**Lessons from a Lockdown**

**Volume II**

Rommel J. Casis

**Day 71**

**1 John 3:11-15**

For this is the message you heard from the beginning: We should love one another. Do not be like Cain, who belonged to the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own actions were evil and his brother’s were righteous. Do not be surprised, my brothers and sisters, if the world hates you. We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love each other. Anyone who does not love remains in death. Anyone who hates a brother or sister is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life residing in him.

***Questions for Personal Reflection:***

1. Do I ever get tired of being reminded to love? Why?
2. What is my reaction when a Christian is able to do something for God that I am not able to do? How do I feel about Christians whose strength is my weakness? Why?
3. What do I do when I feel bad about another Christian? How do I usually resolve conflicts?
4. How do I feel about people in the world hating me? Am I willing to be righteous if it means being hated? Why?
5. How can I express my love for my brothers and sisters today?

***Insight:***

We should love one another. This is a command we have heard from the beginning of our Christian walk. It is repeated so often because it is very important. We need to be reminded to love because our usual state is to be unloving. We should love one another as Jesus loved. We love one another because love comes from God (I John 4:7). We ought to love one another because God loves us (I John 4:11). We should not only love those who love us back. We should also love the person God loves whether or not s/he loves us back.

Why did John use Cain and Abel as an example? Perhaps it is to show that even among family members, love is not automatic. We need to choose to love.

By loving our brothers and sisters we show that we have passed on from death to life. Loving fellow Christians is a sign of salvation. If we do not love we remain in death and in darkness (I John 2:9). A person who has eternal life can love anyone and everyone. What normally stops us from loving people is the pain they cause us. But when you have eternity of happiness in heaven waiting for you, the pain caused by others on this earth really does not matter.

Cain murdered his brother because Abel’s righteousness made his evil heart obvious and without excuse. If Abel can be righteous why can’t he? Do we resent Christians who are more righteous than us? How do we feel about Christians who are examples of righteousness? Do we dislike Christians who point out to us what we’ve done wrong?

When we strive to be righteous, those who are not, may hate us. Paul warns that “everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted” (2 Timothy 3:12). These may be our family and friends who knew us before we became Christians and they are surprised that we no longer join them in their sins, and they heap abuse on us (1 Peter 4:4). The price we have to pay for righteousness is hatred from the wicked. The world will hate the righteous. Do we accept that we will be hated for being righteous?

The righteousness of the righteous makes people in the world look bad. The world’s values are shown to be meaningless when compared with righteousness. By being righteous we expose how the pattern of the world is simply wrong. So we cannot be righteous and yet hope to be liked and be popular in the world. We should focus more on being righteous than being loved by the world. Righteousness brings eternal rewards, popularity is fleeting. What brings us greater happiness, righteousness or popularity? Given the choice between being righteous or being popular, what should we choose?

We will be hated for being righteous and speaking up for righteousness. But we should not respond with hate. Hating is just like murder because it also subjects us to judgment (Matthew 5:21-22). So we should take hatred very seriously. Murder, especially of one’s family like in the case of Cain, is a despicable crime. Hatred makes us to do the unspeakable. Hate enables us to commit evil with no shame or remorse. We should be very alarmed if there is hatred in our hearts. Not having hatred in our hearts is a salvation issue. Even though other people may do hateful things, we need to protect ourselves by not hating them. They harm themselves by doing hateful things but we harm ourselves if we hate them.

Neither should we spread hatred. There is a lot of hatred in social media today. Sometimes this hatred is in the form of news items, memes or personal posts. Before we like or share, we need to consider whether doing so will spread or cause hatred in others. There is never a good reason to cause people to sin.

We should make it our goal to express our love to our brothers and sisters every day. We should express our love to our families and other people in our homes.

Let’s focus on being loving and being righteous even if it means being hated by others.