

## THE EXPRESSION I AM SEEING MOST OF LATE

Over the course of the past few weeks the expression I have been seeing a lot of from people is yawning. I know what some might be thinking that I am referring to my congregation while they try to stay awake during one of my sermons. I do see a few yawns from those in the pews from time to time, but I have not heard any snoring which is a good sign.

To be honest, it has been while I have been out and about of late when I have been seeing so many people yawn. I have seen several employees at my preferred Tim Hortons doing this. I understand many of the yawners working there have started their shifts early that morning. Some of the employees I catch yawning tell me they just started their shift a few minutes earlier. I often say to them it is a good thing there is lots of coffee around to keep them awake. I have even noticed a lot of people yawning while I have been in some grocery stores of late. Sometimes it is fellow customers I see doing this, and other times I spot some of the cashiers yawning while waiting for the next customer to come to their check out. Naturally when I drop my daughter off at high school each morning, I can always count on seeing a few students yawning as they make their way to the front door. And I have also seen a lot of people yawning in their cars while waiting for the traffic light to change so they can proceed. I have been aware of people yawning before, but I am seeing it more frequently of late. At least this is a better expression to be seeing on people's faces than anger.

Boredom may explain why people yawn during my sermons, but other factors that can lead to it include having a poor night's sleep, staying up too late, being awakened by thunderstorms, having a loud snorer in the house, or experiencing sleep apnea. When I first considered doing my mid-week message about seeing all of this yawning, I thought God might have me focus on how we can overcome our tiredness. I wondered if He might have me focus on Mark 4:38 where we see Jesus taking a nap in the back of the boat with His head on a cushion, while the disciples were sailing across to the other side of the lake. I worried if I took this approach that my parishioners might justify taking a nap during my sermons. I found God leading me in a different direction instead by reminding me what the Psalmist wrote in **Psalm 121:**

**I look up to the mountains- does my help come from there? My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth! He will not let you stumble; the One who watches over you will not slumber. Indeed, He who watches over Israel never slumbers or sleeps. (Psalm 121: 1-4)**

This particular Psalm is meant to provide us with *assurance and hope about God's protection* and care over us both during the day and night. The reason we can have this kind of assurance is because God is not only all-powerful, but He is always watching over us because He never tires, nor slumbers, nor sleeps. This picture we are being given of God here stands in stark contrast to ourselves. The pace we try to keep at times keeping up with our busy schedules can be tiring. We try to push our bodies through it but all the yawning and lack of energy we may be experiencing are signs of our bodies' limitations. God does not have these same limitations as His power and strength never diminish.

When our strength begins to diminish as a result of tiredness and fatigue, we learn in Isaiah that we can become refreshed again by placing our trust in God and letting His strength renew ours.

**But those who trust in the Lord will find new strength. They will soar high on wings like eagles. They will run and not grow weary. They will walk and not faint. (Isaiah 40:31)**

All of the yawning I have been seeing of late is a reminder that so many people today are tired. Whether we are the one doing the yawning or seeing somebody else doing it, may it serve as a reminder to us that we can always be assured that *God's strength is not diminishing* and His eye is not dozing off while keeping watch over us. I think we need this reassuring reminder that can be provided each time we see somebody yawn.

**Keep safe and God bless,**

**Pastor Dean**