

BEST SIGNS

I saw a sign this Mother's Day weekend that put a smile on my face. This sign was not put up by a business but rather by a 6-year-old girl who lives two doors down from us. The sign was not done in letters on a billboard, but in chalk at the end of her driveway. The words were not elaborate but quite simple "HAPPY MOTHER'S DAY". Four times a day I would walk by the sign done in chalk at the end of the driveway and smile each time. I envisioned the pride and joy the 6-year-old girl had doing this sign. I thought as well of the smile on the mother's face each time she saw the sign at the end of her driveway. I thought about moms in our neighbourhood out for a walk seeing this sign and being uplifted. It was a simple sign done in chalk, but with such love. I hope this little girl does the same sign for Father's Day as she did for her mom this weekend.

There are many signs to be seen around town right now due to the Sign War that is happening. Brantford businesses began this Sign War Challenge as a way to uplift people during the pandemic and to have some fun. Places participating in this "Sign War" come up with catchy phrases about themselves and challenge others on their signs. The Sign War has made its way out to Mount Pleasant. Our church was the first to start this challenge last week when we posted this message on our sign out front:

*No Sign War Here:
We're Too Pleasant
#signwars*

It didn't take long for other groups in the village to get in on the Sign Wars. By the weekend Devlin's, the fire station and Mount Pleasant School all had gotten into this. On Sunday we saw that the Mount Pleasant Fire Station had challenged Devlin's with the message:

*Hey Devlin's Don't Get Fired Up
But We Think Our Wings Are Better*

This "sign war" challenge is a fun distraction and community builder during this pandemic that has required us to social distance. Prior to Covid-19 sometimes when you would watch sporting events like football or baseball you would see spectators in the stands display signs. One of the signs you would sometimes see held up was 3:16 or John 3:16.

Naturally when we see 3:16, we think immediately of Jesus' words to Nicodemus in John 3:16

For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, and whoever believes in him will not perish, but have eternal life.

The message of the Good News is so wonderfully reflected in this passage. I think the words from 3:16 needs to be on a sign front and visible for us during this pandemic. The words in this verse of Scripture are helpful to us in so many ways as we go through our current reality:

- 1) They remind us each day just how much God loves us.
- 2) They remind us that God's love is not static or self-centered and He is active and reaching out to us.
- 3) They remind us that God is holding nothing back in His giving to us by the fact He even gave us His Son to die for our sins.
- 4) They remind us to keep believing in Jesus and His promises to us.
- 5) They remind us that we don't have to fear death with all the death we are seeing in this pandemic.
- 6) They remind us that it won't be like this in our eternal home in Heaven where there will be no sickness, disease, death or sin.

The words found in John 3:16 would be great to be on signs around town right now. The words would be a source of "Good News", hope and inspiration in a time when we all need these things. We may not see these words on signs except for at some churches. We don't need a sign to remind us of the promises and truths that can be found in this passage. Many of us have committed these words to our heart and memory. If you haven't yet, then mark John 3:16 in your Bible for quick reference. Let's bless ourselves in the midst of this pandemic each day by slowly saying the words at some point. As you do this, no matter the case numbers, or whether we are in lockdown or not, we will be blessed with the Good News:

- *God's love for us is amazing*
- *That Jesus died for our sins is amazing*
- *Trusting Jesus is amazing*
- *We have nothing to fear because of our faith and God's grace.*
- *One day it will be amazing to be in our eternal home in Heaven.*

During this time frame when "Sign Wars" are bringing joy during this pandemic may a popular sign pre-pandemic 3:16, be our sign of Good News and Hope.

By the way, if the Fire Station challenges us back, I wonder what they would think of this response:

Hey Fire Fighters, try putting out our burning bush.

Keep Safe, God Bless,

Pastor Dean