



The Coronavirus crisis: Lessons for uncertain times

As the world comes to terms with an unprecedented virus crisis involving fear, lockdowns and increasing deaths all around us, people might be wondering: **what can we learn** and **how should we live** in these extraordinary times? Let me suggest three broad lessons for negotiating life in these desperate times.

1. God is in Control and His providence must be acknowledged

The Psalmist says: *“The Lord reigns, let the nations tremble; he sits enthroned between the cherubim, let the earth shake. Great is the Lord in Zion; he is exalted over all the nations. Let them praise your great and awesome name—he is holy”* Psalm 99:1-3.

If this pandemic is a teacher, it is saying to us:

We are not in control of our life or our death – God is.

We cannot see the invisible virus – but God can.

We do not know where the virus is spreading or when this crisis will end – but God does.

He is in control – not we.

Behind this ugly virus, we need to see the beautiful complexity of the miracle of God's providence. God is in the business of taking all the wrong, sinful and evil elements of life to make something good, beautiful and even masterful.

He did that at the cross. Satan and evil men tried to kill the son of God – Jesus Christ and they succeeded in doing so. But God used the most heinous evil engineered by Satan and turned it into the perfect cure for the malady of human sinfulness.

Joseph in the Old Testament went through a severe trial brought about by his jealous brothers. But at the end – he saw the marvellous providence and control of God in his life when he forgivingly declared to his brothers: *“You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives”* (Gen. 50: 20).

So, watch this crisis and tune your ears and eyes to hear and see His great love, patience, creativity, and power that are being placed on display every second. Through all the bad news and the daunting statistics, remember God is in control and through His providence He is working. He is working through all the limits and brokenness of human beings, agencies and institutions, for His greater glory and honour.

2. The Fear of death is understandable, but the promise of eternal life cancels out **fear**

We could contain and even find a cure for the virus -- but we cannot find a cure for death. So, we can appreciate the fear of death in many people. It is real and palpable.

The preacher in the Old Testament expressed the futility of life with these words:

“People who are still alive know they’ll die. But those who have died don’t know anything” (Eccles. 9:5). George Bernard Shaw said: “The ultimate statistic is this – one out of one will die”.

The Gospel of Jesus offers the cure for death and Paul in the New Testament expressed this with great joy: *“Death has been swallowed up in victory”*. (1 Cor. 15: 54).

After Jesus was crucified on the cross, he was buried but He rose to life on the third day thereby giving all those who confess His name and trust in him, the guarantee of eternal resurrection. Jesus made many promises but this one tops them all:

“Very truly I tell you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be judged but has crossed over from death to life”. (John 5: 24).

The Gospel means good news because the amazing cure for death has been discovered. Peter, another Apostle bursts with excitement as he shares this death-defying cure, this living hope: *“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead”* (1 Pet. 1:3).

Paul so filled with the real hope of eternal life that Christ offers remarked: *“For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain”* (Phil. 1: 21).

So, if you know Jesus Christ, what is the worst-case scenario that could happen to you in these crisis-filled days? Yes, you could die. The worst is death – **but remember, the worst thing is also the best thing that could happen to you** – those who know Christ will, upon death, be in the presence of Jesus in a glorified body for all eternity.

3. Live out Christ in every way... turn up the light

There are countless lives in all nations that do not know this wonderful Gospel and God in His grace is giving people another chance (perhaps the last for some) to know Him and come into eternal life through His son Jesus Christ.

This is a dark time in our world’s history. But that’s where we the believers of Christ come in. We have been entrusted with the cure for the sinfulness of mankind, death and the meaningless of life. Isaiah in the Old Testament pleads with us:

“Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD rises upon you. See, darkness covers the earth and thick darkness is over the peoples, but the LORD rises upon you and his glory appears over you”. (Isa. 60:1).

We can share His light as the world gets increasingly darker. If you are a believer, this is the time to demonstrate the joy, peace and faith that the Holy Spirit has deposited into you. He has placed these precious gifts in you for such a time as this:

“May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit” (Rom.15: 13).

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