

IT KEEPS COMING BACK TO ME

I have had something very interesting happen to me these past two Mondays. Monday is garbage pickup day in our neighbourhood. Usually, I have a couple bags of garbage to put out each week along with our two recycling bins. One of the items of paper I put in my recycling bin that first week was the schedule from last May when my basketball team played in the Provincial Championships in Ottawa. I had been cleaning out some of my basketball files that week and realized I no longer needed to keep it.

The recycling truck came as usual that Monday around noon and emptied both bins. Just after supper I happened to take our dog Daisy for a walk around the block. When I got around the first corner from our house, I noticed a piece of paper on the road. I looked down at it and realized it was the basketball schedule that I had put in my recycling bin. I do not know if the wind blew it out of the bin that morning or if it fell out of the truck once it turned the corner. I picked it up and put it back in my recycling bin once I got home from walking the dog.

That piece of paper stayed there for a week with more recycling added to it. This past Monday I put the recycling out once again. To ensure no papers would get blown away this time I put the other bin containing the plastics and glassware on top of it. Once again, the recycling truck picked everything up by noon. I took Daisy for a walk around 4:00 p.m. that afternoon. When Daisy and I got to the front of our house at the end of the walk I noticed a piece of paper on the road. Sure enough, it was the schedule from our Provincial Championships. It looked like it had been run over a few times by cars and stepped on as well. Some of the ink had smeared due to the road still being a bit wet from the rain earlier in the day.

Just as I had a week ago, I picked up this piece of paper again. Instead of putting it back in the recycling again I decided to bring it in the house. I just had a feeling that this was no coincidence but rather God letting me know He did not want me to dispose of it yet. I have not figured out the reason why yet, but the timing is interesting. As I shared in my message a few weeks ago, basketball tryouts started at the end of August. We only have six players confirmed at this moment. On Tuesday night we will be having one more

tryout. I am hoping to have some more players attend for that tryout, because if not, we will be unable to put a team together for this season.

It will be disappointing if we cannot, but a lot of other teams are having the same problem. I am just speculating right now, but I wonder if the reason God keeps bringing this schedule back to me is either:

1. To serve as a keepsake for me of those being my last basketball games as a coach
2. Or, if we can form a team, to show these were not to be my final basketball games to coach, and how He faithfully provided at the end.

I think God had another reason for keeping this schedule in my possession these past two Mondays. I was not quite sure as I walked Daisy what I would write about in my mid-week message. By doing what He did, God provided me with the inspiration I needed.

We see from this example how God will sometimes bring back to our attention something that we thought we may have disposed of. Besides items, something we may try to get rid of at times are unpleasant emotions or circumstances that have occurred in our lives. These emotions or circumstances I am referring to here may include:

- feeling grief and sadness as a result of some significant loss in our life
- disappointment and discouragement as a result of something not happening as we may have hoped or expected
- anger, bitterness, or unforgiveness due to some past hurt or trauma in our life
- an addiction, or some sinful behavior from our past

We often try to get rid of these unpleasant emotions and experiences by sweeping them under the carpet so to speak, or by ignoring them and hoping they will go away, or by staying busy. We may think by doing these things we have dealt with our feelings properly. God knows us best. In fact, something we must remember from the Psalms is this:

***O Lord, You have examined my heart and know everything about me!
(Psalm 139:1)***

As God examines our hearts, He may see that these feelings and emotions we tried to dispose of improperly are still very much residing in our hearts. Because He loves us, He will bring these things back to our attention at the proper time in order for us to heal properly.

This is what God did with my grief after my father's passing in September of 1999. He died the day before I was to begin my second year studying divinity at Knox College. After the funeral I spent the next 16 weeks busy handling a full course load of classes. God could see there was still some unresolved grief in my heart that was being covered by my busy schedule.

Once the fall semester was over, God brought this unresolved grief hiding in my heart to the surface during the Christmas break. It was during this first Christmas season without my dad that God helped me deal with my grief in a healthy way. Twenty-three years have passed since my father's death. Every anniversary of his passing I am reminded how much better I am spiritually and emotionally because God brought to my attention the unresolved grief still in my heart. If God sees any unresolved feelings or issues in your hearts that you thought you had gotten rid of, do not be surprised if He has it resurface and brought to your attention at the right timing. When He does, rest assured, He will help deal with it in a healthy and positive way.

The inspiration for this week's message came from my sense God has kept that basketball schedule reappearing after I put it out for recycling. He obviously meant it more than just for my upcoming basketball tryout. The paper answered my prayer concerning an idea for the mid-week message. I pray it will also be the answer to our need for more players.

Keep Safe and God Bless

Pastor Dean