

GETTING MY TICKETS

My daughter and I were very excited when we heard that one of our favourite musical groups would be coming to Toronto on tour. Even though the concert is not until October, tickets were to go on sale Friday, March 31st at 10:00 a.m. on Ticketmaster.

It is not an easy process to get tickets for some concerts through Ticketmaster, especially if the group is very popular. Ticketmaster encourages everyone to sign into their accounts with them at least 10 minutes before the tickets go on sale. Once signed in, you are placed in their waiting room before being assigned a random spot in a queue as soon as the sale begins. Your spot in the queue will appear once the sale starts. On a previous attempt I was informed there were 2000 plus people ahead of me in the queue. Once you are in the queue you have to wait and watch as the number of people ahead of you begins to dwindle down. Finally, you will see that you will be the next one to leave the queue and be able to select seats.

Two weeks prior to March 31st I tried this process for another concert my daughter wanted to go see. Once it became my turn, every time I tried to click on certain seats that matched our price limit, I was informed that somebody else beat me to those tickets. I kept trying for 30 minutes but every time I got this same response. Finally, I got a message that all of the tickets had been sold. That was my experience on Ticketmaster on Friday, March 17th.

On March 31st I was informed at 10:00 a.m. that I was in spot 1753 in the queue. It was a stressful few minutes while I watched my spot in the queue get closer to being able to select tickets. I kept wondering if it would be the same experience as I had last time when no tickets were available. Finally, it was my turn. Two tickets popped up that were a great price. I selected them immediately and this time it allowed me to proceed to the checkout and purchase the tickets.

It was 10:15 a.m. when I received confirmation from Ticketmaster that we were going to the concert. I was so excited that I texted my daughter at school to share this good news. I knew she was just switching classes and she was just starting her second period history class when I texted her. She responded back a few minutes later saying, "Dad, you can't hit me with this good news while I

am in history class! How can I celebrate out loud while in class?" She then said, "but I am glad you did because you made my day very happy." It was a very stressful experience for me on that Friday leading up to the 10:00 a.m. ticket sale to say the least. All the stress was worth it to have this concert to look forward to.

My two experiences with trying to buy tickets on Ticketmaster got me appreciating that we don't have to go through this same process when it comes to securing a spot in heaven. Coming through the season of Lent and Easter we have been reminded once again how Jesus paid the price for us to be able to experience life in heaven with Him one day. Jesus pointed out to Nicodemus the process required to inherit eternal life:

**For God loved the world so much that He gave His one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life.
(John 3:16)**

Thankfully we do not have to pay in order to secure a place in heaven. All it takes on our part is to make the choice to simply believe in Jesus as our Lord and Saviour and start following Him.

Jesus also confirmed for us we will not experience the message that all spots are sold out like I did the first time on Ticketmaster. This assurance is found in **John 14: 2:**

There is more than enough room in my Father's home. If this were not so, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you?

Jesus is doing the seat selection for us, so to speak, when it comes to our spot in heaven. Just as a venue might say to us these are the best seats available, He will go a step further and show us how He has prepared the perfect place for us. Jesus has made sure that we do not have to secure a place in heaven in the same stressful and uncertain manner that we may experience when trying to get a seat at a concert through Ticketmaster.

Even though spaces in heaven will not sell out, hopefully we have already secured a place with Jesus in heaven one day by making Him our Lord and Saviour. One day the opportunity to be able to enter into heaven will no longer be available for some. It won't be a result of spots selling out, but rather

because that person waited too long in deciding. This reality is revealed in the parable Jesus told of the ten bridesmaids found in **Matthew 25**. In this parable five of the bridesmaids were unprepared for the bridegroom's return and as a result missed out on experiencing the marriage feast with him. When these five bridesmaids knocked on the door to be let in, they found it locked and were denied entry.

It is not Jesus' desire for anyone to miss out on the place He has prepared for them in heaven, but He makes it very clear there will be a time when the opportunity for us to reserve our space will no longer be available. Just as Jesus promised He would return from the grave, He has said He will one day return on the clouds to judge the world. He made it clear that only the Father in Heaven knows when this time will be. When that time comes, if somebody has not secured their place in heaven by believing in Jesus, it will be too late. Coming out of Easter, let's make this decision now to secure our place in heaven if we have not already done so, instead of delaying. By so doing, we will have something very special to look forward to in experiencing all of the blessings and joys that heaven offers. We will also be more at peace in our daily living knowing that the challenges we are facing here will exist no longer when we get to heaven.

It is so nice in the midst of life's daily grinds to have something to look forward to. My daughter and I are so looking forward to seeing our favourite group in concert. **It is even better to have eternal life with Jesus to look forward to.** It allows us to move forward each day knowing the best is yet to come.

Keep Safe and God Bless

Pastor Dean