**Lessons from a Lockdown**

Rommel J. Casis

**Day 31**

**Colossians 4:7-18**

Tychicus will tell you all the news about me. He is a dear brother, a faithful minister and fellow servant in the Lord. I am sending him to you for the express purpose that you may know about our circumstances and that he may encourage your hearts. He is coming with Onesimus, our faithful and dear brother, who is one of you. They will tell you everything that is happening here.

My fellow prisoner Aristarchus sends you his greetings, as does Mark, the cousin of Barnabas. (You have received instructions about him; if he comes to you, welcome him.) Jesus, who is called Justus, also sends greetings. These are the only Jews among my co-workers for the kingdom of God, and they have proved a comfort to me. Epaphras, who is one of you and a servant of Christ Jesus, sends greetings. He is always wrestling in prayer for you, that you may stand firm in all the will of God, mature and fully assured. I vouch for him that he is working hard for you and for those at Laodicea and Hierapolis. Our dear friend Luke, the doctor, and Demas send greetings. Give my greetings to the brothers and sisters at Laodicea, and to Nympha and the church in her house.

After this letter has been read to you, see that it is also read in the church of the Laodiceans and that you in turn read the letter from Laodicea.

Tell Archippus: “See to it that you complete the ministry you have received in the Lord.”

I, Paul, write this greeting in my own hand. Remember my chains. Grace be with you.

***Questions for Personal Reflection:***

1. Who is the Tychicus in my life? Why? Am I like Tychicus to another disciple? Why?
2. What did Paul mean when he said that the brothers “proved a comfort” to him?
3. What does it mean to wrestle in prayer? Am I doing that? Why?
4. What could Paul mean with his message to Archippus? Do I have a problem with not finishing what I start? Why?
5. Why did Paul ask them to remember his chains?

***Insight:***

Paul sent Tychicus to the Colossians to tell then all the news about him. He wanted them to know about his circumstances. Tychicus and Onesimus were tasked tell them everything that was happening where Paul was. Thus, Paul wanted the church to know everything that was happening to him and around him. Sharing what is going on with us is important for everyone, even for leaders. Sometimes the more responsibility in leadership we have, the less open we become about our own struggles. While we need to be careful about causing members to stumble in their faith, it is also important for members to know how their leader is doing. Not only should leaders know how their members are doing, leaders must also disclose to their members how they are doing. This spirit of openness is even more important now that we are apart from each other.

Tychicus probably carried the letter to Colossae and possibly the letter to the Ephesians too (Eph 6:21). He took Titus’ place in Ephesus (Ti 3:12; 2 Tim 4:12). He was a disciple who did whatever was needed. He served in whatever capacity, whether it was simply delivering letters or leading churches, no task was too small or too great. We should also have the same heart to go anywhere and do anything for God. Onesimus on the other hand was a runaway slave who become a Christian. We see his story in Paul’s letter to Philemon which was delivered by Tychicus also. Onesimus went back to the city he ran away from, to his face his master whom he had wronged. He had to face his fears and right the wrongs he committed. Sometimes we too need to do the same. Spending more time with our families these days gives us the opportunity to have those difficult conversations with our family members. It is time to ask for forgiveness and to make amends.

Aristarchus was a Macedonian from Thessalonica (Ac 27:2). He was with Paul’s traveling companion and was seized by the mob during the riot in Ephesus (Ac 19:29). He was on the ship with Paul when it was shipwrecked. Paul described him as his fellow prisoner, whether Paul meant this literally or figuratively, Aristarchus was with Paul even in prison as he wrote the letter. We all need an Aristarchus in our lives — someone who stays with us during the toughest of times. We all need to be like Aristarchus in someone else’ life as well.

Epaphras was always wrestling in prayer for them. Wrestling (like the Olympic sport) requires all your energy and focus. Do we pray this way? Do we pray this way for others?

The church in Colossae seems to have a close relationship with the church in Laodicea as they shared letters of Paul. Today, we should imitate this spirit of sharing among our churches. We should help and encourage each other. We should learn from each other and imitate the good things our churches are doing.

Archippus was told to complete the ministry he has received. He was to accomplish the task he was given. We all have different ministries – different ways we serve God and the church. The goal is not simply to start but to finish. Let us not give up on goals we have set just because of the lockdown. Let us find ways to fulfill our role in our ministries even under the different and difficult situations we find ourselves in.

Paul had a network of Christians helping him. He relied on them. He was incarcerated but he did not allow himself to be isolated. He kept in touch and maintained his relationships even though he was in prison. Paul made sure he was part of a team.

Let the lockdown be a time we grow in our spiritual relationships as we serve, encourage and pray for each other.