

Make a Difference (Canada Day)

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June 26, 2016

Text: Matthew 5:13-16

NOTES

A. Two Canadian Stories

1. Shalom Reimer – Miss Teen Canada 2016

- a. Shalom grew up in our church. She cultivated many interests, was concerned that she should be choosing one thing to pursue, and prayed for direction about what that should be. She never had any aspirations to enter a pageant until she watched the Miss Teen Canada pageant some years ago and was inspired by the drive and passion she saw in the contestants. Feeling it would help her overcome shyness and develop leadership skills she decided to enter (with her parents' blessing). She subsequently won Miss Teen B.C. (summer 2015) and the Miss Teen Canada crown (March 2016). Her many interests turned out to be an asset, not a liability in her win.
- b. This win opens doors for much community involvement for Shalom: telethons, runs, fund-raising, etc.
- c. **Shalom Reimer:** *"Christianity doesn't have to be worn on your sleeve. God continually reveals Himself through you. ... Every place in life there are opportunities to reach out and be a witness for Christ."*

2. Gary & Kirsten Skidmore – Kidney transplant story and book authors

- a. Gary & Kirsten discovered, while still pregnant with their second son Alex, that he would have physical problems. They resisted their doctor's advice to abort and have been through two kidney transplants with their now thriving 17-year-old.
- b. Alex's story involves his grandmother donating a kidney to him when he was three. That kidney began to fail after eight years and in 2011 he got his second transplant after his father joined the living kidney donation program.
- c. Gary explained how kidney disease plays havoc with life. They are hoping and praying this kidney lasts 15-20 years.
- d. Two years ago Gary's dad encouraged them to tell their story. The book *Against All Odds* is the result. Its purpose is: to tell their story and so reaffirm that God still does miracles; to give inspiration and help to families in crisis; to raise awareness of the kidney transplant program. The book is available from the CLA bookstore. All proceeds from the sale of the book will go to CLA Missions.

B. Pastor's challenge: Make a Difference.

1. We've heard two stories of ordinary people doing extraordinary things.
2. We are all on a journey and can make a difference in our world. Jesus talked about this using two metaphors: **We are salt, we are light.**
 - a. **Salt – Matthew 5:13**
 - i. Salt was/is a preserving agent.
 - ii. As Christians we can act as the preserving agent in our society. Let's not lose our saltiness—the flavors of love, joy, mercy, grace.
 - b. **Light – Matthew 5:14-16**
 - i. Light illuminates the darkness.
 - ii. Jesus declared Himself the light (John 8:12). He gives forgiveness, discernment, direction.
 - iii. We can reflect the light of Christ onto Canadian society through sharing our thoughts, convictions and showing mercy.

MINISTRY

1. Shalom said, "Christianity doesn't have to be worn on your sleeve. God continually reveals Himself through you." Discuss. What do think she meant by this? Do you agree? How have you seen this supported (or disproved) in your life?

2. How has the Christian faith of the Skidmore family been a factor in their lives to this point? Can you relate any of the challenges they've faced to ones you've experienced? How has God been with you? Tell your stories.

3. Shalom Reimer and the Skidmores are a Christian influence in unusual (to most of us) places. Where are you? How might God use you where you are?

4. In what ways are the metaphors of our lives being salt and light powerful images of how individual Christians can make a difference right where they are? List some practical ways you might be SALT and LIGHT this week.

PRAYER

Dear Jesus, thank You for Canada and the freedom we have to live our faith in You and share it with others. Thank you for the examples of our faithful sisters and brother who are using their platform and experiences to honor You and share the gospel. Please give each one of us insight about how to be salt and light in the place we are. Amen.