

## **COVID-19: A Christian Response**

by David M. Hoffeditz, Ph.D.

From the cancellation of schools to the closing of national borders, the coronavirus has paralyzed our world and instilled fear, uncertainty, and concern. Feeling besieged within the walls of our homes, there are several ways we, as believers, can respond. Observe the following:

1. ***We do not need to fear, our Lord reigns!*** It is so easy in this present time to be fearful. From the empty shelves at the grocery store to the uncertainty of whether one should even go out to eat, anxiety levels soar. We need to be reminded that our God is the sovereign One who knows and controls all things. Isaiah 41:10 writes, “Do not fear, for I am with you, do not be afraid, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my victorious right hand.”
2. ***While we may never know why the Lord has allowed this virus, we can trust in His goodness.*** Psalm 91:2-3 declares, “My refuge and my fortress; my God, in whom I trust. He will deliver you from the snare of the fowler and from the deadly pestilence.” While we may never know why the Lord has allowed this virus to spread, we rest in knowing that even in the midst of suffering, God cares for His children. During the outbreak of Ebola in West Africa in 2013, an American nurse, Nancy Writebol, served faithfully in ministering to the sick. In the process, she contracted this deadly virus. After a miraculous recovery, she stated, “I had experienced Christ’s peace way before I ever contracted Ebola. [After I got sick,] my relationship with the Lord deepened, knowing he was in control. He was in control of what was happening, and it was not a surprise to God. He has our days numbered.”
3. ***In times such as these, we have the incredible privilege to show the love of Christ.*** The importance of Christian charity, hospitality, and care during a time of crisis is vital. In a report that followed the West Africa Ebola epidemic in 2013, scholars discovered that “Faith-inspired actors have contributed important elements to an effective Ebola epidemic response. Local faith-based structures, with support from global faith-based partners, already have a solid foundation in communities and thus can be effective in times of crisis” (C. Greyling, J. A. Maulti, et. al., “Lessons from the Faith-Driven Response to the West Africa Ebola Epidemic,” *The Review of Faith and International Affairs* 14.3 [2016], 122).

How we care for one another will vary pending one’s health, finances, and overall life circumstances. However, there are a variety of ways we can minister to those in need. For instance, we may need to drop off a meal at the front porch for those who are quarantined or send an email or text of encouragement, while prayerfully lifting others up to the Lord. Other individuals may need financial assistance to cover bills from a lack of employment or

to cover unexpected medical bills. As we stock our pantries and hunker down within our homes, we must not forget the impending needs of those around us.

4. ***We should take some time to reevaluate our own lives.*** Often times the Lord used pestilence to judge the unrighteousness (1 Chron 21:14; Rev 18:8). *While I am certainly not saying that this virus is due to God's judgment*, it definitely should cause us to pause and evaluate our lives. We need to walk humbly before our Lord in obedience to Him. Psalm 69 was known as the Plague Song during the outbreak of the Bubonic plague in 1520. In this psalm we are reminded that the Lord listens to the needy; he does not despise those whom He punishes . . . For God will deliver Zion . . . and those who are loyal to Him will live in it!" (Psalm 69:32-36).
  
5. ***In the midst of chaos, we have the joy of growing in contentment in our Savior.*** While the world seeks to take every precaution, this virus has no antidote or vaccine. Rather than panic, we need to claim these words from a Puritan prayer: "When I am afraid of evils to come, comfort me by showing me that in myself I am dying, a condemned wretch, but in Christ I am reconciled and live; that in my self I find insufficiency and no rest, but in Christ there is satisfaction and peace; that in myself I am feeble and unable to do good, but in Christ I have ability to do all things."
  
6. ***We have the opportunity to share with the world the true source of hope and peace.*** While COVID-19 currently has no cure, there is a cure for a disease far worse than the coronavirus. It's fatality rate is 100% unless treated. This disease is sin. We live in a world that is enslaved to the prince of darkness (Ephesians 2:1-3). Hopeless and lost, this world needs to hear the Good News concerning the Great Physician—our Savior, Jesus Christ (see Matthew 9:12)!
  
7. ***We need to pray without ceasing.*** We need to be praying for the Gospel to go forth, for healing of those who are sick, for protection and the well-being of others, and for medical solutions in fighting this virus. In August, 1527, the Bubonic plague struck Wittenberg. The great Reformer, Martin Luther decided to stay and minister to the sick. During this time, he also became ill. Yet, during this pandemic, Luther called on people to trust God in prayer. It was also during this time that he penned "A Mighty Fortress is Our God". Reflect on the third stanza: "And tho' this world, with devils filled, should threaten to undo us, we will not fear, for God hath willed His truth to triumph thro' us. The prince of darkness grim, we tremble not for him. His rage we can endure, for lo, his doom is sure; one little word shall fell him". Indeed, a mighty fortress is our God! We need to take time to cast our cares upon Him in prayer, for He cares for us (1 Peter 5:7). Our Mighty Fortress is worthy of being trusted in these uncertain days. Praise God, His kingdom is forever!