

WAS IT GOOD OR BAD?

I needed to do some banking on Monday morning and was pleased to see there were only two other customers ahead of me in the line when I arrived. When I got to the teller and told him I needed to make a deposit he proceeded to ask me how my weekend was. I must have hesitated for a second, or perhaps my tone was not convincing, but I replied, "It was good!"

He looked at me strangely and replied, "Based on that I would say it was 50-50 whether it was good or bad!" Instead of thinking about what he said at the time, I asked him in return how his weekend was. He was far quicker and more convincing with his response. He smiled and shared how it was a really good weekend for him because he got to do a lot of the things he had hoped to do. I was glad it was a good weekend for him.

After I left, I began thinking about my weekend and why, despite saying it was good, it did not come across as convincing. It did not take me long to realize if I had really thought about my response, I would have had to admit it was not a very good weekend. The reason why it was not so good was because over the course of the two days, Nadine and I learned about several people we know going through difficult losses and challenges.

On Saturday we received a phone call that somebody we knew passed away earlier that morning in hospital. We were also informed on Saturday about somebody needing prayer after they were told that their cancer had returned more aggressively. Later that same day I was also asked to remember in prayer a family who was going through a very difficult day emotionally.

On Sunday morning I was informed of another individual who needed prayer as a result of a battle with cancer. On Sunday afternoon I learned of another young person we knew having died the day before. I remember saying to Nadine on Sunday night how we received so much bad news over the course of the weekend. I realized this explained why my response to the teller at the bank did not come across as enthusiastic when he asked about my weekend.

It is hard to view a weekend as being good when I hear about people suffering and going through difficult times physically, emotionally, and spiritually. I paused many times through the course of the weekend to pray for these

people. I also found my thoughts turning toward them often on Saturday and Sunday. I think we all wish that every weekend, and every day for that matter, was good.

There are so many things in this fallen world in which we live that can turn a good day into a bad one. I have listed some of them above. It is hard for us to avoid being on the receiving end of experiencing bad news at times. When we receive this kind of news, what is our reaction and what do we focus on?

- Do we groan helplessly?
- Do we feel everything is spinning out of control?
- Do we quickly lose sense of all hope?
- Do we focus on our fears?
- Do we lose sight of all the positives?
- Do we lose sight of God?
- Do we question God's goodness?

It is important for us to examine our initial reactions when we experience bad news. By examining our reactions, it will reveal to us whether we are seeing God's power despite this bad news, or if we are being blind to it. I think we would all be in agreement that the best way for us to respond to bad news is not to lose sight of God in the midst of it all. This is why passages like **Psalm 23:4**, are so important:

Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for You are with me; Your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

This passage helps us not to lose sight of God when we receive bad news and prevents us from reacting with fear because we know He is with us and there to comfort us. Another passage that helps me not to lose sight of God when I experience bad news is **Romans 8:38-39**:

For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

This passage helps me stay focused on the wonderful reality that no matter how bad the news may be that it has not separated me from the power of

God's love. It is this truth that keeps me believing, remaining hopeful and positive because I know ***my all-loving God is guiding me through these moments***. We need passages and truths like these in order to **keep our focus on God in the midst of bad news so that fear, helplessness, and hopelessness do not control our thoughts.**

I am glad that the bank teller had a very good weekend. I am glad he asked me the question about my weekend and responded in the manner he did. It was very insightful for me and perhaps all of us. I pray that each one of us will have a good weekend ahead. The Leafs are not playing this weekend with the all-star break, so I do not have to worry about a loss to the Montreal Canadiens ruining my weekend like it did two weeks ago.

Keep Safe and God Bless

Pastor Dean