

MY LOCKED-OUT REMINDER

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. (Matthew 7:7)

Nadine and I took our dog Daisy for a walk on Monday night while Coral was upstairs video chatting with her friend. We always lock the door when we leave the house with Coral still there so that she will feel safe. After bundling up I locked the door, pulled it shut and realized immediately that I forgot to put the house key in my pocket. I am always really good at remembering my key but not on this day. Thankfully, I did think to put a phone in my pocket. We walked Daisy around the block the whole time wondering if Coral would answer her phone or text when we got back home to let us in. It was a really cold night so if she did not answer our calls to unlock the door we were in for an unpleasant experience. After walking around the block Nadine took the phone with her cold hands and texted Coral. After she sent the text there was a moment of tension and anticipation as we awaited what would happen next:

- *Would she receive it and come down immediately to open the door?*
- *Would she be distracted talking with her friend and not see the text message?*
- *Would she peer out her bedroom window and laugh at us and make us wait a few extra minutes?*

Thankfully Coral followed through on the first scenario and came down right away to unlock the door and let us in. After stepping inside, Nadine turned to me and said, *It is a good thing Coral likes us today!* To be liked and loved by a family member has its advantages when you are locked out.

This is something we need to be mindful of as we go through the *lockouts* or *lockdowns* during this pandemic. It has not been easy to have been *locked out* from experiencing the things we appreciate about life. For instance, being locked out at times from:

- Going to school,
- Going to church,
- Eating at restaurants,

- Going to movies or to live theatre shows,
- Gathering with friends and family,
- Celebrating birthdays, anniversaries, and other special occasions,
- Going to the mall and stores to shop.

We have experienced being locked out from doing these things and so much more during these past ten months. Unfortunately, when it comes to our current lockouts we must wait for our politicians and health officials to open the doors to these activities again. Waiting for this to happen is not always easy. We all have had our share of frustrated moments and anxious days while being locked out from activities that bring us joy. Thankfully just like we had Coral who likes us enough to let us in, we all have a Heavenly Father who loves us very much and is willing to let us into experiencing His rewards.

Jesus made this point very clear starting in Matthew 7:7. He told His listeners that if they stayed persistent in asking God, seeking Him, and knocking on His door, that their efforts would be rewarded. According to Jesus the reason for this reward had to do with the Father's incredible love for His children. Jesus brought this out in this example of what loving parents do for their children and contrasting it with how much more a loving Father would do:

You parents – if your children ask for a loaf of bread, do you give them a stone instead? Or if they ask for a fish, do you give them a snake instead? Of course not! So, if you sinful people know how to give good gifts to your children, HOW MUCH MORE will your Heavenly Father give good gifts to those who ask Him. (Matthew 7: 9-11)

During this time when we are experiencing being “locked out” of normal experiences and living it is important for us to follow the example Nadine and I did on Monday night and call on your family member who loves you, God Himself, to open some rewards and blessings to help you get through each day. In order to experience these blessings, we have to keep persistent as Jesus encouraged by continuing to ask, seek and knock:

- *Seek God's presence and comfort on those days you are lonely being locked out from being with others*

- *Ask for God to bless you in some way on the days you are struggling in this lockdown.*
- *Knock on the door of Heaven and enter into a time of prayer and conversation with God when you feel locked away from talking to others.*

During this time when we are being locked out of so many of our normal experiences that bring joy and satisfaction to our life it is so important for us to remember that God loves us so much and that if we just keep seeking and asking, He will open the doors for us each day to be rewarded by His presence and help get us through this pandemic.

As Nadine said on Monday night, “it is a good thing that Coral likes us today.” We were rewarded with a locked door being opened and entering in out of the cold. May we remember each day it is a BLESSED thing that God loves us each day. Knowing this we will know if we sincerely *seek or ask or knock* God will open the door and reward us with His smile and presence to get us through this season of being “locked out”.

God Bless and Keep Safe

Pastor Dean