**Lessons from a Lockdown**

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**Day 40**

**Ephesians 3:7-13**

I became a servant of this gospel by the gift of God’s grace given me through the working of his power. Although I am less than the least of all the Lord’s people, this grace was given me: to preach to the Gentiles the boundless riches of Christ, and to make plain to everyone the administration of this mystery, which for ages past was kept hidden in God, who created all things. His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, according to his eternal purpose that he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord. In him and through faith in him we may approach God with freedom and confidence. I ask you, therefore, not to be discouraged because of my sufferings for you, which are your glory.

***Questions for Personal Reflection:***

1. Am I living my life as a servant of the gospel? Why? Do I see sharing my faith as a privilege? What can I do more?
2. Why did Paul think he was “less than the least of all the Lord’s people”?
3. What does the “boundless riches of Christ” mean?
4. What is my role as part of the church, in making known the wisdom of God?
5. Do I feel confident in approaching God? Why?

***Insight:***

Paul had a humble view of himself. He taught thousands, raised up leaders, and planted more churches than most if not all Christians. His achievements as a Christian were amazing. But he saw himself simply as a servant of the gospel. May we all have this humility regardless of what we achieve in our Christian lives.

For Paul, being given the role to preach to the Gentiles was grace. He described himself as “less than the least of all the Lord’s people.” Why did he say that? Perhaps he felt he didn’t deserve to preach the gospel to the Gentiles because of his life before he became a Christian. Remember that not only was he a Jew, he was also a Pharisee. If Jews did not associate with Gentiles, what more a Pharisee? Perhaps he remembered how badly he treated or looked down on Gentiles. How could he be the choice to preach the gospel to Gentiles? Yet he was God’s choice. We too don’t deserve to preach the gospel. There are things in our past (perhaps even in our present) that should disqualify us from preaching the Word. So, the fact that God is allowing us and even encouraging us to share the gospel so is a privilege. We should therefore look at making disciples, whether through evangelism or discipling, as less of a duty and more of an honor. But how have we been taking advantage of this privilege?

Paul said that he was tasked to preach the boundless riches of Christ. To be boundless is to be infinite or incalculable. We will never run out of wonderful things to preach about Jesus. We can share about Jesus all our lives and always have something more to say. There is so much to learn about Christ, so many reasons to be amazed by him, and an endless number of reasons to be inspired by him.

God’s intention is for the church to make known the manifold wisdom of God. How does the church do that? First, by sharing the gospel to the world. So, when we share our faith, study the Bible with people, have group Bible studies or invite people to church activities, we are fulfilling God’s intention for the church. Second, we make the wisdom of God known by how we live our lives. By our Christ-like living we prove that it is possible to live a godly life. Furthermore, when we enjoy the benefits of such a life, it shows that God’s promises can be trusted. Take note the scripture says that such wisdom is made known to “the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms.” When the church fulfills its role, the message it proclaims reaches not only the four corners over this world, but the heavenly realms as well. As one movie line said: “What we do in life, echoes in eternity.” We need to understand that what we do as a church is supposed to have an impact not only on earth but in heaven itself. This is how significant the role of the church is in God’s plan. Does this inspire you to make sure the church fulfills its role?

In Jesus and through faith in Jesus we can approach God with freedom and confidence. We don’t have to feel insecure when praying to God as long as we have faith. We don’t have to be perfect in order to approach God, we just need to have faith. Because of this as well, we should not be discouraged when we see fellow Christians suffering. Paul told them not to be discouraged by his sufferings. He was in prison but he still had freedom to approach God. The same is true for us. We may be limited in what we can do because of this pandemic, but our access to God is unrestricted. We may not be able to meet with other Christians, but we are always able to meet with God. All we need is faith.

Even during this lockdown, let us have faith in approaching God as servants of the gospel with a heavenly impact.