

REMINDERS OF BEING CANADIAN AND BELIEVERS

Right after church on Sunday the snow started falling very quickly for a few hours. While I was shovelling my driveway on Sunday afternoon a lady walked by out for her daily walk. I have seen her many times before, but I do not know her name because we usually greet each other with a smile or hello and keep going. I do not know if the snow put her in a good mood, but this time after I said hello, she stopped for a short conversation.

She started off by saying, "Isn't it great that it is snowing. This is Canada we should expect snow at this time of year." Remember this comment came from the one who did not have a shovel in their hand at the moment. I smiled and replied that it is always so pretty to see the snow on the trees and ground, but how I do not like it when it affects driving. I thought she might agree with what I said, but instead she replied, "It's Canada! We Canadians should be good at driving in the snow!" I do not know if she drives or not, but that very afternoon the 403 was backed up due to several accidents as a result of the wintry conditions.

After she made this comment, she continued on with her walk down a snow-covered road on a Sunday afternoon in Canada. I still had shovelling to do after our conversation, and as I continued, I began to think more about her comments how we do have certain expectations when it comes to being Canadian and experiencing winters. I began thinking about how people from the United States or other countries view Canadians and life here. Canadians are sometimes portrayed as:

- using the word "Eh" a lot in our vocabulary,
- being very polite and kind,
- being very good at playing hockey (I wish the Toronto Maple Leafs would remember that some nights),
- having a love for maple syrup.

These are just some of the ways people portray Canadians. My reflections while shovelling did not stop with just how people perceive these character traits we may have as Canadians. As I was finishing up, I began thinking about some of the **traits that should describe us as believers**, too. We just

have to look at the way Jesus lived to know the **qualities we should have** as believers. The apostle Peter had the privilege to watch Jesus on a consistent basis for three years. He was in a unique position to see the qualities that allowed Jesus to touch so many lives in a positive way. As a result, Peter was very qualified to share in one of his letters the following six key elements that should characterize and be evident in the way a believer lives his/her life:

Finally, all of you should be of one mind. Sympathize with each other. Love each other as brothers and sisters. Be tender-hearted and keep a humble attitude. Don't repay evil for evil. Don't retaliate with insults when people insult you. Instead, pay them back with a blessing. That is what God has called you to do, and He will bless you for it.

(1 Peter 3: 8-9)

According to Peter, the six elements that should reflect how we live as Christians include:

1. Being of one mind by pursuing the same goals,
2. Being sympathetic and responsive to other's needs,
3. Being loving of others and treating them as brothers and sisters,
4. Being sensitive and caring,
5. Being humble and willing to encourage one another and rejoice in each other's successes,
6. Being willing to turn the other cheek and respond with a blessing rather than an insult.

These six qualities not only go a long way toward identifying ourselves as Christians to others, but in serving God effectively too. One of the ways God calls believers to serve Him is to follow in His Son's example thereby witnessing to others through these attributes that having a relationship with the Father makes all the difference in this fallen world. Peter reminding us about some of the **qualities we should be witnessing to others as we are living our faith**, provides us with the opportunity to ask ourselves this question: Are people seeing any selfishness, division, lack of compassion and care, or pride in how we are living, or do they clearly observe the six attributes Peter mentions above?

Sometimes we can drift away from displaying some of these elements of a believer in our day to day walk with the Lord. If we are missing any of these qualities, **may we seek God's help to make the necessary changes so that our lives can be a witness to others that He is real, and that having faith in Him truly makes all the difference as we live each day in this fallen world.**

On a snowy Sunday afternoon, I was reminded in my conversation with this lady of certain expectations we should have as Canadians in winter. I appreciated her positive view when it comes to experiencing a Canadian winter. I hope I still feel this way as more snow falls upon us this week. I also appreciate how God used the conversation to give me inspiration to remind all of us about the **expectations He has for how we should live our life as believers.** It was another reminder to me how blessed I am to have a relationship with God, and how He keeps reminding me that my faith in Him makes all the difference, even on a snowy Sunday afternoon in Canada.

Keep safe and God Bless

Pastor Dean