**Lessons from a Lockdown**

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**Day 17**

**Colossians 1:3-8**

We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, because we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love you have for all God’s people — the faith and love that spring from the hope stored up for you in heaven and about which you have already heard in the true message of the gospel that has come to you. In the same way, the gospel is bearing fruit and growing throughout the whole world —just as it has been doing among you since the day you heard it and truly understood God’s grace. You learned it from Epaphras, our dear fellow servant, who is a faithful minister of Christ on our behalf, and who also told us of your love in the Spirit.

***Questions for Personal Reflection:***

1. When was the last time I thanked God for other people? What can I do to pray for people more?
2. How does faith and love spring from hope?
3. Where do I find hope?
4. What do I hope for? What role does hope play in my daily life?
5. Is the gospel bearing fruit and growing in my life? If not, why not? Is the gospel bearing fruit and growing in people around me? If not, why not?

***Insight:***

Not only did Paul pray for people, he thanked God for them. It is already difficult to consistently pray for other people who are not immediate family members. But Paul did more than that because he thanked God for the Colossians. This is even more amazing when we remember that Paul did not plant the church in Colossae. He only heard about them, probably from Epaphras. So Paul was always praying for people whether he met them personally or only heard about them. They were always on his mind. During this lockdown we have been given a wonderful opportunity to think about other people and pray for them more. How much have we taken advantage of this opportunity?

Faith in God and love for God’s people go together. You cannot have one without the other. We cannot say we have faith in God, but not love ALL of God’s people. We generally love MOST Christians. But there are a few Christians we may have difficulty loving. Maybe they have hurt us with their words or offended us by their behavior. So, let us grow in our faith in God so we can love ALL Christians. Faith is expressed through love. The more faith we have the more love we can give.

Paul says that faith and love spring up from their hope. This means we need to have hope in order to have faith and love. Have we ever considered how important hope is in our life? Hope gives meaning to our life. Having all the means to live is useless if there is no meaning in our lives. Without hope, life is not worth living. What do we hope for? What are you looking forward to? The end of the lockdown? The end of the pandemic? Getting our jobs back? Getting our lives back? Is our hope found only in this life or is our hope in heaven? Our hope must go beyond this life.

Our hope in heaven must be a present reality. This hope must fuel our drive to have faith in God and love people. If our hope in heaven is real to us, it should affect how we live our lives on this earth. We need to ask ourselves: Am I living the life of a person whose hope is in heaven?

There are many discouraging things happening on this earth. There is so much injustice around us. Things don’t seem to work out as they should. Wickedness seems to be rewarded while righteousness is punished. But we should not give in to despair because our hope is not on this earth but in heaven. This world will end someday but our hope is eternal. We may weep now, but later God will dry our tears and we will receive what he has promised to those who are faithful to him. Because of this hope, we can be like the Christians in Hebrews 10:34 who joyfully accepted the confiscation of their property, because they knew that had *better and lasting possessions*. Our light and momentary troubles here on this earth is nothing compared to our hope in heaven. Do you have this hope?

The Colossian found this hope in the gospel. This is where we found hope as well when we studied the Bible and became Christians. This is what we do when we study the Bible with people. We share with them our hope so that they too can have hope in heaven. This is what happens when we preach the gospel.

The gospel is like a seed that grows as long as you plant it in good soil. The gospel is destined to bear fruit and grow. We just have to plant it. We won’t really know whether the soil is good or not until we plant the seed. But we do know that the seed will always grow in good soil. We just have to keep planting the seed.

During the lockdown, let us live according to our hope in heaven and help others experience this hope as well.