

THERE ONE DAY, BUT NOT ANOTHER

I always look forward to interacting with some of the staff at Tim Hortons whenever I stop in for my large double-double. Some of the staff I have come to know have been there for several years while others have only worked there for a short time. I try to interact with all the staff but naturally I have got to know some better than others.

Over the past five years I have gotten to know one of the employees who is often there when I stop in for my morning coffee. I always ask her about her son who plays baseball and will be attending high school in the fall. We have developed such a good connection over the years that she often refers to me as her favorite customer. I did not see her at all whenever I stopped in last week and thought she might be off on holidays. I asked one of the employees if this was the case but was surprised to learn that she had quit a week earlier.

I was shocked to say the least. Often when an employee I have come to know well there is about to leave, they tell me. I try to make an effort on their final day to wish them well and thank them for serving me over the years. As I left that day with a large double-double in my hands I was reminded of the reality of how some people may be in our lives one day, but not the next.

I was also reminded of this truth in the weeks leading up to our church's recent garage sale. At times I would see some of my congregation members consider buying an item prior to the sale but then hesitate to do so. When I would ask them about it afterwards, they would often say, "If I am meant to have it, it will still be here the next time I come." While I can understand that line of thinking, sometimes what the person saw there at that moment was not there when they returned. That was the case with one item from a year earlier that one of my members had her eye on. She did not buy it at the time but came back a week later and asked me where it was. I had to sheepishly admit I bought it myself during the week.

It is not only people and items that can be there one day, but not the next. Opportunities for us to show God's love can follow this pattern too. I was reminded of this on the morning I wrote this message. I happened to be coming out of Sobeys with some groceries in hand when I saw a man on a motorized scooter trying to put some items in his trunk. I could have walked by with my hands full, but I stopped instead and asked if he would like my help. He was thankful for the offer and took me up on it. I had the opportunity to

show Christ-like love in that moment. If I had thought to myself, this opportunity will be there some other time when my hands are not full, I would have missed out on serving the Lord in that moment.

All of these situations reminded me how important it is to show appreciation and care toward others every day, and to take advantage of opportunities we may have when they come our way. We may think there is always another day when we can do these things, but that may not always be the case. This truth also comes into play with respect to spiritual matters. We see this in Jesus' teachings about the importance of remaining watchful and being prepared for His second coming. He described the day of His second coming in this manner: **Two men will be working together in the field; one will be taken, the other left. Two women will be grinding flour at the mill; one will be taken, the other left. (Matthew 24:40)**

Jesus then went on to tell three parables to teach further what it means to be ready for His return and how we as believers should live each day knowing we might be here one day but not the next. In the parable of the ten bridesmaids (**Matthew 25:1-13**), Jesus taught how each person is responsible for his or her spiritual condition by making the decision to put their trust and belief in Him before He returns. In the parable of the three servants (**Matthew 25:14-30**), Jesus taught the importance of us using the gifts He has entrusted to us faithfully every day. Finally, in the parable of the sheep and goats (**Matthew 25:31-46**), Jesus stressed the importance of living each day serving and showing love to others. These three lessons serve as a reminder for us of how we should approach each day for the Lord. By approaching each day doing these three things, we will be showing our love for the Lord, our desire to use our gifts faithfully, and our willingness to show Christ-like love toward others when opportunities present themselves to us.

I was reminded this week that when it comes to people or situations, they may be there for us one day but not the next. I may not see this employee that I enjoyed getting to know so much over the years but that won't stop me from stopping into Tim Hortons tomorrow or the next day, so I can appreciate my large double-double. If Jesus happens to come tomorrow maybe I should stop in two or three times today for coffee.

Keep safe and God bless,

Pastor Dean