**Lessons from a Lockdown**

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**Day 51**

**Ephesians 5:3-7**

But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God’s holy people. Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving. For of this you can be sure: No immoral, impure or greedy person—such a person is an idolater —has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of such things God’s wrath comes on those who are disobedient. Therefore do not be partners with them.

***Questions for Personal Reflection:***

1. Why is greed listed with sexual immorality and impurity? What is common among the three?
2. In what ways do people today commit obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking? Am I tempted to engage in this? Why?
3. Which of all the sins listed did I commit the most before? Which do I still struggle to overcome today? Why?
4. Why is immorality, impurity and greed a form of idolatry or false worship?
5. What excuses do people give for these sins?

***Insight:***

For there to not even be a hint of sexual immorality or any kind of impurity or greed among us, it should be unthinkable for any of us to commit such sins. Our lives must be such that no one would even consider the accusation that any of us commit these sins. Could this be said of our church today? Do we have such a reputation for holiness, godliness and righteousness that allegations of such iniquities being committed by us would sound preposterous? Thus, not only should we not commit these sins but act the opposite of these sins. It is not about not crossing the line but staying as far from the line as possible. Is this our heart today?

Sexual immorality and impurity are sins we clearly recognize. For greed to be listed with them reflects the seriousness of this sin. According to Paul these are sins of idolatry. When we commit these sins, we worship ourselves or the objects we desire more than God. So rejecting these sins, require us worshipping God always and only. If our focus is on worshipping God every day, offering our bodies as living sacrifices (Ro 12:1), then we should be able to stay away from these sins.

Immorality is any sexual relation outside of marriage. The fact that immorality is not only accepted but celebrated in popular media does not diminish its sinfulness. Morality is not a popularity contest. Apart from violating clear biblical commands, immorality is repugnant if we consider its societal cost: abortion, incest, rape, adultery, divorce, broken homes, teenage pregnancies, abandoned children, sexually transmitted diseases and others. Why would anyone want more of these in our world?

The Greek word translated as impurity means uncleanness. It includes lustful, luxurious, profligate (recklessly extravagant or wasteful) living. Impurity is not only in our actions but also in our thoughts and motives. Technology has become a means to promote impurity. During these times we are more online, we are more vulnerable to temptations for impurity. Television and the internet can broadcast into our homes the temptations of the world - the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life (1 Jn 2:16 ESV). We should therefore be more careful than ever before.

Greed is wanting to have more of something. It is desiring more than what we need. People can be greedy whether they are rich or poor. So when we have only a little we should not think that having more will give us immunity from greed. Wanting more than we need is a result of what is in our heart, not what is in our hand. Sometimes being greedy is simply not wanting to share with those in need. Greed includes focusing on our needs only and not considering the needs of others. Greed is what makes us focus on work and neglect spending time with our family. Greed is what makes us ungrateful for what we have. Greed is what makes us complain when we are so blessed so much compared to other people. Greed is indeed a sin as disgusting as immorality and impurity.

Obscenity, foolish talk and coarse joking are sins we commit while we interact with other people. People commit these sins by engaging in (including laughing to) green jokes, “locker room” talk, cursing, making racist or discriminatory remarks, making fun of people and similar acts. Today, people haves exported these sins into the digital world where they can be more viral and virulent. Often, these sins are made acceptable by being funny. Sitcoms, movies, music and stand-up comedy have desensitized us to the sinfulness of such things. But words and images do not become less sinful just because they make us laugh. Paul said that we should replace these sinful interactions with thanksgiving. Tell people how grateful you are for God. Talk about people you are grateful for. Thank people for the good that they do for others. Appreciate what other people do for you. This is what we should post, comment, share and like.

Paul said that they should not let anyone deceive them with empty words. No amount of words can explain away the sins listed by Paul. There is no excuse. As Paul says, “because of such things God’s wrath comes on those who are disobedient.” These are sins which can disqualify us from the salvation we have received by grace. Are these sins worth going to hell for?

During the lockdown, let us not tolerate sin in our lives.