**Lessons from a Lockdown**

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**Day 28**

**Colossians 3:12-17**

Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts. And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

***Questions for Personal Reflection:***

1. What does it mean to clothe myself with compassion, kindness, humility and gentleness? Do these virtues characterize my relationships with people? If not, what should I do?
2. What is the difference between bearing with another and forgiving one another? Is there someone I need to forgive as Jesus forgave me?
3. Why does love bind all the virtues together?
4. How can I teach and admonish using psalms, hymns and spiritual songs?
5. How do I do things in the name of Jesus?

***Insight:***

We are God’s chosen people. We are part of a special group in God’s eyes. This fact alone should make us rejoice today. Because we are God’s chosen people we clothe ourselves with every virtue. Often we put on clothes to meet people’s expectations of us. We dress formally when we meet someone important or when we attend an important event or a formal meeting. We dress casually when we are meeting with friends. When we go to work we dress according to what is expected of someone in our profession. In the same way, we put on virtues as a clothing because we are God’s chosen people. These virtues are expected if us. We display these virtues because of who we are in the eyes of God.

Which of these virtues have we forgotten to wear lately?

All these virtues are important because they “set the tone of human relationships” (William Barclay). But love is what binds all the virtues together. It is difficult to have compassion, or show kindness or be humble, gentle and patient without love for that person. This is perhaps one of the reasons why love for God and loving are neighbors are the first and second greatest commandments.

Even in the church filled with Christians trying to be like Christ, we still need to bear with one another. To bear is to endure. Christians despite their best efforts will still do or say things which may offend us or at least make us feel uncomfortable. Bearing with one another means not retaliating. It does not mean tolerating sin. Sometimes what other Christians do that irritate us may not even be sinful, it may simply be a weakness (e.g. lack of social skills) or just a preference (e.g. using certain perfume). Whatever it may be, we ought to bear with one another and if it is sin, we ought to forgive as Jesus forgave. If it is sin, let us not retaliate but instead speak the truth in love.

The peace of Christ should rule in our hearts because we were called to peace. Is peace ruling our hearts? It may be difficult during these times of uncertainty, but peace should govern our hearts. We need to fight against anything that prevents us from having peace control our hearts. We do this because this is what we are called to do as God’s chosen people.

Also, as God’s chosen people, the message of Christ should dwell among us richly. As Steve Kinnard describes it: “The community of Christ is to be known as a group that feasts on the Word of Christ…[It] should be front and center in our assemblies. It should be a main component in our conversations in fellowship.” The fact that we can only meet online lately does not diminish this standard. But whether we are meeting in small groups online or as an entire congregation, all of us (not just the preachers) have the responsibility to make sure that the Word of God dwells among us richly, in our preaching and in our conversations with one another.

Curiously, Paul told them to teach and admonish “through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit.” This means that singing is not just for praising God or for starting a service or devotional. Singing is supposed to teach and admonish. How is this possible? This can be done if we sing songs that reflect biblical truth. Some songs even have actual Bible verses as lyrics. Therefore, songs in church are meant to teach and not merely to entertain. Songs in church should engage the mind and heart to think about God and his word. We sing songs in church not because they fit our preference for a certain type of music or simply because they sound good. We are to sing songs to each other that teach us biblical truths. We should learn from the songs. We should be moved to do what is right because of the songs. We sing songs to each other to teach and admonish. Notice that this command is for the whole church and not just the songleaders.

During this lockdown, let us live as God’s chosen people, clothed with virtue, ruled by peace and singing spiritual songs to each other.