**Lessons from a Lockdown**

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**Day 35**

**Ephesians 2:4-10**

But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions —it is by grace you have been saved. And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith —and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

***Questions for Personal Reflection:***

1. What does “made …alive with Christ” mean? Do I feel spiritually alive today?
2. What does “saved by grace” mean? Why is it through faith?
3. How has God been kind to me? How have I been kind to others?
4. Am I required to do good works? Why?
5. How does God prepare in advance the good works he wants me to do? What good works have I been doing?

***Insight:***

We were spiritually dead, but God made us alive with Christ. We were resurrected with Jesus. Not only did God raise us up, he also “seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus.” It’s as if we are with Jesus in heaven now because we are in Christ and someday, we will be with him in heaven. Not only does God want to give us life, he also wants us to be with him forever and to have a place of honor for all eternity. Why would God want to do all of that for us? Remember that he did this while we were still spiritually dead, before we could do anything to earn his favor. He did all of this “in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus.” God wants to display his surpassing and immeasurable grace by being kind to us. God does not want to keep his grace a secret. Neither should keep God’s grace a secret. We should proclaim it and we should share it with others by being gracious ourselves. When we are kind to people, we are expressing grace. Let us imitate God by showing kindness to everyone.

We are saved by grace. This means we cannot work for our salvation. Most if not all religions tell us that we need to do something to achieve salvation. But Christianity teaches us that we never achieve salvation, because it is a gift from God. We are not saved because we have complied with the requirements of salvation. So, we shouldn’t feel “less saved” on days we are doing badly spiritually or “more saved” on days we are doing well. Salvation is not like a water tank that increases or increases based on how much good works we pour into it. If salvation is a water tank, it is always full because of God’s overflowing grace.

We are saved by grace *through* faith. Faith gives us access to grace. The channel or means by which grace flows into our lives is faith. Like a farmer building irrigation channels to water his crops, we need to build our faith to experience God’s grace. So, without faith there is no grace.

This means that grace is not a free pass that gives us license to do whatever we want. Grace does not mean that we can sin as much as we want because we are immune from punishment. Grace does not mean that once you are saved, you remain saved regardless of how you live your life. Remember that grace comes *through faith.* How can you be faithful to God if you deliberately disobey him? How can we have faith God and commit acts of rebellion against him? Isn’t true that the more we sin, the weaker our faith becomes? When we were studying the Bible were we not able to overcome our sins because of our growing faith in God? Faith and sin cannot co-exist in us. We have to choose. If we choose faith then we have grace.

Salvation is not by works. But God expects Christians to perform good works. A Christian performs good works not to be saved, but because he is already saved. Good works is a response to salvation not its requirement. Doing good works is part of our design as human beings. That is why even those who don’t believe in God feel good when they do good works. When we do good, we are merely fulfilling our purpose. Not only did God create us to do good he prepared in advance the good works he expects us to do. He is like a parent setting up his child so the child can do chores. He teaches us what to do, he gives us what we need and helps us when we get stuck. If we look at our life — the experiences we’ve had, the skills we have developed, the people we have around us, the place we are in, our interests and the resources available to us— we can figure out what good works he wants us to do. Have we made the effort to figure out what good works God has prepared in advance for us to do? Are we doing it?

During this lockdown, let us remain in God’s grace through faith, showing kindness to others and doing the good works he prepared in advance for us to do.