**Lessons from a Lockdown**

Rommel J. Casis

**Day 4**

**Philippians 1:27-2:2**

Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. Then, whether I come and see you or only hear about you in my absence, I will know that you stand firm in the one Spirit, striving together as one for the faith of the gospel without being frightened in any way by those who oppose you. This is a sign to them that they will be destroyed, but that you will be saved—and that by God. For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe in him, but also to suffer for him, since you are going through the same struggle you saw I had, and now hear that I still have.

Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind.

*Questions for Personal Reflection:*

1. What do you think it means to “conduct [yourself] in a manner worthy of the gospel”? What would it mean for you in your life?
2. If “worthy of the gospel” is your standard for living what would you need to change or continue doing?
3. What circumstances or situations ordinarily distract you or prevent you from living this way?
4. Do you feel united with the Christians in your group? Why?
5. What are some things you can do to build spiritual unity in your group?

*Insight:*

Many different things can happen to us in our lives. We can go through happy times and sad times, victories and defeats. Sometimes what happens to us is totally unexpected – like this lockdown, being quarantined in your home for days and for some, not being able to work. Paul says however that *whatever* happens – no exceptions – Christians must conduct themselves in *manner worthy of the gospel of Christ.* In the ESV this is written as “let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel” while in the GNT it says “your way of life should be as the gospel of Christ requires.” Being “worthy of the gospel” is the Christian standard for living. The gospel has a message to the world and the way we live must be consistent with that message. Our lives must not conflict with the gospel message.

The question is: does our way of life help advance the gospel? If a person studying the Bible to become a Christian observes the way I live – how I spend my time and resources, how I interact with people in person and online etc. – will it convince him that the gospel is true and that he should be like me? Do I honor the gospel by my manner of life? These days of quarantine, it is easy to just lounge around our homes and be lazy. It is easy to just spend hours on social media, neglecting the people in our own homes or not help with household chores. It is easy to be irritable and filled with worry. Let’s not do that. Our circumstances might have changed but our standard for living remains the same – worthy of the gospel.

Conducting ourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel requires that we know what the gospel is. If we have never done a bible study on the gospel, perhaps you can use the time you have during your quarantine to study it out. How can we conduct ourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel, if we don’t know what the gospel is?

Paul writes that when we conduct ourselves in this way “then” he will know that they are “standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel” (ESV). In chapter 2, Paul continues to talk about unity — being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind. These days of quarantine we may be *physically* apart but we can still be *spiritually* united. One way we can do this is by praying for each other *daily*. Pray for your family and all the Christians in your group. Pray for specific needs. Another way is by having spiritual interactions. Our communication is limited to technological means at this time so let’s make it count. Use whatever on the phone or online time you have to communicate spiritually. Let’s share quiet times, scriptures, teaching / preaching worship videos and other materials that can help us be more spiritual. We can even have discipling times on the phone or online. Let’s not waste our time and opportunities. Instead we should focus on communicating spiritually.

We can be united no matter what happens but this unity does not come out of nowhere. Our ability to be united with each other comes from our relationship with Christ. If we are united with Christ, we can be united with each other. So in our zeal for spiritual fellowship with other Christians, let us not neglect our relationship with God. We cannot conduct ourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel and have spiritual unity without a close relationship with Jesus. So while we plan out our on the phone or online meetings of the body, let us also plan out our times with God.

Although the lockdown may change our lifestyle, the standard for our life is still the same – worthy of the gospel.