**Lessons from a Lockdown**

Rommel J. Casis

**Day 25**

**Colossians 2:13-23**

When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, having canceled the charge of our legal indebtedness, which stood against us and condemned us; he has taken it away, nailing it to the cross. And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.

Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day. These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ. Do not let anyone who delights in false humility and the worship of angels disqualify you. Such a person also goes into great detail about what they have seen; they are puffed up with idle notions by their unspiritual mind. They have lost connection with the head, from whom the whole body, supported and held together by its ligaments and sinews, grows as God causes it to grow.

Since you died with Christ to the elemental spiritual forces of this world, why, as though you still belonged to the world, do you submit to its rules: “Do not handle! Do not taste! Do not touch!”? These rules, which have to do with things that are all destined to perish with use, are based on merely human commands and teachings. Such regulations indeed have an appearance of wisdom, with their self-imposed worship, their false humility and their harsh treatment of the body, but they lack any value in restraining sensual indulgence.

***Questions for Personal Reflection:***

1. How would I live today, if I were someone who recovered from a fatal disease? What would a second chance at life motivate me to become?
2. In what way has God made me alive in Christ?
3. How is my relationship with people who are very religious? Do they make me feel insecure?
4. What does the phrase “the reality...is found in Christ” mean to me?
5. How has my connection with Jesus affected by the lockdown?

***Insight:***

Before we became Christians we were not just sick with sin, we were dead. A dead person has no hope, he cannot do anything to improve his situation. Whether we were religious or atheists or somewhere in between, we were spiritually dead. Becoming a Christian means that God raised us from the dead. As if giving us life was not enough, God also forgave all our sins. God has given us the chance to start over. We have a new life in Christ.

There may be people around us that seem to be very religious, whose commitment to their beliefs seem to eclipse our own. Their teachings have the “appearance of wisdom.” A few might even look down on us for our lack faith or zeal for God. They may try to convince us to join them so that we can be “radical” like them. But who is really worshipping God? Real worship is found in Christ. Rituals without Christ are mere shadows. Why replace what is real with a mere shadow? Real worship is not defined by the commitment or zeal of the worshippers but by how Christ-like, Christ-centered and Christ-dependent it is. Jesus does not want us to be devoted to religious acts, he wants us to be devoted to him. So let us be careful that our own relationship with God does not become legalistic.

Therefore, in our excitement for church activities, we should be careful that we do not neglect our connection with Christ. When our activities do not strengthen our connection with Christ, there is something wrong. Every meeting of the body must be focused on strengthening our connection with Jesus. Every meeting of the body is a devotional. Our goal must be to engage worshippers and not merely to entertain an audience. Our songs, prayers and messages must all inspire devotion to Jesus.

This lockdown has also forced us to re-think how we worship God. By being apart from each other, we have exposed how dependent we are on people in our worship. We need to ask ourselves these questions: Am I able to worship God even when I am alone? Can I still sing songs, have great prayers and lessons even if I am alone? Can I lead my family in worship?

It is God who causes the church to grow. We may be quarantined in our own homes and apart from each other physically, but that does not mean we cannot grow. Even now Christians are growing in their knowledge and wisdom as they spend more time with God in prayer and in meditating on the Bible. Christians are growing in their fellowship as they disciple each other more frequently online. Christians are growing in faith as they use technology to have Bibles studies and Bible talks. We are also growing in number as people are making the decision to make Jesus Lord and are getting baptized. Those who have left the church are also finding their way back. As long as we remain connected to Jesus we will grow. It is the connection with Christ which matters and not the distance.

During the lockdown, let our physical distancing from Christians lead us to a stronger spiritual connection with Christ.