

BECAUSE I ASKED

Last week I was asked if I would offer pastoral support and comfort to a person who has been struggling to find hope. A time was arranged for the two of us to speak by phone around 8:00 p.m. one night. We had never met before so I was a bit anxious wondering how the conversation would go. Sometimes in pastoral care situations it takes time to develop trust before somebody is willing to openly share their feelings. I was also feeling anxious about this call because the situation causing this person to struggle with hope was something I had not encountered very often in my twenty plus years of ministry.

Because of my anxiousness I decided to pray asking God to give me the right words to say in order to provide this person with some much-needed hope. Part of this prayer was asking Him to use me as a vessel in order to share what He wanted said to this person. I felt more assured after praying and as 8:00 p.m. approached I went outside and sat awaiting the person to call me. This person contacted me right on time.

I started the conversation by asking questions in order to get a better understanding of what this person has been feeling. About 5-10 minutes into our conversation a bunny rabbit suddenly appeared and came to a stop right between my feet. We get a lot of rabbits around our place. Usually, they stay still and if I happen to approach closer, they will hop off. This bunny did not seem to be afraid or anxious by my presence. After a few minutes I moved from the side of my house to the front while still talking on the phone.

Sure enough, this bunny followed me to the front of the house. As the conversation continued the evening light turned into darkness. Once again, even as it became darker, this bunny stayed within three to four feet of me at all times. The conversation lasted for about 75 minutes in total. A lot of sharing was done during that time. I was able to offer this person some suggestions on how to maintain hope and strength in difficult times.

Once we disconnected, I looked down at the bunny. It had been with me almost the entire time of the conversation. Now that the conversation was over it was time for me to head back into the house. As soon as I turned to walk into the house, the bunny went on its way around the opposite side into my

neighbour's back yard. Five days have passed since that night. I have been outside many times since that night making phone calls and working around the yard. I have seen a couple of other rabbits since but not this same bunny. After I got off the phone, I shared with Nadine about what this bunny did. We both saw it as God's way of letting me know He was there to relieve me of any anxiety and help me share the right words to offer comfort and hope.

As I reflected upon this incident and all that transpired it made me think about these words from Jesus in His Sermon on the Mount:

Keep on asking, and you will receive what you ask for. Keep on seeking, and you will find. Keep on knocking, and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks, receives. Everyone who seeks, finds. And to everyone who knocks, the door will be opened.

(Matthew 7: 7-8)

That night began with asking God to give me the right words to share with this person needing to find hope. I truly felt I received what I asked for because throughout the conversation I sensed God's Spirit guiding me into what to ask and say. I was also seeking God's presence to be with me in that conversation. He sought me out by sending that bunny to be right with me the entire time. I have never experienced anything like that before. I know that I was also knocking on heaven's door that night seeking God's help to open the way for a meaningful conversation to transpire with this person. Asking, seeking, and knocking were all aspects of my prayer request that night. All three aspects were answered by God in a way that had His hand all over it.

I share this story because we may find ourselves in a similar situation when somebody wants to speak to us about an issue they are struggling with and are in need of hope. In these situations, we can sometimes be afraid that we might say the wrong thing and make matters worse for that person. We need to remember it takes a lot of courage on that person's part to ask us to listen. If this situation should ever arise for us, hopefully we will learn from my example by taking Jesus up on His advice to keep asking, seeking, and knocking. By so doing, may we experience the same thing I did that night. By asking for God to give us the right words to share, we will find the Holy Spirit directing our

conversation in ways we could never do on our own. By seeking, may we see through the eyes of faith God's presence in some special way with us. By knocking on heaven's door for help, may we see how God has opened the way to helping us and that other person in that moment.

Sometimes we need reminders through stories like I am sharing how God desires to help us in the most amazing of ways regardless of the situation or need we are asking about. He did that for me last week. I sense He did the same for the person I talked with during the conversation. I do not know if God revealed Himself in some special way to the other person, but He certainly did with me by having the bunny stay right beside me the entire time. Just like the bunny I guess I better hop off to the next task on my list.

Keep Safe and God Bless

Pastor Dean