**Lessons from a Lockdown**

Rommel J. Casis

**Day 24**

**Colossians 2:8-12**

See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the elemental spiritual forces of this world rather than on Christ.

For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form, and in Christ you have been brought to fullness. He is the head over every power and authority. In him you were also circumcised with a circumcision not performed by human hands. Your whole self ruled by the flesh was put off when you were circumcised by Christ, having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through your faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead.

***Questions for Personal Reflection:***

1. In what ways can I become a “captive” of philosophy? What false doctrines or beliefs have an effect on me? Why?
2. Why are these philosophies hollow and deceptive?
3. What does it mean that “in Christ [I] have been brought to fullness?”
4. What does the old self being “put off” mean? How should that affect my life today?
5. In what ways am I different from my non-Christian self?

***Insight:***

We might think that being confused by false doctrines is “young Christian struggle.” But Paul warned the entire church in Colossae about being taken captive by hollow and deceptive philosophy. In the first two chapters of this letter, we see Paul dealing with theological issues (e.g. the supremacy of Christ) because the Colossians were being challenged by many false teachings. These teachings were hollow, empty, without substance. Believing false teachings is like eating junk food. Junk religion briefly gives you a feeling of satisfaction but it does not give you any nourishment. It is also deceptive because it makes promises it cannot keep. Like a crooked salesman it makes you believe in a product which doesn’t really work.

How do we recognize these false teachings? We look at what the teaching is based on.

Is it based on human tradition? Tradition is something we do simply because it’s been done that way for a long time. Those who practice it don’t really know why they practice it. Its legalistic. It’s a religion based on rules but has no heart for God.

Is it based on “elementary principles of the world?” Is it based on the world’s values and patterns? Is it based on anything other than Christ? Any teaching or philosophy that is contrary to the person and teaching of Christ is false. It does not matter how much good it seems to do, how logical it appears or how convincing it is. If it is contrary to Christ’s teachings then it is false.

Some false doctrines make it appear that they are based on Christ’s teachings. They cite Scriptures and use Christian terminologies. How do we distinguish what is false from what is true? How do people become experts in identifying counterfeit items? They study the original very well. Once you are very familiar with what is genuine you will be able to identify a fake. It is the same way with the teachings in Bible. If you know very well what the Bible teaches, you will be able to recognize false teachings. So let us study the Bible very well so that we will not be fooled by false doctrines.

Paul said that “in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form.” So that means all of God is in Jesus. So Jesus is completely God. Paul also says that “in Christ [we] have been brought to fullness.” Other translations write is as:

“and in Him you have been made complete” (NASB)

“and you have been given full life in union with him” (GNT)

“and you have been filled by Him” (HCSB)

In Christ we are full and complete. We have the rest of our lives to understand fully what this means. At the very least it means that in Christ we lack nothing and we can be just like Jesus if we wanted to. In the same way that Jesus shows who God is, we are also supposed to show who Jesus is. How well have we represented Christ?

Paul explained that our old selves have been *put off* . Our sinful nature has been cut off from us. We are no longer slaves to sin. So when we do sin now as Christians, it is not because we have no choice. As Christians we have the power to choose to sin or not. When we do sin, it is because we choose to. Sinning is not inevitable or unavoidable. Sin is a choice.

Our pre-Christian selves died when we were baptized. Baptism is not just a time we are cleansed, it is a time we died. But if we died with Jesus we are also raised with him. It seems that the resurrection spoken of here is not the resurrection on judgment day. It is the new life we have in Christ. After we were baptized, we were given a new life. This happens through our faith in the working of God. Each of us has a new life not because of our good works but because God is working in our life.

During the lockdown, let us enjoy our full and new life in Christ.