

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. This reminder came after reading **Joshua 13:1**:

When Joshua was an old man, the Lord said to him, "You are growing old, and much land remains to be conquered."

Joshua was somewhere between 85 to 100 years old at this time, but God still had work for him to do despite his age. This passage reminded me how God asked Noah to build the ark when he was 500 years old and he did not

complete it until the age of 600. Both of these passages served to remind me that we never retire no matter what age we are when it comes to serving God. Then I found God reminding me that when it comes to the future, we can never imagine all that He has in store for us. He led me to read what Paul wrote in **1 Corinthians 2:9**:

No eye has seen, no ear has heard, and no mind has imagined what God has prepared for those who love Him.

Paul shared with his readers that we cannot imagine everything that God has in store for us, both in this life and for eternity. We do know however from Scripture that when it comes to our future God will create a new heaven and a new earth, and we will live with Him forever. Knowing about this wonderful future that awaits us in eternity gives us the hope and courage we need to face our futures here on earth moving forward:

- assured this world is not spinning in futility, but rather God is in complete control moving the future toward the specific point of Christ's return,
- comforted knowing the realities of this world are not all that there is, but the best is yet to come,
- understanding that the Holy Spirit will encourage, comfort, and counsel us as we face our realities by instilling a deep and lasting peace in our hearts regardless of our circumstances.

Staring into my future as I did on Monday morning served as a reminder to me that even if I retire at age 65, I will continue to serve my Heavenly Father until He calls me home. It also reminded me that by focusing on the promises of the future, I can rest assured because God is in complete control. I hope each one of us takes a moment like I did on Monday morning to look into our future so that we can come away committed to on-going service and assured that our futures are well placed believing and trusting in our Lord.

Looking into my future did not end on Monday morning. That afternoon I talked with a minister who will be retiring in September. His countdown is just over 100 days according to him. I wished him well, and he did the same for me with 4 years and 3 months to go.

Keep safe and God bless

Pastor Dean