

SHE DID NOT RECOGNIZE ME

Two Saturdays ago, I was helping my next-door neighbor cut some branches on our properties. I have shared in my messages before how this neighbour is a Montreal Canadiens fan. I must have felt brave that Saturday as I decided to wear my Toronto Maple Leafs hat while he had a chainsaw in his hand. The neighbour across the street recognized the irony of a Leafs fan working with a Canadiens one and even mentioned I should put it in a sermon. I decided to put it into a mid-week message instead.

Another neighbour down the road happened to be walking by as we were working out front. This person recognized my neighbour right away but did not recognize me. My neighbor had to tell her who I was. She apologized for not recognizing me and said, **“I guess it is because you are not with your dog at the moment.”** This was not the first time that one of my neighbors could only recognize me in connection with my dog Daisy. Last fall a neighbour stopped his car to talk to me while I was raking leaves out front. He said, **“I just found out you are a pastor. I told my neighbour that you are a pastor, but he did not recognize who I was talking about until I said, ‘The person who walks that small white dog past our places every day.’”**

It is a bit humbling to know that I am only recognized by some people in my neighborhood if Daisy is with me. I have experienced this most of my life when I think about it. My mother was well known in the education system in Brantford. For the longest time people would recognize me as June's son. I experience the same thing when it comes to my wife Nadine. Often times people recognize me as her other half. I sometimes wonder why they never recognize me as "Nadine's better half?" I experience the same thing with my daughter, too. I remember the day when I walked into a sleep center to pick up my CPAP machine, and the person at the front desk recognized me right away by saying, **“You are Coral's dad! I recognize you from cheering for her in the stands at basketball.”**

Perhaps we have all had similar experiences when it is only because of somebody we are closely connected with that we are recognized. As believers, we are to be closely connected with Jesus, but do people recognize that we have spent time with Him by noticing some change or difference in us? The Israelites back in Moses' time would quickly recognize whenever he had spent time with the Lord. They would see a radiant glow on Moses' face. In the case of Zacchaeus, the change people noticed after he spent time with Jesus was

the difference in his character and actions. Zacchaeus was not very well liked amongst his fellow Israelites because he acted dishonestly in his position as a tax collector. Zacchaeus happened to be in the crowd the day when Jesus entered into Jericho and due to his small stature, he climbed a sycamore tree to catch a glimpse of Him. Zacchaeus was not only spotted by Jesus but called down and asked if he would host Christ in his home.

How long Zacchaeus hosted Jesus we are not told, but we do learn about the change that was brought about in him as a result. Zacchaeus came out of his home afterward and said, **“I will give half my wealth to the poor, Lord, and if I have cheated people on their taxes, I will give them back four times as much. Jesus responded, ‘Salvation has come to this home today, for this man has shown himself to be a true son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek and save those who are lost.’ (Luke 19: 8-10)** What a change we see in this once dishonest tax collector, after he spent time with Jesus.

As we see from the examples of Moses and Zacchaeus, people should recognize that we have been with our Lord based on our expressions and outward actions. A question we should be pondering is whether people are indeed noticing?

- **Do people notice it in the expressions on our faces when we have been with Jesus worshipping Him on the Sabbath?**
- **Do people notice a sense of peace in us after we have spent time with the Lord in prayer?**
- **Do people recognize our connection and relationship with Jesus based on how we are living our lives for Him?**
- **Is Jesus seeing these changes in us after we spent time with Him like He saw in Zacchaeus?**

We are given an incredible gift as believers to be able to spend time with Jesus at any time. Let's make sure we take full advantage of this gift and use these times to **let Him make changes in us** so that others will know our close connection with the Lord. And, if you happen to be driving down my street and see somebody wearing a Leafs hat, holding a small white dog on a leash, drinking a large Tim Horton's coffee while standing next to a chainsaw-holding Montreal Canadiens fan, it is a good chance you will recognize it is me.

Keep safe and God bless,
Pastor Dean