

Objective: to enable every believer to live the supernatural lifestyle that God intended.

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NLBC a.m.

God's Family & Lockdown

John 20:19; John 20:26;

Gal. 3:23-29

1 Peter 5:9

“...Standing firm in the faith, because you know that *your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings.*”

Introduction

God's people have found themselves 'locked down' on numerous occasions throughout history. In this season of global virus outbreak, governments have chosen to 'lock down' their populations, forbidding them to go out, except for the most significant reasons connected to survival. Today, we want to understand what 'lockdown' really means for God's family.

Lockdown

To be “locked” or commanded to stay behind closed doors—To practice ‘social distancing,’ or ‘self-isolation,’ are practises we have not known in modern public life at a global level. It is

a 'new way of living' that we must learn. How do we eat? How do we get our hair cut? What do we do with our children? How do we pay our bills? So many questions arise in this 'new world order.' Let's look at few examples of 'lockdown' in Scripture:

- John 20:19 – “On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, **with the doors locked for fear of the Jews**, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" Jesus is not prevented from entering our homes by 'lockdown.'
- John 20:26 – “A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. **Though the doors were locked**, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" Once again, the disciples were in 'lockdown' because of fear...both times Jesus came and said, “Peace be with you!” Same Jesus today with the same message to you!

Let us examine the 'spiritual nature' of 'lockdown.'

Gal. 3:23-29 says, “Before this faith came, **we were held prisoners by the law, locked up until faith**, should be revealed. So, the law was put in charge *to lead us to Christ* that we might be justified by faith. Now that faith has come, we are no longer under the supervision of the law. You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptised into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for

you are all one in Christ Jesus. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.”

Mankind was ‘locked down’ once he was kicked out of the ‘good life’ in the Garden. He came under the Law—and lived a prisoner of that life of confinement and drudgery. He wasn’t allowed ‘out,’ into freedom, peace, and blessing, until faith came.

Notice phrase: “...**until faith came**...man was locked up. Man is always in ‘lockdown’ when he is not operating in faith. He lives in the ‘prison of fear’ trying to carve out a life ‘in a small space.’

What Matters Most Under Lockdown

In the times of deprivations, destitution, and scarcity, believers re-discover what is most important in life: what the manual for living, the Bible says: 1 Tim. 6:8 says, “...if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that.”

1 Peter 5:9 says, “Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that **your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings.**”

Global and national sports events have been cancelled. Concerts have been cancelled. Cinemas have been closed. The stock market where the worlds goods are traded, has been devastated. Economies hold no promise for great prosperity and job security. Governments that might think of expansionism, have to put their wicked notions on hold—for

what value is there in taking control of another nation of 'infected people?' Because these and many other things, have been 'locked down,' mankind is forced to take stock of what is absolutely, necessary—the basics of life.

Everything we need for life and Godliness comes from Him. 2 Pet. 1:3 says, "His divine power **has given us everything we need for life and godliness** through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, **so that** through them **you may** participate in the divine nature and **escape** the corruption in the world caused by evil desires."

What Keeps You Strong:

- Faith -- God's eyes are upon you and He protects you and rescues you. 1 John 5:4 says, "This is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith!" Matt. 9:29 says, "...according to your **faith**, will it be done to you!"
- Love Rom. 8:35-39 says, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? As it is written: "For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered." No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor

anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Share God’s love, pray, encourage, get out of yourselves, give, give, give to others...this ‘loving lifestyle’ is what secures the inner life of blessing. What people are discovering under the governmental lockdown is that, it is their ‘inner life’ that most precious to them.

They could stay distracted on other things when they had freedom. They could soften any hardship, so they thought, by doing something else. Now we discover that we only have the true freedom of life, on the inside, if we are centering on Christ and His mission in the world.

Loving others is where life started with us. He loved us. We became lovers by accepting His love. Now we are the ‘great lovers in the earth’ giving His love to a loveless world.

- Joy – Philippians 4:4 says, “Rejoice in the Lord (when there is no virus) always!” Rejoicing releases strength.... Neh. 8:10 says, “Nehemiah said, "Go and enjoy choice food and sweet drinks, and send some to those who have nothing prepared. This day is sacred to our Lord. Do not grieve, for **the joy of the Lord is your strength.**" Let some songs of rejoicing ring out of your heart and home today!

- Meditate on the “good stuff.” Phil 4:6-8 says, “Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable — if anything is excellent or praiseworthy — think about such things.”

There are so many conspiracy theories out there—the Internet, the great gossip-manufacturing plant of this world, is under the control of the evil one, inspiring new viruses of fear, designed to get you paralysed because you can do nothing about the conspiracies that are controlling your life. Stop searching what feeds the ‘curiosity of evil’ and start meditating the ‘answers to life’ found in Him who is The Life!

Questions To Ask and Answer in These Days

In these days of severely restricted freedoms, we are forced to consider what are the most essential elements of our lives. Proverbs 15:31-33 NASU says, “He whose ear listens to the life-giving reproof will dwell among the wise. He who neglects discipline despises himself, but he who listens to reproof acquires understanding. The fear of the LORD is the instruction for wisdom and before honor *comes* humility.”

1. What will my life be like when the danger of this virus is passed?

2. Will it return to the 'normal' of what it was before the virus came?
3. What are the messages God is giving to me about my life?
4. What **are** the most important things in my life?
5. What is God's mission for my life? Am I pursuing it or 'just living life?'
6. What in my life will count for eternity? Whose life am I affecting for eternity with my time, talents and resources?

Determine to make a gain from this season of your life.

Let me encourage you to take communion today—the New Covenant Passover meal – the meal that protects you, the meal that delivers you, and the meal that sustains you!