**Lessons from a Lockdown**

Rommel J. Casis

**Day 3**

**Philippians 1:18b-26**

Yes, and I will continue to rejoice, for I know that through your prayers and God’s provision of the Spirit of Jesus Christ what has happened to me will turn out for my deliverance. I eagerly expect and hope that I will in no way be ashamed, but will have sufficient courage so that now as always Christ will be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death. For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. If I am to go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labor for me. Yet what shall I choose? I do not know! I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far; but it is more necessary for you that I remain in the body. Convinced of this, I know that I will remain, and I will continue with all of you for your progress and joy in the faith, so that through my being with you again your boasting in Christ Jesus will abound on account of me.

*Questions for Personal Reflection:*

1. Is Christ your life? Why do you say so? What is competing with Christ as top priority in your life?
2. What in your life shows that you live for Christ? How do you live for Christ?
3. Describe the person whose conviction is “to live is Christ, to die is gain”? Are you that kind of person? Why?
4. Why do you want to live longer?
5. Have you reached the point where you can honestly say that you are not afraid to die? Why?

*Insight:*

Paul wanted to give honor to God whether by his life or by his death. His conviction was “to live is Christ, to die is gain.”

He did not live for himself or his loved ones or the disciples or the church. His life was Christ and Christ was his life. He did everything for Christ, relying on the strength and wisdom that Christ provided him. Jesus was his priority and his reason for living. Can we say the same?

If we look at our schedules and see what we prioritize or choose to spend the most time on, will it show that Christ is our priority? If we write a journal and record all that we do during this lockdown, will it show that we live for Christ? Is it obvious to other people that Christ is our life? When we live for Christ, we inspire people. It would help others see that it is possible and desirable to live for something greater than ourselves. This is our testimony to the world. This is how we share our faith.

For Paul, not only was Christ his life, he also considered dying a “gain.” It was a benefit, not a loss. He was not afraid to die. In fact, he desired it so that he could finally be with Christ.

Are you afraid to die? When you live your life for Christ, you will not be afraid to die. The more you live for Christ, the more death is welcome because it will bring you to the One you live for.

During this time when a disease is spreading, killing thousands all over the world, most people are afraid to die. As Christians, we cannot be like “most people.” While we should not be irresponsible with our health and put ourselves in unnecessary risk, neither should we be terrified with the prospect of dying. If we live for Christ, death is not a loss, but a win.

We should take some time examining our hearts to see how we really feel about living and dying. The quarantine has given us time to pause and reflect on what we are doing with our life. Sometime today, ask yourself these questions: Is Christ my life? Do I feel that dying would be a gain?

While Paul longed to be with Christ, he realized it was more necessary for him to remain alive so that he could “continue” with them for their progress and joy in the faith. *Sheila Jones* explains that, “[t]he Greek word translated ‘continue’ means ‘to wait beside a person to be ready to help all the time.’” *Sheila* adds:

It is one thing to “stick around” with people because it is not yet time to leave. It is quite another thing to commit your time, energy and life to them.”

Paul wanted to remain alive not so that he can continue to enjoy life. He wanted to continue living so that he could help more people. For him, living for Christ meant spending his time helping people find Christ and mature in their faith.

Let us imitate Paul’s heart. We don’t know how much time we have left on this earth. Let us make it our goal to live each day for Christ and not for ourselves. Let us spend our time serving Christ by helping others know Christ and grow in Christ.

We can live for Christ even during the lockdown.