**Lessons from a Lockdown**

**Volume II**

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**Day 86**

**2 John 1:7-8**

I say this because many deceivers, who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh, have gone out into the world. Any such person is the deceiver and the antichrist. Watch out that you do not lose what we have worked for, but that you may be rewarded fully.

***Questions for Personal Reflection:***

1. What does there being false teachers in the world have to do with walking in love?

2. What is my experience with these false teachers or false doctrines? How did I deal with them?

3. What is it I have worked for? How do I lose it?

4. What rewards am I looking forward to? Why?

5. Is the concept of reward consistent with the concept of grace? Why?

***Insight:***

John told them that the reason why they should walk in love is because many deceivers or false teachers are out in the world. There will always be deceivers — people who teach the wrong things about Jesus. These are not just religious leaders. These include professors and teachers in schools who misrepresent who Jesus. These include authors whose writings confuse people about who Jesus is. These include ordinary people who have the wrong ideas about Jesus who share their wrong ideas with others. False doctrines are not just spread in religious gatherings. They can be seen in novels, movies, televisions shows, talk shows and different forms of media. We must not knowingly or unknowingly buy into these false teachings that can be embedded in popular culture. As Christians, we must learn to distinguish fact from fiction.

But what do these false teachers have to do with the command to love one another? Perhaps what this means is that the best way to combat false doctrines is by loving people. Ordinarily, when we prepare ourselves to refute false doctrines, we study the scriptures so that we can respond to wrong arguments and make good arguments to correct false teaching. This is correct and important. We fight false doctrine with the truth. But there are people who might not be swayed even by the best arguments. Perhaps they cling to false doctrine out of emotional connection and not rational thinking. Sometimes the best way to show them that what we believe is true is by our love and the way we live our lives. Our testimony is still the best argument against false doctrine. Our lives best demonstrate that the gospel is true. Our love for each is our best evidence for the true gospel. This is how we neutralize the deceivers in the world — by living a life of love. So sometimes we don't need to know a lot of things to refute false doctrines. We just need to walk in love.

We need to watch out that we don't lose what we have worked for and so that we would be rewarded fully. What is John referring to? What is the reward he is talking about? It can't be our salvation because we don't work for that. Our salvation is not something we can earn. But the Bible does talk about Christians being rewarded for their labor. Paul talks about how the one who plants and the who waters will be rewarded according to their own labor (1 Corinthians 3:8). So one of the things we work for is helping people become Christians and there are rewards for our efforts in doing this. Jesus talked about welcoming people and water to disciples, or acts of hospitality and kindness as meriting a reward from God (Matthew 10:41-42). He also talked about those who gave up relationships and property for him and the gospel receiving one hundred times as much (Mark 10:29-30). So sacrificing for God and the gospel will be rewarded. The writer of Hebrews tells us that we should not throw away our confidence because we will be richly rewarded. (10:35). He further says that we need to persevere so that when we do the will of God, we will receive what he has promised. Perseverance will be richly rewarded.

But is the concept of grace inconsistent with the concept of reward? Grace means we receive something we have not earned or worked for. On the other hand, a reward is something we work for or we have earned. How are they consistent? The Bible teaches that we will be rewarded for the good things that we do, but the good we do will never be enough for us to earn what only grace can give us. Furthermore, though we know that there is a reward for doing good, the reward is not our motivation but gratitude for the grace of God. Inevitably the reward that we get from God is worth infinitely more than what we deserve. So even our reward is by grace.

So when John warns against losing "what we have worked for" or that we should make sure we are "rewarded fully" he is not saying that we should work for rewards. He is only saying that we should be careful not do anything that would forfeit the reward we would receive if we stayed faithful. While we cannot do anything to earn salvation, we can certainly do things that can disqualify us from it. God has given us so much by grace. It would be a shame for us to lose all the rewards God promises us, just because we were not careful.

Let us be watchful of our lives and what we believe in.