

Needing Warmth

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By Pastor Sharon tidd

I love a nice warm cup of tea. Usually I stick with Orange Pekoe, but occasionally I'll try a fruity herbal tea or chamomile tea. And when I want to jazz things up abit, a chai tea latte! Any other tea lovers out there?

Science has shown that holding a warm cup of tea or coffee or hot cocoa creates the same feelings within us as a loving hug. Holding that cup or mug actually releases serotonin in our bodies. Did you know that? I suspect that's why I love my tea so much! And these days, with the need to stay physically distant from people, I'm missing hugs a lot! As I've been saying good-bye to the members of my present church (I'm moving to a new role at the start of next week) I've wanted to be able to give hugs, but that hasn't been possible thanks to COVID-19. It hasn't been easy, since I am a hugger by nature!

Well the life of a teabag isn't easy either, when you think about it. In order for its benefits to be produced ... the wonderful aroma and flavour and warmth ... it has to go through hot water. Boiled water, in fact! And it has to sit in that boiled water for a minimum of 3 minutes! Not an easy thing to endure!

Our lives can often feel like that teabag's life, can't they? It seems like we can sometimes face a never-ending supply of 'hot water'. Some of it we bring on ourselves. Some just is, because we live in a broken and sinful world ... a world riddled with COVID-19 in these days! Sitting in or passing through 'hot water' is rarely a pleasant experience. More often, it's quite painful. It can really wear us down. It can turn our smile upside down pretty quickly. But I have found that the attitude I carry when I'm in 'hot water' can make a huge difference.

In the book of James, God tells His followers to "Consider it pure joy, whenever you face trials of many kinds (that's the 'hot water'), because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything."
(James 1:2-4)

God has a wonderful way of using the 'hot water' in our lives to bring out the best in us, kind of like that teabag. Recognizing that He is using that 'hot water' for our good can help us endure. So, while we're battling those trials ... when we're in or passing through 'hot water', whether it's illness or depression or loneliness or hunger or simply missing physical contact (hugs!)... let's try to reflect on the good things that God wants to bring out in us through those trials. In the end, we will be stronger ... and our aroma and flavour and warmth will be a blessing to others because we persevered through the 'hot water'!