**Lessons from a Lockdown**

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**Day 50**

**Ephesians 4:32-5:2**

Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you. Follow God’s example, therefore, as dearly loved children and walk in the way of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

***Questions for Personal Reflection:***

1. How kind and compassionate am I to the people in my home? Would they say I am kind and compassionate? Why?
2. Is it easy for me to forgive? Do I forgive as God forgives? Why?
3. In what specific ways can I imitate God at home? Online?
4. How can I walk in the way of love? What do I need to change?
5. What specific things can I do to love just as Christ loved us”? In which relationship is this hardest for me? Why?

***Insight:***

We must be kind and compassionate. One way to look at kindness is to act towards people in a way that is helpful to them or to act in a way that fits their need. So kindness is not just being nice, its treating people the way they need to be treated. To be compassionate is to feel concern for others. Thus, when we are compassionate towards people, we are kind to them. Are we kind and compassionate with the people in our homes? Are we kind and compassionate with people we interact with online? Are we kind or compassionate all the time?

We are called to forgive people just as Jesus forgave us. The pandemic has been tough on all of us in different ways. We have all been emotionally affected and stressed at various times for varying reasons. Our patience has grown thin. We have become irritable. This has caused us to say or do things that may hurt others or we may have been hurt by others. We need to ask for forgiveness and forgive others just as we want to be forgiven.

We need to follow God’s example like children who love to imitate their parents. Our goal is to be like him in his character or in his nature. If Jesus lived in our house or went online, how would he behave? We need to do the same. A follower of God is an imitator of God.

But to imitate God we need to know God. When we read the Bible we need to do so with the intention of knowing God more. The Bible is a library of books that teach us about God in different ways. Are we excited to go through the Bible and learn more about God? Have you been learning about God daily? As we learn about God, we need to find ways to imitate him in our daily lives. Often, we get to know God more as we imitate him.

We must love “just as Christ loved us.” We need to be as loving as Jesus. How did Jesus love people? He taught them, healed them and gave himself up for them. We love people when we teach them about God. We may not have miraculous gifts of healing, but we can help people get healed emotionally or spiritually by counseling and comforting them. We can give ourselves up for people by setting aside our own needs and focusing on the needs of others. Jesus did all of this all the time. Jesus loved even when he was tired, sad and persecuted. We should do the same.

We need to display the same kind of unconditional love that Jesus had. He loved people not because they loved him back. He loved people not because they did something for him. His love came from a commitment to love to no matter what. Jesus loved the unlovable. We were one of them remember? We need to imitate him. We need to love even when we don’t feel like it. We need to love even if our love is not reciprocated or even appreciated.

Jesus’ love was seen in his actions. What acts of love have we been doing this pandemic? If we claimed that we are walking in the way of love, would anyone object? Have we become more loving as we get to spend more time with our families? Have we become more loving as we interact with people online? What have we done to show our love?

Jesus taught that we ought to love our enemies. This means we ought to love even those who hurt us. Some people may not like us. We need to love them too even if they do not love us back. This is the way of love. It is a hard way to live. It is a way of suffering. We will go through heart ache. In the same way that loving can give us the greatest joy, we need to accept that it can also cause us the greatest pain. But “true love is demonstrated as we maintain it through our pain” (Thomas Jones). Are we willing to love in this way? This is Jesus’ way. We cannot follow Jesus if we do not go through this way.

The way of love is the narrow road and only a few people find it. It is an uphill climb (Where else would heaven be?) but it is the most fulfilling journey we can take. Living by loving like Christ is life to the full.

Even though we are in lockdown, we should follow God’s example and walk in the way of love.