

ALMOST THERE

It was not until 3:15 p.m. on Sunday when I was able to stop by Tim Hortons to get a coffee. How I can make it past a morning on a Sunday without stopping into Tims for a coffee, but not on any other day during a week is a mystery I think only God can explain. When I ordered my first large double-double for the day, one of the regular employees I have come to know looked very tired as she took my order. Seeing how tired she was, I decided to ask her if she was almost done for the day. When she replied, "I am almost there" naturally I asked if she finished work at 4:00 p.m. I was shocked when she replied, "I actually get off work at 8:00 p.m. today." I smiled when she said this knowing she still had 4 hours and 45 minutes before her shift ended. Seeing my smile she too realized at that moment that she was not quite "almost there" yet when it came to her shift being over.

When we hear somebody say "They are almost there" we assume they are very close. Sometimes we are the ones wanting to know if we are "almost there." In our youth, if we ever asked our parents from the back seat of the car, "Are we there yet?" we were hoping to hear them say we were very close. As adults we tend to wonder if we are almost there yet when it comes to enduring a crisis or challenge in our lives. One of the things we want to know in the midst of an adversity is whether we are "almost there" when it comes to having our life return to normal or experiencing more pleasant times again. Examples of this desire to know might include:

- Am I almost there in winning my battle with cancer?
- Am I almost there in overcoming my grief?
- Am I almost there in experiencing more better days than worse days?
- Am I almost there in having my suffering be behind me?

Even if we discover the answer is that we are very close to being "almost there", the reality is we still have time to wait and put in until we arrive at the point of "there." For the employee at Tim Hortons on Sunday afternoon she still had 4 hours and 45 minutes of time to put in with respect to her "almost there." For people who are battling through adversity the time they must wait upon with respect to their "almost there" might be much longer. It is not easy to be patient and persevere when the time frames for our "almost there" seem still to be longer off in the time horizon than we hoped.

The apostle Paul could see the struggle believers were having enduring persecution until they reached their desired destination of experiencing eternal life with Jesus. In order to help them persevere during their time of drawing

closer each day to being “almost there” with Jesus in heaven, Paul offered the following advice as encouragement:

But those who live to please the Spirit will harvest everlasting life from the Spirit. So, let’s not get tired of doing what is good. At just the right time we will reap a harvest of blessing if we don’t give up. Therefore, whenever we have the opportunity, we should do good to everyone- especially to those in the family of faith. (Galatians 6:8-10).

We learn from Paul that the key things for believers to remember in order to endure their time being “almost there” whether it be with respect to eternal life or challenges here on earth are:

1. Staying focused on living our lives in a way that pleases the Holy Spirit. This requires us to allow the Holy Spirit to control every aspect of our life on a given day so that we produce the fruits of the Spirit.
2. To never tire of doing what is good and right in God’s eyes. It can become so easy to become discouraged and not strive as hard as we keep waiting for our “almost there” to become “I am finally there.” Paul reminds these believers by staying diligent to the very end with respect to doing what is good in God’s eyes, it will result in blessings whether on this side of heaven or when we get there.

When we see the suffering and hardships happening to those in our world and in our own lives we may wish we were “already there” when it comes to the “New Heaven and New Earth.” With each passing day we may be closer, but we are not there yet. Let’s take Paul’s advice seriously so that we may live each of our “almost there” days in a way that is pleasing to Him.

After I enjoyed my first double-double on Sunday afternoon, I took our dog Daisy for a walk and chatted quickly with a neighbor who retired in January of this year. Each time I saw him before he retired, I would often comment to him, “You are almost there.” He has been retired now for 6 months. He had a Tim Hortons coffee in his hand when I saw him on Sunday afternoon. I just had to ask if retirement allows him to still afford a visit to Tim’s each day. He replied, “Actually now that I am retired, I have the time to go to Tim’s whenever I want.”

I am “almost there” with 4 years, 1 month, and 1 week to go until retirement. It’s good to know that when I finally arrive at retirement, I will have time to go to Tim Horton’s more often.

Keep safe and God Bless

Pastor Dean