**Lessons from a Lockdown**

**Volume II**

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**Day 87**

**2 John 1:9-13**

Anyone who runs ahead and does not continue in the teaching of Christ does not have God; whoever continues in the teaching has both the Father and the Son. If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not take them into your house or welcome them. Anyone who welcomes them shares in their wicked work.

I have much to write to you, but I do not want to use paper and ink. Instead, I hope to visit you and talk with you face to face, so that our joy may be complete.

The children of your sister, who is chosen by God, send their greetings.

***Questions for Personal Reflection:***

1. How do I continue in the teaching of Christ?

2. How should I treat people who believe in false doctrines? Why?

3. How careful am I about what I allow in my home?

4. Is John saying we should not welcome non-Christians into our homes? Why?

5. Do I prefer face to face conversations to written communication? Why?

***Insight:***

What does "runs ahead and does not continue in the teaching of Christ" mean? Other versions translate it as "abide in the teaching" or "remain" in the teaching. We do not continue in the teaching when we violate Jesus' teachings or stop believing in them. What could possibly make us do this? What could make us give up on God? We can think of a number of reasons but they all have one thing in common: not being close to God. If we remain in Jesus we remain in his teaching. Jesus' teaching will become a bunch of rules to us if we do not have relationship with him. Inevitably it is our closeness to him that determines whether we can obey his teachings. More than anything else it is our relationship with Jesus which we should nurture.

The teaching of Christ could also refer to the correct belief about Christ. John was dealing with those who were tempted with believing in false doctrines. It's sometimes difficult to distinguish between a true Christian and one who believes in false doctrines. Even if on the outside a person can act like a Christian, but if in his mind he has wrong beliefs about Jesus, that person does not have God. The Bible says we need to watch our life and doctrine closely (1 Timothy 4:16). Being a "good person" is not enough reason to call one a Christian. Neither is knowing the correct doctrine enough to call one a disciple of Jesus. To be righteous before God, we need to believe in the right teachings and live in the right way.

To run ahead could mean to go beyond the teachings of Jesus. It could mean "adding" to the teachings by insisting on commands or principles Jesus never taught. It could mean moving to another gospel completely. Paul warns against this in Galatians 1:6-9. Paul says that the person who turns to a different gospel is under God's curse. So we really need to be careful about what we believe.

We should be careful about brining into our lives those who teach and believe in false doctrine. While our intention may be to reach out to them, some false teachers really have no intention of repenting but they have every intention of converting us to their side.

This concept of being careful of what we bring into our homes has meant something more now during this time of pandemic. We are advised to de-contaminate ourselves and everything we have when we return home. This prevents the virus from entering our homes. But this is a principle we should have been practicing even before the pandemic struck. The principle that we should be careful of what we bring into our homes to values we allow to be taught in our homes. We may shut the doors of our houses to the world but we allow the world in by what we watch on television and on the internet. We allow the world to enter our minds by what we read in books, in our tablets, computers and mobile phones. What appears to be entertainment could actually be temptations to sin or believe in the wrong values. Are we careful about what we allow into our minds through media as much as we are careful about the virus?

John told them not to welcome in their homes anyone who did not bring Christ's teaching. It does not mean we will not be hospitable to the lost. Nor does it mean that we should be rude and unkind to those who teach false doctrines. It may mean that we should not act in a way that could be interpreted as our approval of what they do or teach. We should not show that we support their teachings in way. We can be respectful but at no point should our actions be misinterpreted as agreement with their false beliefs. Otherwise, this would be "shar[ing] in their wicked work."

John had more to say but he would rather speak to them face to face. There are things that are better said in person so that we can hear the tone of voice and facial expressions of those we communicate with.

Face to face meetings can be a challenge during this pandemic as safety requires that we do not have actual meetings and that if we do, we should be wearing masks. It's a good thing that there are technologies that allow us to talk face to face even though we are far apart. Video-conferencing is still not the same as talking to someone on the real world but we should take full advantage of the technology right now in the same way that the New Testament writers took advantage of the technology available during their time.

Let us continue in the teaching of Christ.