

Phil Chin's Stewardship Reflections from 10/31/21 Service

I am grateful to be alive! What about you?

I say that because almost 10 years ago I suffered a heart attack, but I wouldn't admit it, either to myself or anybody else. But my wife, Mary Lou, saw through all of that and said, "You better check yourself into a hospital."

"No, no I said I can wait until tomorrow morning."

Well I did wait until the following morning and I felt so much better until the people at hospital told me that you're going to need some stenting done in there just to clear up some blockages.

"Fine, I said."

So there I am on the "stent table", ready to be all "stented" up. They said it won't take long, maybe 75 minutes or so. I would be awake for most of it.

"Fine, I said."

There I am on the table. Two minutes later, everything stops. Stops cold. All the doctors run out. There I am, wondering what's going on? And then I see in the little room just off the operating theater, Mary Lou with these doctors. And they're doing this: they're shaking their heads. Now I'm saying to myself, it's a bad joke. Well the joke was almost on me because they couldn't do any stenting because my, they call it the left anterior descending, the LAD, the Widow Maker, was 95 per cent blocked, occluded. And by the way for those who don't know, at 100 per cent blockage, the patient dies. That's me!

Then another doctor comes out and says "Hey, what are you doing tomorrow morning?"

I said, "Not much. What do you have in mind?"

The following morning I underwent a triple coronary bypass.

I then asked, "Only triple? Why not go for four?"

The doctor said, "You don't need four."

And so on and so on.

I am a grateful man. I am grateful for Mary Lou. For the teams of doctors and nurses and physical therapists that have allowed me this day to deliver this stewardship message.

And why is gratitude so important? I'm glad you asked that. I did my homework: Gratitude is good for us and the science confirms it. My extensive research on the internet proves it!

Now, I'm no neuroscientist, I'm no psychologist but stay with me here, I can confidently report that giving thanks may make the brain more altruistic.

Imagine that! Why would I talk about that in a stewardship talk?

Seems there's a deep neural connection between gratitude and generosity! And we talked about how grateful people such as me, we do ourselves GOOD by being grateful. And we have talked about the power of gratitude. You've read about the power of gratitude. Gratitude is good for us, it even helps us get a better night's sleep, so I'm told in the research.

It just makes sense to me that being altruistic and generous would make you feel happier and healthier.

So why not do something that is both good for you and for others. Altruism, gratitude. What a deal!

There's more research here. Gratitude may change our brains. it's indisputable. The research says that gratitude may rewire our brains to give more pleasure when we give. Give and it makes you feel good. All those neurotransmitters are activated with acts of altruism and generosity.

It's proven. It's true.

You are all generous people, all, altruistic people. So you know about this. You just have to focus on this during our pledge season.

Mary Lou and I are indeed grateful for each other, our family, our friends, our neighbors and for our last 15 years as members of St. Bart's.

When it comes time to determine your pledge, our pledge, we are going to let our hearts and brains do what comes naturally and do what is good for ALL of us.

Thanks for your time.