**Lessons from a Lockdown**

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**Day 9**

**Philippians 3:1-11**

Further, my brothers and sisters, rejoice in the Lord! It is no trouble for me to write the same things to you again, and it is a safeguard for you. Watch out for those dogs, those evildoers, those mutilators of the flesh. For it is we who are the circumcision, we who serve God by his Spirit, who boast in Christ Jesus, and who put no confidence in the flesh— though I myself have reasons for such confidence.

If someone else thinks they have reasons to put confidence in the flesh, I have more: circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; in regard to the law, a Pharisee; as for zeal, persecuting the church; as for righteousness based on the law, faultless.

But whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith. I want to know Christ—yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, and so, somehow, attaining to the resurrection from the dead.

*Questions for Personal Reflection:*

1. What are some of the best things I have accomplished as a Christian? What are the things am I most proud of as a Christian?
2. Am I doing everything I can to protect my faith? What can I do more?
3. Is knowing Christ my priority? Am I paying the price for knowing Christ?
4. If how much I know Christ is shown by how much I am like him, how much do I really know him?
5. As you fast today, what will you be praying for?

*Insight:*

*No confidence in the flesh*. What does this mean for us? For Paul it meant not relying on his heritage and accomplishments to feel justified before God. It meant he could not rely on his religious credentials to feel good about himself. Some of us may have been religious before we became Christians. We went to church, said the prayers, joined the rituals and maybe even read the Bible. In the past, these things may have given us confidence in our status in eyes of God. But now as Christians, we no longer base our confidence on our religious works. The same holds true for our accomplishments as Christians. Some of us have accomplished great things for God. But do these things necessarily reflect how we are doing spiritually?

When we are asked “How are you doing spiritually?” do we immediately think about whether we have been having quiet times or whether we have been attending church? Do we think about whether we have been having discipling times or how much we are serving in the church? But while our Christian “activities” or services are good, these are not what make us right before God. Even today as we fast – as we deprive ourselves of food in order to pray – we shouldn’t place our confidence in it. What is more important than all that we do as Christians is *knowing Jesus*.

Knowing Jesus gives us faith which is the source of our righteousness. We needed faith to be saved and we need faith to stay saved. Faith is our spiritual breath. When we were born, we began to live as we drew our first breath. In the same way, we needed faith to be born again in the waters of baptism. But to continue to live and grow on this earth, we continuously need to breathe. In the same way, to continue to live as disciples, we need to have faith. To be spiritually alive, we need to have faith in Jesus. As need to breathe always, we need to have faith always. That is why the best thing we can do for someone to is to help him have faith and worst thing we can do for someone is to cause her to struggle in her faith.

Lately we have become more protective of our health. But what about our faith? Shouldn’t we be as, if not more than, protective of our faith? We avoid certain people, places, and activities to protect our health. We should do the same to protect our faith. Based on your situation, what or who should you avoid?

Paul wanted to know Christ. He wanted to know the *power* of his resurrection but also to participate in his *sufferings* and become like him in his *death.* Knowing Jesus is not just about enjoying the “easy” stuff. To know Christ means being willing to suffer as he did. This is the price we need to pay. Knowing Jesus is not just “head knowledge” or *knowing about* Christ. You can know about someone without really knowing them personally. Our goal is to know Jesus as a person. Knowing Christ is about *experiencing* Christ, feeling what he felt and becoming like him in every way. To become like him in his death, we need be like him in our lives.

Today, let us lockdown our faith by knowing Christ more and more.