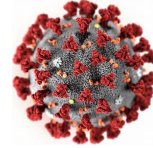


Covid-19: A Pestilence



A few things we need to keep in mind during perilous times

1. These are UNSAFE times

1. We are living in DANGEROUS DAYS. **Jesus said** in Matthew 24 7 His second coming would be preceded by an increase of “*pestilences*.”

The word *pestilence* is found 49 times in a King James Bible. When I first heard of sweeping effect of the coronavirus several weeks ago, the first word that came to my mind was *pestilence*.

Exodus 5 3 is the first mention of “pestilence” in the Bible. It is mentioned in connection with the plagues God would send upon Egypt. Interesting

The dictionary says a **pestilence** is “a fatal epidemic disease that is highly infective and devastating; A contagious disease; harmful to health and life.” The coronavirus has reached *pandemic* proportions. According to the latest CDC statistics the Covid-19 virus has infected a million people and killed 50,000 people worldwide in just 4 months. I would say the coronavirus qualifies as being

Stay SAFE in these UNSAFE times.

Since the Covid-19 virus has swept across our world, we are urged to **sh** our hands with soap... use hand-**sanitizer**... and practice “**social distancing**.” Avoid close contact with other people. If possible, **wear a mask** that covers your nose and mouth when you are out of your house. I attempt to practice all these things. I have been “ordered” to not leave our house—just in case. Many churches now “live” stream their services via Facebook. I have never thought I’d say that (Gal. 2 9). In these times, Christians would greet one another with a kiss (1 Cor. 16 19; 1 Thess. 5 26). They would give other believers “*the kiss of peace*” (Gal. 2 9). But, today that is a “**no-no**” [Perhaps they would be giving a light elbow bump of fellowship”]

People in the Bible isolate themselves from the disease of leprosy. Anyone who would approach someone with this highly contagious disease must be warned, “Unclean” and stay away lest they also catch leprosy.

While I was walking down one of the streets in our neighborhood recently, people who were walking towards me from the opposite direction would move to the other side of the street. If it were not for Covid-19, that would give me a societal complex. Now-a-days I walk by myself in the desert near our house.

2. These are UNPRECEDENTED times.

I read this coronavirus will change the way we live forever. Things will not be the same—the way we greet people (hello, goodbye)... the way we shop... Education... Entertainment... Sports... concerts... How we conduct worship services will be affected. Over 10 million people have filed for unemployment last week. Our computer system had a server hit.

My wife, in jest, posted on Facebook, “you suppose this crisis is God’s way of telling us to stop?” I responded to Barb’s comment “Are you saying God sent this? I don’t know if God sent it, **but** He certainly could have prevented it. (See Job). So, if He permitted it, He must have some purpose for it, whatever that may be.”

WHAT I MISS While I don’t mind spending time alone with my wife at home, I do miss being with other people. The thing I miss most during this coronavirus epidemic is the fellowship I enjoy by being with likeminded Christians at my local church. I miss attending church services IN PERSON, instead of watching on Facebook at home.

There is a saying that “absence makes the heart grow fonder” If that is true, I’m growing more and more fond of my church the longer I must stay away. When the day arrives that we may again assemble together physically, I’ll be there.

3. These are UNNATURAL times.

I know some people are either anti-social or non-social. For these kinds of people, this present “lockdown” is probably a blessing. But, for most Christians, like myself, “social distancing” is very difficult. Do you know what makes “social distancing” difficult because it is **UNNATURAL**. These are not normal conditions that require us to live in isolation.

MAKING THE IMAGE OF GOD. God is a social Person. Being in relationship with the triune members of the Godhead—God the Father, God the Son, and the Holy Spirit. We see them conversing with each other when God said in Gen. 1:26—“*And God said, Let US make man in*

...*in His likeness...*"). Since man is created in the image of God, ... being. That is why God said, "*It is NOT GOOD that the man*" (Gen. 2:18).

While I am an *independent* Baptist, I realize I am still *interdependent* on other members in the body of Christ. We are ONE in the body of Christ. We need each other (1 Cor. 12:12-27).

4. These are UNCERTAIN times.

No one knows for certain when this crisis will end. Will our economy ever rebound to where it was three months ago? Some are optimistic that life will return to some semblance of "normal" by the end of April. Maybe—I hope so, but it may go on indefinitely. Only God knows.

5. Some ENCOURAGING truths!

Here is some encouragement for us while we must be apart.

1. Even when I cannot be physically present with other Christians at my local church, I can be with them *IN SPIRIT*. Physical distance **cannot** separate our union in the Body of Christ.
 - When Paul could not be present with the church at Corinth, he wrote to them that he was with them *in spirit*. Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 5:3-4 – "*...sincerely, but present IN SPIRIT, have judged*... In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, *AND my spirit...*"
 - But we, brethren, being *from you for a HEART, endeavoured*... *abundantly*... (1 Thess. 2:17). I wrote to the church at Phil. 1:7).
 - I visited the city of Colosse. Yet, not... to the... "*For though I be absent in the flesh, yet I am with you IN THE*" (Colossians 2:5).

So, while we are ordered by our government to "distance," the Bible assures us the government can never separate us from the Body of Christ. We are still ONE in Christ, no matter how much distance (1 Cor. 12:12-27). Isn't that a blessing?

The question of how we are united to the Body of Christ? There is only one way. It is by trusting Christ as your Lord and Savior (Gal. 3:26-28). When you trust Christ, He puts you into His body.

- Here's **a few things you can do** while you are “grounded” or under “house arrest” during this coronavirus.
 1. Spend some extra time in the Word. Do a personal Bible Study of some book in the Bible. Write a journal of what God teaches you.
 2. Pray for your church and its missionaries.
 3. Call some people on the phone to encourage them. Or, send few notes in the mail or text a few people to let them know you are thinking about them and they aren't alone in this crisis.
 4. Find some project to do around the house to stay busy. Do some house cleaning. It is spring time isn't it
 5. Exercise at home. Saw some people lifting weights and doing aerobics in their garage yesterday.
 6. Listen to some good music. Get out a few CD's you haven't listened to for awhile. Playlists?
 7. Remember, you are not alone. You are always “connected” to other believers, spiritually, which in some respects is better than being physically connected. You may be cut off from physical contact, but nothing can cut you off from the fellowship we have in the Body of Christ
 8. Most of all, Keep looking up, your redemption draweth nigh. Jesus is coming again to take us out of this mess

Amen!

