various Tim Hortons seeing him chatting with friends over coffee.

After I grabbed my coffee, I returned home to find my neighbour's trash bin in the street. This neighbour also retired last fall, and I could tell he was not at home, but away fishing. I went over and retrieved his trash bin off the road before entering my house to enjoy my coffee. When I sat down at my computer to check e-mails while sipping my coffee, I opened my inbox and clicked on a message from a minister informing me he will be retiring on August 1st of this year. It was not even 9:15 a.m. on Monday morning before I had all of these encounters with people who have retired or are about to retire.

The reason why I consider these encounters as staring into my future is that I am only 4 years and 3 months away from being able to retire myself. In fact, last Friday I received an update from the pension department at my denomination's head office letting me know what my monthly pension will be if I retire at age 65. I have had a lot of people share with me that the time will go very quickly until I retire. I am sure that it will, but there are some stressful weeks in ministry when the time does not seem to be passing by quickly.

After staring into my future on Monday morning, I opened my Bible and began looking at passages related to my reality in a few years. I found it interesting that the first thing God reminded me about is how age does not allow me to retire when it comes to serving Him. [Read more](#)

May 22 - Known for at the Funeral Home

A person I knew passed away a week ago. This person did not attend my church so when I learned of their passing, I did not expect to be asked to officiate at the funeral service. The daughter of the deceased did not want to have the celebration of life last particularly long so when she shared this with the funeral director he said, "Well you won't want the minister you are thinking about to do the service because he tends to be long winded." I guess I do not fall into the category of being "long-winded" because I was the one recommended to do the celebration of life instead. It is a good thing the funeral director did not ask anybody at my church if I am "long-winded" because they may have had a very different opinion on this matter.

This incident from last week reminded me how we come to be known for having certain reputations based on what people might observe while watching us. I have shared in my mid-week messages that at my local Tim Hortons I have the reputation for being a regular, for always ordering a large double-double, and for smiling and being friendly with the staff. At Sobeys, I have developed the reputation with one cashier for being the "discount guy" and "bargain hunter." This cashier is always interested to see what items I need her to apply a discount toward and how much I saved as a result. I also have the reputation for being a die-hard Leaf fan as well. It is

a hard reputation to have at this time of year when the Leafs exit the post season way to early. When it comes to my work at the higher levels of my denomination, I have developed a reputation in the eyes of many people, for being very professional and competent in dealing with matters of the courts of the church.

After I finished reflecting upon some of the reputations I have become known for, I began thinking about some that various people in biblical times had. One person that my thoughts began to focus on were the admirable qualities that Ruth exhibited which helped her to develop a good reputation in the eyes of so many. [Read more](#)

May 15 - Dressed to Convey a Special Message

This past weekend I was in Kingston to watch my daughter's basketball team play in the Ontario Basketball Championships for her age group. It was a very emotional weekend for my family because these were my daughter's final competitive games in rep basketball before heading off to university in the fall.

Usually when a basketball team comes onto the court prior to the game, they will be wearing a warmup shirt, or their game jersey. These warmup jerseys will usually have the team's name and logo on them along with the player's number and sometimes their last name, too.

Just after my daughter's team finished their final game on Sunday, another team came onto the court to start warming up. Instead of wearing their warmup jerseys, the girls on this team were all wearing white t-shirts over their jerseys. Each player had written or painted the words "Happy Mother's Day" on their t-shirts, and drawn pictures or symbols that represented their love for their mother.

I have been to three Ontario Basketball Association Championship weekends that have fallen on Mother's Day Sunday, and I have never seen a team come up with this idea before. I was impressed by seeing this message of love and appreciation these girls were sending to their mothers watching them in the stands on Sunday. I am sure it brought a lot of smiles and some tears to the moms from that team.

Seeing the effort these young women put into designing and making these shirts for their mothers reminded me when my daughter did this for me on two different Father's Days. [Read more](#)

May 8 - I Can Be Boring in Some Ways

My wife shared with me recently that I can be boring at times. Thankfully she was not referring to my sermons when she said this (or I don't think she was). Her reference to me being boring had to do with my choice of eating cereal for breakfast each morning. I have Honey Nut Cheerios with a sprinkle of granola, topped with a handful of Frosted Flakes, a few raisins added to the top, followed by a small amount of honey. How this combination can be considered to be boring is beyond me.

My wife, on the other hand, prefers variety when it comes to her breakfasts. Four mornings during a week I will make her cereal for breakfast. For variety's sake, on two of those mornings, I give her "Multi-grain Cheerios" with a handful of granola and a sprinkle of cinnamon, topped with a cut up banana and a dash of honey. The other two cereal mornings I give her "Shredded Wheat" with similar toppings. At least one morning a week, in order to provide her with some variety, I will make her poached eggs on toast, and on the other two days I will do up oatmeal with apples and cinnamon. I do not mind offering my wife variety when it comes to her breakfasts, but as for me I am content having my same "boring" cereal every morning.

Recently I watched a television show where an actor shared that he too eats the same cereal every morning. Naturally my ears perked up when I heard him reveal this. He then shared how he tries to spice his breakfast up one day a week by putting chocolate milk on his cereal. I thought about trying this variation in order to make my morning breakfast choice less boring but being lactose intolerant, and cheap too, I did not want to have to buy both vanilla and chocolate Soy Milk every week.

I admit to being boring when it comes to my breakfast choice. Some people thought I had a boring job when I used to work as an accountant. Naturally I have heard my share of jokes over the years about how boring accountants can be. I have had some people over the years also share with me how they consider the Christian life to be boring. [Read more](#)

May 1 - Playing My Part

I was asked to play a role in a movie recently. I am on camera almost every week filming our worship services so naturally some big screen movie company or the Hallmark Channel might be interested in me playing the role of a preacher. The request, however, came from my daughter for a movie she and a group of fellow students are doing in film class. When it was determined that they needed somebody who could dress up in black and appear at a cemetery for a certain scene, my daughter knew I was the perfect person for the role. I was thrilled to be asked because last year when my daughter directed a film for the "Cross Cuts" competition she gave my wife a role, but not me.

As the days got closer to filming, I asked my daughter to give me my lines so I could begin rehearsing. I was informed at that moment that they decided I should have no lines. Preachers like me are just used to opening our mouths and go on for long periods of time speaking. When the day for filming my role finally came, I was complimented for the funeral-looking attire that I was wearing. I think the compliment from these students doing the filming was their way of trying to get me into character and cooperating with their instructions.

In my first scene I was told to look sad and downcast while approaching a street corner in our car. When I stopped at the corner, I was to be yelled at by a pizza delivery person in their car angry that I was driving too slowly. When this driver raced

off, they filmed my daughter placing her hand on my right hand on the steering wheel. I was told when she did that to place my left hand from the steering wheel on top of her hand as a gesture of care. Then the camera was placed on our dashboard focusing on an empty child's car seat in the back. This shot was meant to reveal the reason for our sadness and why we had just come from the cemetery. [Read more](#)

April 23 - My Eye Has Been on a Bird

Every time that I go out my front door or return home these past few weeks my eye has been focused on what a bird has been doing with my mailbox. I have never caught the bird in the act, but it has been placing materials to build a nest on the inside of my mailbox. If I happen to close the mailbox then this bird leaves everything on top of it instead. I try to remove these nesting items whenever I find them, but this bird is persistent to say the least and starts adding more materials to the top my mailbox. While the mess the bird leaves is annoying, I do find it humorous that it seems to leave things in my mailbox more frequently than anyone from Canada Post does. I love seeing birds in a nest, but just not in my mailbox.

It has been nice over the past few weeks to see the return of birds around my property. Besides the one coming to my mailbox, I am noticing a few more appearing at my feeders and sitting on top of our fence in the back yard. I find it quite calming watching the birds at my feeder. That sense of calmness changes however whenever I see a squirrel or chipmunk chase away the birds at the feeders and begin to eat away. I have also been noticing more sounds of chirping coming from the trees whenever I take my dog Daisy out back to do her business. Pretty soon I expect to hear the sound of orioles that come to my next-door neighbour's feeders.

As I reflected upon seeing what the birds have been doing lately around my house, I was reminded how Noah was particularly interested in this while he was still on the ark. We read in **Genesis 8** that as the waters continued to go down and the mountain peaks began to become visible Noah released a dove in order to see if the water had receded enough that it could find dry ground. [Read more](#)

April 17 - My Weekly To-Do List

Usually on a Sunday afternoon or on Monday morning I will open up my calendar and write out a "To Do" list for the week. I start off each week's "TO DO" list with - SERMON - POWERPOINT- CHILDRENS' STORY- and LITURGY. These four things get top spot on my list each time because they are all necessary components of our weekly worship service. Writing a mid-week message usually occupies the next spot on my list. I would hate to disappoint you by putting this lower on my list and perhaps running out of time during the week to write one. How else would you nod off to sleep while reading? Then my list usually includes meetings, filming an online service, caregiving, administrative tasks, and family commitments during that week.

When Holy Week comes around, my "To Do" list not only has one worship service to plan out at the top, but two with Good Friday as well. As busy as my schedule is during Holy Week, I know of other ministers who put on multiple services during this week. I talked with a person today in order to try and arrange a meeting with them for this week, and he told me that it was a busy week for him with it being Easter. I had to smile on the other end of the phone, and replied, **"You should try having a pastor's schedule during Easter."**

Whenever I find myself bemoaning about my busy "To Do" list during Holy Week, I will sometimes reflect on everything Jesus had to do during that Passover week and realize my schedule is light compared to His. [Read more](#)

April 10 - His Eye Was on My Tie

This past Sunday morning I stopped at a Tim Hortons to get a coffee before driving to the church. I typically do not do this before the service on Sundays. From Monday through Saturday I almost always stop at Tims in order to get my morning coffee, but on Sundays I will have my favourite beverage at home and not get one from there until later in the day. Because I did not have time to have my morning coffee at home this past Sunday, and knowing I had to rush off right after the service to drive to London to see my daughter's basketball game, I realized it was my best chance to enjoy my morning beverage. I also realized that if I tried to drive to London without having had my morning coffee it was going to be a very grumpy trip for me. When I went into Tims before the service, I was wearing one of my favorite ties that has 3 crosses on it and these words from **Psalm 19:1: The heavens declare the Glory of God!**

When I placed my order for a large double-double, I could tell my tie caught the eye of the employee taking my order. I noticed that his eyes glanced down in order to see what it said. This employee has served me coffee on many different occasions before, but I do not think he has ever seen me in my Sunday best wearing this tie. Prior to this he may have thought I was just a regular customer who loves his coffee, but after his eye caught sight of my tie he would realize this regular customer was also a believer who loves the Lord.

Sometimes like this employee did with my tie, we will see somebody wearing a necklace with a cross on it, or earrings in this same shape, or a t-shirt with a Christian symbol or message on it that identifies to us they are a believer. It is not just the clothes or jewellery that we wear that let people know we are believers. I will sometimes notice at a restaurant that a person is a believer when I see them, or the group they are with, bow their heads and pray before they begin to eat. Sometimes in parking lots or waiting at traffic lights I will also notice a bumper sticker on a person's car that identifies them as a believer. Whenever I see these bumper stickers, I am reminded of the story of a police officer pulling a car over after seeing these Christian sayings thinking the vehicle was stolen because the driver was driving too fast and with rage.

Whenever I remember this antidote, I am reminded of how people watch to see if our actions and behaviours as believers match the message, we try to convey whether it is through items we wear, or decals that we may place on our cars. [Read more](#)

April 3 - That Consistent Form of Communication

My wife and I are often way behind the times when it comes to the latest technology. An example of this is how so many people had smart phones before we ever decided to get one. It was not until my daughter's first year playing competitive basketball that we finally decided to get one realizing how it could benefit us when travelling to various cities for games. The other parents on the team had a good laugh at our expense when we finally caught up with the times.

My wife has been using that original phone since 2018. The phone has been giving her a lot of problems lately due to a lack of storage and as a result she has had to delete many of her apps. She has been doing some research on new phones and finally this past Saturday I had some time to narrow down the options with her. It is amazing all the different factors that have to be considered when looking for a new phone. Naturally, being frugal, price is a very important consideration for me. Some considerations to take into account when looking at price are whether we want to own the phone out right at the end of the contract or trade it back in, and also the rate plan that best fits our needs.

We went on Saturday and found a new phone that was offered with a plan we thought was affordable. We then had to decide if we wanted to pay for a protection plan, for the store to transfer the data over, and whether we wanted other accessories for it. Naturally the cheap side in me declined all these extras. We brought the new phone home on Saturday and my wife spent the weekend setting it up and becoming familiar with it and saved us a \$50.00 setup fee!

This experience took me down memory lane on Monday thinking about the various phones I have used through my 60 years. My first memory was of a rotary phone where you would dial each number with your finger. [Read more](#)

March 27 - Just Three

My daughter turned 19 on Monday. The time has passed by so quickly these past 19 years, and we are so proud of the young woman she has become. One of the things my daughter enjoys doing is going to the movie theater. She often refers to being at a movie theater with popcorn in hand as her happy place.

We decided to go to the movies as a family on Monday as one way to make her birthday special. The movie she wanted to see was not playing in Brantford, so we ended up driving to Ancaster to see it. When we entered the movie theater, we discovered we were the only ones there. We sat in our seats and began watching the

preshow expecting more people would eventually enter. When the lights dimmed, and the movie began to play we were still the only people in the theater.

It was great to have the entire movie theater to just us. We did not have anyone behind us kicking our seats. Nor did we have to worry about a "Tommy Texter" or "Susie Talker" making our experience an unpleasant one like we did a few weeks earlier watching a movie in Brantford. We were free to laugh out loud, put our arms on the chair rests beside us, and talk amongst ourselves during certain scenes in the movie. Leading up to my daughter's birthday we had considered renting a small private movie theater so it could be just the three of us, but we got this experience on Monday night without having to pay any extra. Afterward we all commented what a blessing it was to experience the movie with just the 3 of us in the theater.

As I reflected upon this blessing of being just 3 while driving home that night, I was reminded of the blessed gift that we experience from having the "just 3" crosses on Good Friday. [Read more](#)

March 19 - Responding to a Deep Need

My daughter and I are big fans of Formula One racing. This past weekend marked the opening race of the 2025 season in Melbourne, Australia. Even though the start time for this race was midnight on Sunday (yes church was the next morning) my daughter put on her F1 sweater, I got us each a coffee, and we settled in front of the television excited to see racing again.

What is making this season of F1 even more interesting is there are so many rookie drivers that have earned a spot to compete against the best racers in the world. It had been raining in Melbourne just before the start of the race, and more rain was expected over the next two hours. As the drivers were doing a formation lap around the track prior to the start of the race, one of the rookie drivers had his tires lock up causing him to crash into the wall. His debut in F1 was over before the race was even started. This racer is just 20 years of age. He has so many races ahead of him but naturally he was devastated at being eliminated. Even though he was still wearing his helmet it was very evident from his body language that his emotions were taking over. It was hard not to feel sad for this driver seeing his tears.

As the driver was walking back toward his team's garage, the father of F1 driver Lewis Hamilton suddenly appeared and put his arm around this young man. For the next few moments, the cameras showed this father offering words of encouragement to this heartbroken driver. We could not hear what was being said at the time but afterward it was revealed how the father spoke about some of the setbacks his own son Lewis experienced in F1 early in his career. It was touching to see the efforts Lewis Hamilton's father went to in order to console this new driver in a time of deep need.

There are so many people in life right now who are experiencing deep needs and could benefit from some consoling and encouragement. I saw an example of this in a

store recently. A mother with two young children was trying to pick up chocolate bars laying on the floor that they had accidentally knocked over from a store display. Two employees saw what had happened but just kept talking with one another leaving the mother to desperately try to clean up the mess. Another employee who was just leaving for the day saw this mother in need of help, so she stopped to assist in picking up the remaining chocolate bars and reset the display. The mother was so thankful to this employee who stopped to help in her time of need. What Lewis Hamilton's father did on the weekend, and what this employee did as well reminded me of the parable Jesus told of acts of compassion and mercy He would like to see more people doing. [Read more](#)

March 13 - Which One Are We?

Coral and I went to the movies a couple of weeks ago and during the pre-show a public service announcement was shown that I had not seen in years. Apparently, etiquette amongst movie goers has been on the decline of late. Cineplex was beginning to hear a lot of complaints from their customers about movie goers texting on their phones or talking in loud voices during the show. Naturally this can be very disruptive to those customers who have paid good money to enjoy the experience. Cineplex decided in December to once again show a public service announcement encouraging people not to be a "Tommy Texter", or "Sally Soundtrack", or "Suzie Seat Kicker" during the movie.

A group of teenagers happened to be seated a few rows in front of us while this public service announcement was being played on the screen. One of the boys was talking out loud during the playing of it, and one of the girls was texting on her phone. Unfortunately, these two teenagers did not recognize they were doing the very things this public service announcement was discouraging patrons from doing so everybody could enjoy the movie.

A few minutes into the movie a couple who was sitting in front of this group of teenagers got up and moved down several rows to try to get away from hearing them talk out loud. About 10 minutes into the movie the teenage girl pulled out her phone and saw a text. She turned to her friends and said in a loud voice she had to leave because her mom was picking her up.

When she left, the texting stopped but the talking did not. The teenage boys got up and joined another group in the back row and continued talking out loud. We tried to tune out their voices, but it was hard not to be distracted by it. If "Tommy Texter" and "Sally Soundtrack" had listened to the public service announcement and realized it was referring to them, it would have been a more enjoyable experience for everyone.

This experience at the movie theater reminded me how sometimes we do not identify ourselves or our behaviour with something that is being taught. This truth often comes out in stories we read in the Bible. One story where this is evident is in Jesus' telling of the **"Parable of the Four Soils."** [Read more](#)

March 5 - Becoming More *Jeopardy*- Than *Wheel*-Minded

Over the years I have been more of a *Wheel of Fortune* watcher than *Jeopardy*. One of the reasons why I drew more to *Wheel of Fortune* is because it is something I would watch together with my dad each night before he passed away. Another reason for my preference had to do with my ability to solve the puzzles. Most times I was able to solve the puzzle before it was revealed.

It just wasn't on the television version that I was able to do this. My boss in the 90's installed a version of it on our work computer. The computer was situated in my office so he would come in at times during lunch and play it while I worked at my desk. Naturally I would take a few glances at the computer monitor to see if I could solve the puzzle before him. I always wished I could have been a contestant on *Wheel of Fortune*. I think I would have done quite well as long as the wheel did not land on bankrupt each time.

I did not *Jeopardy* too much because I was so bad at it. If the categories had to do with sports or the Bible, then I had a good chance at answering it properly, but rarely did I know the answer to other spots on the board.

Recently I have started watching *Pop Culture Jeopardy* and *Celebrity Jeopardy* with my daughter. I am enjoying watching these versions of the popular game show because I actually have a better success rate at answering the questions. (Okay, phrasing the answer in the form of a question). I have to admit that my daughter has a better rate than I do in coming up with the answers, but it is still fun to play along with her.

I notice at times when we watch these versions of *Jeopardy* sometimes one of us knows the proper response but hesitates in saying it, and other times we may say after hearing the answer, "I should have known that." I know many people are avid watchers of both *Wheel of Fortune* and *Jeopardy*. We actually toured the set of *Jeopardy* in 2018 but were unable to see the *Wheel of Fortune* studio because they were filming that day.

As I thought about the process in *Jeopardy* of coming up with the answers and phrasing them as questions, it made me begin to think of how we approach this same process with Jesus. [Read more](#)

February 26 - 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 barbecue. 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. [Read more](#)

February 20 - Ever Changing Regulations

On Friday afternoon I stopped into the TD Bank to pay the Receiver General amount for our church. I have been doing this once a month for the past ten years and never experienced any difficulty. On Friday I was told I could no longer be the one who did this unless a new form was completed by the signing authorities at the church. The branch manager informed me it is a new regulation that had just been implemented due to problems associated with money laundering. I commented to him how difficult it must be for them to keep up with all the changes in regulations. He looked at me and said, "They are constant."

Later that afternoon I was at a CIBC branch to make a deposit for an individual I am the caregiver for. Once again, I found myself in discussions with a manager explaining new forms were needed in order for me to do this. These new forms would require me to obtain a doctor's note, then make a follow up appointment with the manager, and after that arrange for a phone call between the person I am the caregiver for and the bank manager. I explained some of the challenges that would be involved in arranging all of this, but the manager said this was all necessary due to recent changes with banking regulations. I probably spent 90 minutes in total on Friday afternoon talking with the bank managers about these new regulations required in order to do the

banking with them moving forward. Even after I get all the necessary paperwork completed, it would not surprise me if new regulations come in and I will be doing this all over again.

All of these changes in regulations I experienced on Friday got me thinking about God's Commandments. God provided the Israelites with His Ten Commandments right after He entered into a covenant relationship with them at Mt. Sinai. [Read more](#)

February 13 - Reminded of the Journey

Last Saturday I had the honour to officiate the funeral for one of my church members. Usually at a funeral we take time to remember the journey we have had with the deceased, but on Saturday, I found myself also reminded of the journey God has led me on after spotting some familiar faces from my past in attendance.

Before the service I spotted a person who attended Brock University at the same time I did forty years ago. I was studying to become an accountant back then and had no idea at the time that God would eventually call me to become a minister. I don't know if he recognized me or not after all these years when I officiated the service. My Grade 2 teacher was also in attendance at this funeral, and I had the chance to talk with her afterward. She said to me, "I can't believe you stood up there and led the service. You were such a quiet and shy kid in my class." She was not wrong. I shared with her how I was just as shy and quiet when I first got my call from God to become a minister, but He has given me the gifts to now be able to do this. Then I had the chance to speak to the father of somebody I went to high school with. I was surprised to learn from the father that his son is now living and working in France. Normally at a funeral I am reminded of the journey I have had with the deceased, but on Saturday, God used these people to point out the journey He has been leading me on.

Funerals can be one opportunity God will use to remind us of the journey He has been leading us and others on. Another means by which God will remind us about the journeys He has taken people on happens when we read stories in the Bible. On Monday morning while reading my Bible I was reminded of the journey on which God took Ezra and many Jews who had been living in exile. [Read more](#)

February 6 - It Helps Change Our Perspective

Sometimes we need reminding that we are not the only person going through a busy or difficult stretch in life. Last week God found an opportunity to remind me I am not the only busy pastor serving Him. I was in correspondence with another minister on Friday about some documents that needed to be reviewed by him as soon as possible. He acknowledged receiving the documents but replied, "I will not be able to look at them before Monday because I have a funeral on Saturday, two services on Sunday morning, and then two more services on Sunday afternoon at area nursing homes."

I have a busy life at times as a pastor, too, not only looking after my own congregation but three others in Brantford. I also handle the administrative tasks for our Presbytery body. On top of this my wife and I are in a care-giving situation for two elderly people. Sandwiched in between all of this is keeping track of my teenage daughter's school, work, and basketball schedules. At times the busyness that comes with all of this can make me feel overwhelmed. However, when I saw this minister's busy schedule over the weekend, I no longer bemoaned about my own. I was grateful that my weekend was far less busy than his.

Sometimes we need this perspective or reminder that others are going through the same things we are or have it even worse. When we are going through stressful seasons and hardships, we often feel sorry for ourselves and think we are the only person going through these ordeals. [Read more](#)

January 30 - Life Is Not Always Fair

God had a purpose for me to be at Tim Hortons on Saturday morning at a certain time, but I did not know this at first. Around 8:30 on Saturday morning I realized that I had left something at church the previous Sunday that I needed so I made a quick trip to get it. I hadn't had my morning coffee when I left the house, so I decided to stop into Tim Hortons and get one to enjoy on the way. When I walked out with my coffee, little did I know that God would have me return an hour later.

On the car ride home from the church I received a text from my daughter requesting that I bring her back a coffee. How could I say no to such a request, and it gave me the perfect excuse to go in and get a second coffee for myself that morning. When I entered Tims the second time, I spotted a man that I run into regularly sitting in the corner reading his book while sipping on his coffee.

After grabbing my two coffees I went over to his booth to say hello and ask how he was doing. I was caught by surprise when he replied, "Well to be honest not very well. I saw my doctor this week and he told me I only have six months to live." I was aware that he was having health problems, but I did not realize it was this dire. I told him how sorry I was, and we spent the next 5-10 minutes talking about this reality he is facing. One of the things we spent time discussing was how unfair life can be at times. [Read more](#)

January 23 - When We Need to Be Lifted Up

This past week while I was waiting in line with another customer at Tim Hortons one of the regular employees saw me, smiled and waved. The other customer standing beside me took notice of this. At first, she said nothing, and then she turned to me and asked if they were waving at her. Before I could respond the employee said, "**No, I was waving at him. He is a ray of sunshine to me and always makes me smile.**"

I have been described in many ways before and not all of them have been positive. This was the first time I can recall somebody ever referring to me as being a "ray of sunshine." As I have shared in some of my previous messages, I just try to be personal and friendly in my interactions with the employees there. Many times, they are the ones who lift me up and make me smile when they wave at me or make a special effort to have my coffee ready even before I order it.

When I got home and shared with my wife what this employee said about me, she smiled, nodded her head and rolled her eyes because she knows me better than anyone else. Naturally I had to share this with my daughter too. Little did I know at the time I shared this with her, that she would use it the next time she wanted something from Tims. On Saturday my daughter was working a 9-hour shift so we told her before she left that we would bring her a coffee at some point. When she was ready for us to bring it, she messaged us and said, "I would like a Cold Brew coffee, but tell dad to use some of his *ray of sunshine* ways to encourage them not to put too much ice in it." Her comment made me laugh and lifted me up on Saturday night.

This interaction from last week got me thinking about how we all need to be lifted up by somebody at times. No matter how strong we may be physically, emotionally, or spiritually, life's circumstances and daily challenges have a way of draining us. [Read more](#)

January 15 - Knowing Where We Are Going

This past weekend my daughter's basketball team played games on Saturday and Sunday at the Meridian Center in Pelham. We had never played at this venue in my previous years coaching basketball, so I needed to look up the directions ahead of time. Since Pelham is near St. Catharines where I went to university, I knew most of the route but I needed to jot down on paper the turnoffs I would need to take after passing the university. My wife also put the venue's address into our GPS in case we were diverted by accidents, or my notes were not accurate.

As we drove to Pelham on Saturday, it was slow going in portions due to the snow that had fallen the night before. I had to use my windshield wiper fluid quite a bit just to see. About halfway there my wife lost the GPS signal on her phone. Naturally there was some anxiousness on our part knowing we were now relying only on my written directions in order to get there. Added to our anxiety now that the GPS was not working, was not knowing for sure how much longer it would take for us to arrive. Thankfully the directions I had written down were accurate and we arrived at the venue about 40 minutes before the game started.

On Sunday morning Nadine asked me if I needed her to put the directions into the GPS once again, but I did not need them because I knew exactly where I was going this time. As I drove to Pelham on Sunday morning, I was very conscious of the difference with respect to my emotions from the day before. Because I knew exactly where I was going this time, I found myself so much more relaxed and I experienced

no feelings of anxiousness at all. In fact on Sunday, we arrived in Pelham early enough that I was able to stop at a nearby Tim Hortons to get my favorite coffee before the game. Time did not allow me to make this stop on Saturday because of worrying whether we would arrive at the venue on time.

My travels over the weekend reminded me how we experience very different emotions when we know where we are going as opposed to when we do not. This got me thinking how Jesus wanted to assure us both emotionally and spiritually by sharing with us the directions to heaven so that we can be there with Him one day. [Read more](#)

January 9 - Making it Even Better

I usually make Nadine oatmeal for breakfast on Sunday mornings before we head off to church. When I make it for her, I begin by measuring out a half cup of water and placing it in a pot on the stove. After the water comes to a boil, I add the oatmeal and stir it until it is all moist. After removing it from the stove, I drizzle some honey on it, followed by a few sprinkles of cinnamon and top it with some sliced bananas. After pouring a bit of milk on it, I bring out the brown sugar and let Nadine decide how much she wants to put on.

I have offered many times to make this for my daughter some mornings but she always refuses claiming I do not make it as good as she does. Over Christmas I took the opportunity to watch my daughter make oatmeal for herself. She started off by pouring my Soya milk into the pot on the stove instead of water. She then added honey to the milk followed by some chia seeds. Next, she added the oatmeal before turning the burner on a low setting and letting it cook slowly for ten minutes or so. Once it was done, she put it in a bowl and topped it with her favourite fruits and a few chocolate chips for added measure.

The very next Sunday I decided to make Nadine's oatmeal using my daughter's method. When I asked Nadine afterward how it tasted, she replied it was so much moister and better done this way. Moving forward, I will be using my daughter's method of making the oatmeal for Nadine each Sunday morning.

It did not come as a surprise to me that Nadine preferred the oatmeal made with milk as opposed to water. It reminded me how much better hot chocolate tastes when I make it with milk as opposed to just water. Sometimes making a few changes like this can make something we like to eat so much better. This can also be the case when it comes to matters of faith. One person that offered advice to believers in order to make their faith even better was the apostle, Peter.

One of the problems Peter saw early Christians struggling with was their inability to grow and mature in their relationship with Christ. [Read more](#)

January 1 - Focusing on Prevention

I was listening on the radio on Monday morning as I drove to Tims to get my coffee to the conversation the hosts were having about the World Junior Hockey game played the night before between Germany and Canada. Even though Canada won 3-0, the hosts were commenting how our players have not been winning games in convincing fashion like they have in previous years. This concern they were expressing about the Canadian team was not only because of the score against Germany but also a result of the shoot out loss a few days earlier to Latvia. The one host commented on how he knows the coach for Canada very well and revealed that his teams tend to focus on goal prevention as opposed to scoring. He then warned those listening like myself to be prepared for some low scoring, nail-biter games moving forward in this tournament due to this coach's focus on goal prevention.

When the one host finished saying this, the other one replied, "I blame Blue Jays GM Ross Atkins for this. We know how much he has been focused on run prevention and that it has come at the expense of the Blue Jays scoring themselves. Now his strategy is spilling over into our game of hockey." I laughed after he said this because I often hear Blue Jays fans complain about this whenever I listen to "Jays' Talk" on the radio after games.

Goal and run prevention may have been the main point of discussion on the radio Monday morning, but it was getting my attention when I returned home too. I wrote in my message last week how we were noticing some critters scurrying around in the crawl space between our first and second floors. A wildlife removal company came on Friday to do an inspection and found two small openings from the outside where the mice were getting in.

On Monday morning this contractor was back at my house to put on "gate traps" at these two openings that would allow any mice in our crawl space to exit but not get back in. The contractor also ran silicone completely around the house between the brick and our siding to prevent mice from trying to create any new holes to enter inside. Once we stop hearing evidence of mice still up in our crawl space, the company will come back to remove these gate traps and fix the two holes. The theme on Monday morning for me while driving for my coffee and returning back home was definitely on prevention.

When I sat down at my computer later Monday to write this message, naturally my mind was still focusing on prevention. [Read more](#)