**Lessons from a Lockdown**

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**Day 36**

**Ephesians 2:11-13**

Therefore, remember that formerly you who are Gentiles by birth and called “uncircumcised” by those who call themselves “the circumcision” (which is done in the body by human hands) — remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

***Questions for Personal Reflection:***

1. How was it like when I was separate from Christ?
2. Am I close to Jesus now? Why?
3. What do I have now as a Christian that I did not have before?
4. How does what I gave up to be a Christian compare with what I have as a Christian?
5. How does my sacrifice compare with Jesus’ sacrifice?

***Insight:***

Paul wanted them to remember that they used to be separated from Christ, excluded from citizenship with God’s people, and strangers to the promises of God.

To be separate from Christ is to have no relationship with him. Do we still remember what that was like? When we have been Christians for a period of time, we may forget how bad our lives used to be before we became Christians. To be excluded from God’s people is to be an outsider or even an outcast. Because we were not part of God’s community, we could not enjoy its benefits. To be strangers to the promises of God is to not even be aware of what God’s blessings. Before we became Christians, we had nothing. We had no hope. We did not have God.

We have so much more now that we are Christians. But sometimes it does not feel that way. Sometimes we struggle with what we had to give up because we became Christians. Some of us struggle with how much money we have given up over the years. We might even compute how much contribution, benevolence and special missions’ contribution we have sacrificed. We think that if we had kept the money we wouldn’t be struggling financially right now, or we would have a better car or own a house. Some of us struggle with relationships we had to give up, family members who have disowned us for our faith, or friends who no longer want to see us. We think that we wouldn’t feel lonely today if we weren’t so committed to Christ. Some of us may struggle with jobs we have given up, careers that we did not pursue or businesses that we let go of because we prioritized the church. Each of us gave up something to be a Christian and we continue to sacrifice daily for the cause of Christ. But honestly, if we add up everything we had to give up for God, does it even compare to what we have received in return?

Now we are united with Christ. We can be as close to him as we want to be. He is with us and will never leave us to the very end of the age. We can talk to him anytime and anywhere. We can ask God anything in Jesus name and he will hear us. We are never alone. He will never leave us or forsake us. Now we are part of God’s people, his treasured possession. God has placed his seal of ownership on us, declaring that we belong to Him. We are under his protection. Now we enjoy the benefits of being part of God’s community. We have spiritual relationships. We have brothers and sisters who love us and who care enough to speak the truth in love to us. We have a spiritual family that inspires and encourages us and helps us to grow. Now we share in the promises of God. We have an inheritance from God to look forward to. Nothing in the world can compare with the incomparable riches God has in store for us. Even now we enjoy spiritual blessings no amount of money can buy. Our past no longer haunts us and our future is secure. We have confidence in the present and hope for the future. Most important of all, now we have God in our lives. We can walk everyday with the Creator of the universe, and have fellowship with the King, eternal, immortal and invisible but whom we can see through Christ. The Lord Almighty protects us; we call the Everlasting Father “dad”; and the King of Glory is with us always. We can go on, but you get the point.

We used to be far away from God, but we have been brought near by the blood of Christ. It was Jesus’ sacrifice on that made of all of this possible. How does our sacrifice compare with Jesus’ sacrifice?

When we compare what we have sacrificed in the world with what we have gained in Christ, we can see clearly that we made the right choice. All we have given up does not even come close to what we have gained in Christ. Not only that. Our sacrifice is nothing compared to what Jesus sacrificed by becoming human and dying on the cross for us.

Let us draw near to God, enjoy the benefits of being part of God’s family, and find hope in God’s promises, despite the challenges during this lockdown.