**Lessons from a Lockdown**

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**Day 41**

**Ephesians 3:14-21**

For this reason I kneel before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name. I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord’s holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge —that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.

***Questions for Personal Reflection:***

1. What does it mean to be strengthened in my inner being? How strong am I in this way?
2. Am I getting stronger in my inner being? Why do I need to be strengthened in this way?
3. What does it mean to be rooted and established in love?
4. What does the phrase “together with all the Lord’s holy people” imply?
5. How does knowing that God can do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine affect how I live?

***Insight:***

Paul prayed that they be strengthened with power through God’s Spirit in their inner being. He had earlier written about the “incomparably great power” available for believers (Eph 1:19). Now he explains that this power comes through the Holy Spirit. We cannot do things on our own. It would be foolish of us to try to live the Christian life relying on our own strength and abilities. Paul was a very intelligent and talented man, but he was a very prayerful man. He knew that he needed the power that can only come from God. Is this our conviction as well? Are we praying every day? Do we pray before making important decisions or performing important tasks?

Paul also describes the strengthening as happening in “their inner being.” It is not a physical strengthening of the body but the spirit, the soul, the heart. It is not the strengthening of the flesh which will someday die, but the strengthening of that part of us which will live forever.

Paul explained that this strengthening of the inner being is necessary so that Christ may dwell in their hearts. Having Jesus live in our hearts is not a small matter. Can you imagine God being with you all the time? In the Bible, the heart is described as the seat of our emotions and thoughts. If Jesus is in our hearts that means our emotions and thoughts would be influenced by him. In fact, we will not do anything without his influence. If Jesus is living in our hearts, it will be seen in how we act, how we think and how we speak. Even our facial expressions would reflect the fact that Jesus in living in our hearts. But perhaps we are not Christ-like in this way because we only allow Christ to visit our hearts (perhaps Sundays and devotionals?) but not live in it. Jesus must not be just a visitor but a resident in our hearts.

We also need power “to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love.” We would not be able to comprehend Christ’s love if God does not enable us to do so. It requires that we be rooted and established in love. We need to practice love in order to understand Christ’s love. The love of Christ is not a theory we can just learn in books or videos but something we must experience as we decide to love each day. Paul says that they understand Christ’s love “together with all the Lord’s holy people.” This means that knowing God’s love is done in a community and not alone. Love cannot be learned by self-study. We need other Christians to understand Christ’s love because love needs to be experienced. We need to give love and receive love.

When we know Christ’s love we will be “filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.” Regardless of what we accomplish, our lives would be empty without God. Only God can fulfill us. We are filled with God when we know Christ’s love. There is no other way to be fulfilled.

God can “do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine.” There is no limit to what God can do. How should this truth affect how we pray? Imagine you have a machine that can produce any kind of food you want anytime and all you have to do is ask. What will you ask for? How often will you ask? What about our prayers to God? God can give us anything we need in a magnitude beyond our wildest imagination. What are we asking for? Are we praying for God’s power to strengthen us so we can love and understand Christ’s love?

Let us pray that we understand Christ’s love during the lockdown.