

REVERSIBLE

A couple of weeks ago I purchased a new belt at Giant Tiger. I tried it on in the store before I purchased it, but I did not remove the tags when I first got home in case I needed to return it. This past Monday morning was the first time that I decided to wear the belt since purchasing it. Once again, I tried it on to make sure it fit. Seeing that it did, I removed the tags with confidence that I would not need to return it. I went out Monday morning after breakfast to get my coffee at Tim Hortons and it was not until I returned home that I realized I missed cutting the one tag off the belt. I looked down at the belt and spotted a tag indicating it was reversible. I quickly cut it off, but I began to wonder if anyone at Tim Hortons happened to notice my faux pas.

This incident got me thinking about a time when I made a similar mistake back in high school. I had just gotten a new pair of jeans and wore them to school for the first time. I cannot remember exactly what period or class in the day it was, but one student blurted out, "Dean, you still have the store tags on your jeans!" It was an embarrassing moment for this teenager at the time to say the least. It's funny how I remember so little from high school, but I still recall this embarrassing incident.

I may not be good at noticing reversible labels on my clothes, and I am just as bad when it comes to backing up my car in reverse. About 23 years ago I had several vertebrae in my neck that were inflamed. Even though I went to get treatment from a chiropractor I still do not have full range of movement when it comes to turning my neck to the one side. As a result, I have a tough time looking behind me when I am backing up the car. My wife Nadine tends to back the car up for me most times, but if she is not with me then this process can be quite an adventure. Recently I tried backing into my driveway and noticed my neighbor was watching me as I did so. I swerved onto the grass, then compensated by cranking the wheel in the opposite direction, and ended up parking the car totally crooked in the driveway. The neighbor had a good laugh watching my attempts at reversing the car.

All of this thinking I was doing on Monday morning in regard to that reversible tag got me curious what Jesus had to say on this subject. Something the Bible makes very clear to us is that we can reverse the consequences of our sins by repenting and confessing them to the Father. Being blessed by the Father's forgiveness is like experiencing a reversal on our part because He will never again remember the sin. This assurance of the Father's complete forgiveness was pointed out by the writer of Hebrews:

Then he says, “I will never again remember their sins and lawless deeds. (Hebrews 10:17)

Even though a reversal has happened, so to speak, when we have been forgiven, we are not always good at showing our appreciation toward God for His grace. Jesus commented about this to a Pharisee named Simon who was upset by the appreciation being shown by a woman who had been forgiven of much. While He was having dinner at the home of this Pharisee a woman from that town heard that Jesus was dining there, and came with an alabaster jar filled with expensive perfume and began anointing Jesus' feet. The Pharisee knew the woman's sinful background and was appalled at her actions. Seeing this reaction from Simon, Jesus decided to tell this story:

A man loaned money to two people – 500 pieces of silver to one and 50 pieces to the other. But neither of them could repay him, so he kindly forgave them both, cancelling their debts. Who do you suppose loved him more after that?

Upon being asked this Simon replied, **“I suppose the one for whom he canceled the larger debt.”** Jesus then proceeded to share how this woman who had been forgiven of many sins was showing her appreciation and love by anointing His feet with this expensive perfume. This woman's acts of gratitude for this reversal in her life stood in stark contrast to Simon who did not even make the effort to wash the dust from Jesus' feet when He entered the his home which was considered a social courtesy at that time.

God's forgiveness of our sins is like a reversal. If we are truly being honest with ourselves, I think we would acknowledge we have been forgiven of so much by our Heavenly Father. Expressing overflowing love toward Him should be our natural response. An important question we must ask ourselves as a result of this reversal is whether we are showing our appreciation for the wideness and greatness of His mercy as the woman in our story did? If we are not than we need to reverse back toward the cross and ponder all of our sins that Jesus covered so that we could be forgiven.

I am sure most people reading this message might be better than me at spotting “reversible” labels still on the clothes or at reversing their cars. I think we can all be better in showing our appreciation and love for God's forgiveness and in so doing reversing the consequences of our sins.

Keep safe and God bless,

Pastor Dean