

## **SOME GIFTS FROM CANADA DAY**

Canada Day has come and gone for another year, and I hope each one of you had a blessed time last Friday. I was blessed this Canada Day with three gifts. The first gift was the opportunity for our church to have our first social gathering in over two years. Of course, we have gathered for church when we have been allowed during the pandemic, but we had not restarted any of our social gatherings. We arranged for people to come at 11:00 a.m. to the church on Canada Day to enjoy strawberries and ice cream while visiting with one another in the back yard. It was so good to see those in attendance enjoy being able to socialize with one another in a comfortable and safe way.

I was worried about the weather as showers had been forecasted earlier in the week to occur around the time this event was to take place. I prayed many times throughout the week that if it was His will for us to have this event to hold off the rain for us. God gave us this gift. We received another gift during this time of socializing. Right at noon, just as we were about to bring the gathering to a close, O Canada started playing on our chime system. It was so fitting for us to be able to stand together outside as our national anthem was being played on Canada Day. Being able to have this social event happen at our church topped off at the end with the playing of O Canada was the first gift on Canada Day.

Later that afternoon we went over to Lions Park in Brantford for the Canada Day celebrations. Our plan was just to walk around, grab a bite to eat, and then come home shortly afterward. We had just finished eating and were about to head to our car when I happened to notice two of my daughter Coral's teammates from her basketball team walk by. What was so surprising is they live in Ancaster and we had no idea they would be there that day. They asked Coral to stay with them and go on the rides and watch the fireworks together.

Coral was so excited at the opportunity as she rarely gets to hang out with these friends outside the basketball season. The parents of one of these girls offered to bring Coral home after the fireworks, which gave Nadine and I the opportunity to return home and to get some work done in preparation for Sunday. About an hour after we left Coral texted to say another one of her

basketball teammates was there and now all four of them were hanging out. These four girls received the gift of being able to spend time together on Canada Day even though nothing had been previously arranged. It was a gift I know my daughter appreciated.

The final gift from Canada Day was something a young girl in our neighbourhood did. On Canada Day, she decorated the tree in front of her house with Canadian flags. She then attached an envelope to the tree with a sign on it that said:

**Please take a lollipop inside the envelope and enjoy Canada's birthday!**

When I saw this sign in front of her house, I thought to myself what a great gift she gave to people on Canada Day. The interesting thing is I did not see this gift that she had given others on Canada Day until two days later. I saw it as I was walking my dog Daisy on Sunday afternoon. A few minutes earlier on the walk I began praying and asking God what my mid-week message should be about this week. It was shortly after I prayed that I stumbled upon this girl's kind gesture and gift from Canada Day. It was then I knew exactly what I would be writing on this week.

I think these three gifts have something more in common than the fact they had to do with Canada Day. What these gifts also share in common is that in my eyes they all came from the generous and loving hand of God. Here are the reasons why I see it this way. First, God knew how much some of the people in my congregation needed an opportunity to connect with one another in fellowship. God provided me with the idea to do this on Canada Day. He looked after the weather, made sure people who needed to be there were, and capped it off by having O Canada play at the perfect timing. My daughter being able to spend Canada Day with three of her basketball teammates was also a gift from God. As I mentioned there had been no previous texts amongst these girls that they would meet up at the event that night. Some might view it as a mere coincidence, but just as God knew my congregation needed fellowship with others, **He** knew my daughter needed the same with her friends. God made this gift happen for her in an unexpected way. She had an incredible time with her friends at the Canada Day celebrations. It will be a Canada Day she will always fondly remember. Finally, even though I did not

see this girl's gift of lollipops to people on Canada Day, I stumbled upon it with God's doing at a time when I needed His inspiration for this week's message.

I choose to see events like these three not as mere coincidences but rather as gifts from God. By seeing circumstances like these through the eyes of faith as gifts from God helps us so much in our journey of faith:

- it reminds us how active and involved **God is in our daily lives**.
- it shows us how **God is very aware of our needs** and shows us His love by providing us with these much-needed gifts.
- it reminds us we are **not without help** and God is there for us when we ask.
- it reminds us that **God is very much in control**.

Seeing circumstances like these three situations from Canada Day through the eyes of faith helps me to realize my faith is well placed in God, and what a gift it truly is to have a relationship with Him. I pray that each one of us sees clearly the **gifts God is giving to us on a daily basis**. They are there for the seeing, but it takes looking through the eyes of faith to see and acknowledge them. If we are failing to see these daily gifts, then a prayer we need to start praying is asking God to remove any scales from our eyes that are preventing us from seeing through the lens of faith. With these scales removed from our eyes we will be amazed to see all the gifts God is offering to us. I imagine God smiles every time we discover one of these gifts He is providing for us. I know I am still smiling from the gifts He provided on Canada Day. I am also smiling that I have completed another mid-week message with ***His help***.

God Bless and Keep Safe

Pastor Dean