

NEVER TIRE OF THIS

I shared in my mid-week message a few weeks ago how the tire on my one car split while I was in Caledonia, and I needed to remain patient as I waited for a tow truck to arrive. I knew the tires on my car were not in great condition and that the day was coming soon when I would have to open my wallet and splurge for new ones. I waited until last week to make the purchase so that I could put on a new set of snow tires.

When I arrived to have the new set installed, there was a delivery truck at one of the bays unloading an order of tires. I watched as each tire rolled off the truck and bounced on the ground like a basketball toward the owner. As each tire came toward him the owner gave it a slight tap so that it would continue on in the direction of his two employees standing behind him who would then grab them and pile them up one on top of the other. I was quite impressed with the system they had devised for unloading tires.

What I was not aware of until afterward was that the owner was keeping a count in his head not only of the number of tires being unloaded but what size each was. As soon as the last tire came off the truck, the owner was aware immediately that three tires were missing from the order and which size they were. He called the driver over and pointed out on the packing slip which tires were missing on the delivery truck. I asked the owner afterward if it was common for him to experience this with his shipments. He said to me, "Unfortunately in my business it is. That is why I need to count!" A short time later I counted four new snow tires on my car and how much came out of my bank as a result.

That same day I discovered how reliable and trustworthy my new tires were. While I was driving my daughter to work that afternoon, a delivery truck pulled out in front of me from a side street without looking. I had to quickly slam on my brakes in order to avoid colliding with him. It was a good test of these new tires as they gripped the road well and helped me to come to a stop before colliding with the other vehicle. The other driver realized he was in the wrong and waived to acknowledge the fact before driving off. My daughter and I both commented afterward that at least we now know we have reliable tires.

I imagine many of us are thinking about getting our snow tires put on soon now that we have "fallen back" with the time change. All of my focus on tires last week, and the two lessons I came away with respect to counting and reliability, got me thinking about the time when Jesus taught these insights to His disciples in the miracle of the loaves and fishes. The story starts off with us learning how Jesus spent the afternoon in a remote place teaching a large crowd of people. Because it was getting late in the afternoon, and due to the area being so remote, the disciples encouraged Jesus to send the crowds away to the nearby towns and villages so they could purchase something to eat before it got too late.

Jesus tested His disciples in this moment by telling them to be the ones to feed the crowd. The disciples did some counting, and they soon realized they would have to work for months in order to have enough food to feed the crowd of 5,000 men and likely another 10,000-15,000 women and children. Jesus then directed them to count how much bread they had. It did not take long for them to count that they only had 5 loaves and 2 fish to feed this large crowd with.

The one thing the disciples failed to include in all of their counting was Jesus' presence with them and His power to help. After having the disciples focus on counting, Jesus decided it was time to show them just how dependable and reliable He is. Jesus had the crowd sit in groups before blessing the loaves and fish, and having the food distributed. Everyone ate as much as they wanted and afterward the disciples collected 12 baskets of leftovers. Jesus taught the disciples as well as us in this miracle the importance of ***never leaving Jesus out of the equation*** in counting what we have and how we can rely and depend on Him no matter how big the challenge before us is.

I will be travelling with new winter tires on my car to navigate this winter season of driving. I can count on them already to be reliable and dependable. No matter what season I am entering, I can count on Jesus in the same way.

Keep safe and God bless,

Pastor Dean