

We Are So Blessed

Message for Sunday, July 7, 2019
by Bruce Fraser

PART 1

Bible reading:

Luke 12:48, Good News Bible:

Much is required from the person to whom much is given; much more is required from the person to whom much more is given.

Canada is certainly one of the nations which is included under “to whom much more is given.” In thankfulness for the great country we live in, let’s sing our national anthem, “O Canada.”

Now we’re going to see a video in which the speaker is telling how great a country Canada is, and how he is proud to be Canadian. At the very end we see that it’s a beer commercial (for Molson Canadian), but we’ll let that slide. [Watch it online: www.youtube.com/watch?v=WMxGVfk09IU.]

Let’s talk about that: what is great about Canada, about being part of this country? *Talk in the table groups for a few minutes. Ask each group to share their top two things.*

For the reader, here are some things I think of. You will have your own ideas.

- Canada is respected around the world as a nation which values freedom, fairness, integrity, and peace.
- Our country is made up of a multitude of peoples from all over the globe. Toronto is one of the most diverse cities in the world, with people of almost every race, nation, language, culture and religion, all living together.
- Our soldiers have served in almost every United Nations peacekeeping force, with Canada contributing far more than its share of the cost.
- Our national police force, the RCMP, has been used as a model by hundreds of police forces in other countries.
- Our Medicare system ensures that everyone receives good health care, even those who cannot afford expensive medical treatment. (Sadly, not always promptly.)

Yet there is still more to do. While we thank God for the country we live in, we recognize our responsibility to use our tremendous resources wisely, as God’s servants. Remember that Bible passage: “Much more is required from the person to whom much more is given.”

Some examples of how we live this:

- We care for others we know who need a hand, a friend, or just a listening ear.
- Even in this land of abundance, there are people who have little. So every month we bring food for the Community Cupboard.
- When we give our money offerings, we designate some of it for the Mission and Service Fund. Much of that goes to help people.
- Several people in our church are involved with helping refugees from Syria escape the violence and begin a new life here in Canada.

Again, talk in your table groups about some ways you/we can live out that responsibility.

PART 2

Bible reading:

1 Peter 4:8-11, New Living Translation:

Most important of all, continue to show deep love for each other, for love covers a multitude of sins. Cheerfully share your home with those who need a meal or a place to stay.

God has given gifts to each of you from his great variety of spiritual gifts. Manage them well so that God’s generosity can flow through you. Are you called to be a speaker? Then speak as though God himself were speaking through you. Are you called to help others? Do it with all the strength and energy that God supplies.

We are so blessed to be here in Canada. We are also blessed with our relationships: family, friends, the church, neighbours, co-workers. (Yes, even the ones that are annoying: they help us grow in love, to be like Jesus!)

Show the video “Love Life.” [Watch it online: www.sermonspice.com/product/52456/love-life.] It shows an older woman looking through her memory box. With each item she pulls out, it reminds her of precious people in her life over the years. Most of them are about the boy who became her husband.

Let's talk in our table groups about people who are precious to you. They may still be alive, or they may have passed on. Reflect on how these people are gifts from God.

QUESTION: How have you been a gift from God to others?

PART 3

Bible reading:

Ephesians 1:6-8, New Living Translation:

So we praise God for the wonderful kindness he has poured out on us because we belong to his dearly loved Son. He is so rich in kindness that he purchased our freedom through the blood of his Son, and our sins are forgiven. He has showered his kindness on us, along with all wisdom and understanding.

Above all, we are so blessed because of Jesus. Knowing that we are loved, even though we are not worthy; we are forgiven, even though we have done wrong; we are welcomed, even though we cannot pay the price.

Sing: "Rock of Ages"

Next Steps:

- Be aware of God's gifts. To use the old clichés, stop and smell the roses. Count your blessings.
- Be aware of the responsibility that comes with blessing.
- Ask: "How will I be a blessing to others?"