

BETWEEN SEEDTIME AND HARVEST

*Senior Adults Newsletter
Christ Covenant Church
April 2020*



GRACE TO YOU

by
Pastor Bruce Creswell

*I am submitting the below article this month, as it is so timely for our current situation. The article is taken from The Gospel Coalition and the author is **Mark Oden**.*

8 Things the Coronavirus Should Teach Us

I awoke this morning in Naples, Italy's third city, to have been placed on lockdown. Public gatherings, including church services, have been forbidden. Weddings, funerals, and baptisms have been canceled. Schools and cinemas, museums and gyms, have all been closed. My wife and I just returned from a grocery-shopping trip that took two hours due to long checkout lines. Italy currently has the highest reported number of coronavirus cases outside of China: 9,172 cases and 463 deaths. As a result, 60 million people have been told to remain in their homes unless absolutely necessary.

How are we, as Christians, to respond to such a crisis? Answer: with faith not fear. We are to look into the eye of the storm and ask, "Lord, what are you wanting me to learn through this? How are you seeking to change me?"

Here are eight things we'd all do well to learn, or relearn, from this coronavirus scare.

1. Our Fragility

This global crisis is teaching us how weak we are as human beings.

At the time of writing, 98,429 cases of coronavirus have been reported worldwide, causing 3,387 deaths. We're trying our best to contain its spread. And, for the most part, I guess we're confident of eventual success.

Now imagine a virus even more aggressive and contagious than coronavirus. Faced with such a threat, could we prevent our own extinction as a species? The answer is clearly no. It's easy to forget, but humans are weak and frail.

The words of the psalmist ring true: "The life of mortals is like grass, they flourish like a flower of the field; the wind [or COVID-19] blows over it and it is gone and its place remembers it no more" ([Ps. 103:15-16](#)).

How does this lesson of our fragility hit home? Perhaps by reminding us to not take our lives on this earth for granted. “Teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom” ([Ps. 90:12](#)).

2. Our Equality

This virus doesn’t respect ethnic boundaries or national borders. It’s not a Chinese virus; it’s our virus. It’s in Afghanistan, Belgium, Cambodia, Denmark, France, America—77 countries and counting have been contaminated by the coronavirus.

We’re all members of the great human family, created in the image of God ([Gen. 1:17](#)). The color of our skin, the language we speak, our accents, and our cultures count for nothing in the eyes of a contagious disease.

In the eyes of the world, we’re all different; in the eyes of the virus, we’re just the same.

In our suffering, in the pain of losing a loved one, we are completely equal—weak and without answers.

3. Our Loss of Control

We all love to be in control. We fancy ourselves captains of our destiny, masters of our fate. The reality is that today, more than ever before, we *can* control significant parts of our lives. We can control our home’s heating and security remotely; we can move money around the world with a click of an app; we can even control our bodies through training and medicine.

But perhaps this sense of control is an illusion, a bubble that the coronavirus has popped, revealing the reality that we’re not really in control.

Now, here in Italy, the authorities are trying to contain the spread of this virus by closing, opening, and closing again our children’s schools. Do they have the situation under control?

What about us? Armed with our disinfectant sprays, we try to lower the risks of being infected. There is nothing wrong with this activity. But are we in control of the situation? Hardly.

4. The Pain We Share in Being Excluded

A few days ago a member of our church traveled to northern Italy. On her return to Naples, she was excluded from a dinner with work colleagues. She was told it would be better for her not to come due to her recent travels up north, even though she hadn’t been anywhere near the red zones and wasn’t displaying any coronavirus symptoms. Obviously, this distancing hurt her.

A 55-year-old restaurant owner from central Naples has recently been quarantined. Having tested positive for COVID-19, he was said to have felt relatively well physically, but was saddened by the reactions of many of his neighbors: “The thing that has hurt him more than his positive diagnosis for the coronavirus, is the way he and his family have been treated by the city in which he lives” (*Il Mattino* newspaper, March 2, 2020).

Being excluded and isolated isn’t an easy thing, since we were created for relationship. But many people, now, are having to deal with isolation. It’s an experience the leper community of Jesus’s day knew all too well. Forced to live on their own, walking the streets of their hometowns shouting, “Unclean! Unclean!” (cf. [Lev. 13:45](#)).

5. The Difference between Fear and Faith

What's your reaction to this crisis? It's so easy to be gripped by fear. It's easy to see the coronavirus everywhere I look: on the keyboard of my computer, in the air I breathe, in every physical contact and around every corner, waiting to infect me. Are we panicking?

Perhaps this crisis is challenging us to react in a different way—with faith and not fear. Faith not in the stars, or in some unknown deity. Rather, faith in Jesus Christ, the good shepherd who is also the resurrection and the life.

Or perhaps this crisis is challenging us to react in a different way—with faith and not fear. Faith not in the stars or in some unknown deity. Rather, faith in Jesus Christ, the good shepherd who is also the resurrection and the life.

Surely only Jesus is in control of this situation; surely only he can guide us through this storm. He calls us to trust and believe, to have faith and not fear.

6. Our Need of God and Our Need to Pray

In the midst of a global crisis, how can we as individuals possibly make a difference? Often we feel so small and insignificant.

But there is something we can do. We can call out to our Father in heaven.

Pray for the authorities running our countries and cities. Pray for the medical teams treating the sick. Pray for the men, women, and children who have been infected, for the people afraid to leave their homes, for those living in red zones, for those at high risk with other illnesses, and for the elderly. Pray the Lord would protect us and keep us. Pray to him, that he might show us his mercy.

Pray also for the Lord Jesus to return, that he might come back to take us to the new creation that he has prepared for us, a place with no tears, no death, no mourning, crying or pain ([Rev. 21:4](#)).

7. The Vanity of So Much of Our Lives

“Vanity of vanities, says the Preacher, vanity of vanities. All is vanity” ([Eccles. 1:2](#)). It's so easy to lose perspective in the midst of the madness of our lives. Our days are so filled with people and projects, works and wish lists, homes and holidays, that we can struggle to distinguish the important from the urgent. We lose ourselves in the midst our lives.

Perhaps this crisis is showing us what to concern our lives with. Perhaps it's teaching us what's really important in our lives and what is vanity.

Perhaps this crisis is reminding us what we should concern our lives with. Perhaps it's helping us to distinguish between what's meaningful and meaningless. Perhaps the Premier League, or that new kitchen, or that Instagram post aren't essential to my survival. Perhaps the coronavirus is teaching us what really matters.

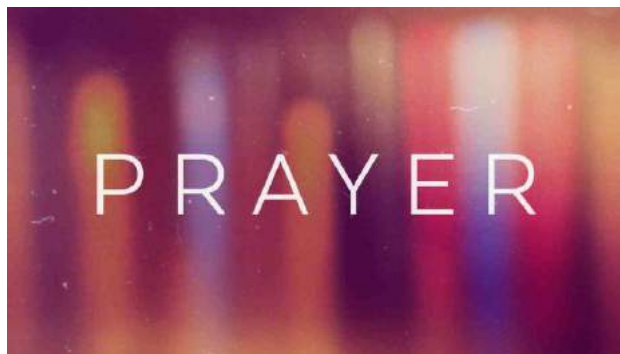
8. Our Hope

In a sense, the most important question is not, “What hope do you have in the face of the coronavirus?” because Jesus came to warn us of the presence of a far more lethal and widespread virus—one that has struck every man, woman, and child. A virus that ends in not only certain death, but eternal death. Our species, according to Jesus, lives in the the grip of a pandemic outbreak called sin. What is your hope in the face of that virus?

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The story of the Bible is the story of a God who entered a world infected with this virus. He lived among sick people, not wearing a chemical protective suit but breathing the same air as we do, eating the same food as we do. He died in isolation, excluded from his people, seemingly far from his Father on a cross—all that he might provide this sick world with an antidote to the virus, that he might heal us and give us eternal life. Hear his words:

Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; and whoever lives by believing in me will never die. Do you believe this?” ([John 11:25–26](#))



Submitted by Dot Branson

Grant me, O Lord, to know what I ought to know,
 To love what I ought to love,
 To praise what delights Thee most,
 To value what is precious in Thy sight,
 To hate what is offensive to Thee.

Do not suffer me to judge according to the sight of my eyes,
 Nor to pass sentence according to the hearing of the ears of ignorant men,
 But to discern with a true judgment between things visible and spiritual,
 And above all things, always to inquire what is the good pleasure of Thy will.

HYMN HISTORY

Submitted by Peggy Dear

THANKS TO GOD FOR MY REDEEMER

It is easy to thank God for roses. Much harder to thank Him for the thorns. This hymn offers a mature approach to thanking God, showing appreciation for pain and pleasure, joy and sorrow.

August Storm wrote this hymn in 1891 while still a young man of twenty-nine. He worked for the Salvation Army in Sweden and published this hymn in the organization's periodical, *The War Cry*. The Salvation Army specialized in reaching out to the poor and troubled, so Storm probably saw more than his share of pain and sorrow, as well as the joy and pleasure of lives turned to Christ.

Just eight years after writing this hymn, Storm was stricken with a back problem that left him crippled for the rest of his life. He managed to continue his Salvation Army work, and he maintained a thankful spirit even during this most difficult time. If anything, his troubles gave more power and credibility to his sermons and writings.

Thanks to God for my Redeemer,
Thanks for all Thou dost provide!
Thanks for times now but a memory,
Thanks for Jesus by my side!
Thanks for pleasant, balmy springtime,
Thanks for dark and dreary fall!
Thanks for tears by now forgotten,
Thanks for peace within my soul!

Thanks for prayers that Thou has answered,
Thanks for what Thou dost deny!
Thanks for storms that I have weathered,
Thanks for all Thou dost supply!
Thanks for pain and thanks for pleasure,
Thanks for comfort in despair!
Thanks for grace that none can measure,
Thanks for love beyond compare!

Thanks for roses by the wayside,
Thanks for thorns their stems contain!
Thanks for home and thanks for fireside,
Thanks for hope, that sweet refrain!
Thanks for joy and thanks for sorrow,
Thanks for heav'nly peace with Thee!
Thanks for hope in the tomorrow,
Thanks through all eternity!

AUGUST LUDWIG STORM (1862-1914)

SAVE THE DATE for the Senior Retreat!

September 22-25th
at Bonclarken Conference Center
in lovely Flat Rock, NC
Guest Speaker: Paul Engle

Thrive over 55 Senior Living Expo

The date for this has been changed to May 16th.



APRIL BIRTHDAYS

2	Roma Thompson
5	Judy Aylestock
5	Marv Eash
5	Dorothy Falls
8	Shirley Maurer
9	John Oliver
10	Sang Lee
14	Lanier Ellis
14	Louise Wyse
15	Darrell Kirkley
17	Ilse Cauble
17	Hilda Torres
18	Kitty Peterson
19	Alona Weddine
21	Sarah Mills
26	Martha Lee



4	Steve & Patty Marion
7	Jerry & Ilse Cauble
17	Bill & Alona Weddine

NEWSLETTER ARTICLE DEADLINE

Articles for the May newsletter are due to Jane Yancey no later than April 20th. Please send them to her at jane@yancey.com

CORONAVIRUS – A PRAYER

Lord, we come to you humbly and expectantly. Please hear our prayer for mercy.

For those already infected, we pray that you would ease their pain and grant to them a complete recovery.

For the elderly and immune-compromised, we pray that your protecting hand would be upon them and that you would keep the contagion far at bay.

For the healthy, we pray that you would grant continued health, and a compassionate heart for those in need.

For the doctors and scientists, we pray that you would grant them the knowledge and insight they need to treat, cure, even eradicate, this virus.

For the healthcare workers, we pray that you would give them safety and skill as they engage in their ministry of compassion.

For leaders both great and small, we pray that you would provide guidance to properly direct those under them, neither with reactionary panic nor with stubborn intransigence, but with wisdom and gentleness.

For those stricken with panic and fear, we pray that you would grant peace in your perfect providence and provision.

Turn the hearts of the people to you, O Lord. You are the Great Physician, not only of the body but also of the soul.

Teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom. Teach us to redeem the time, for the days are evil. Teach us to hope.

This world is not our home.

-Eric Anderson

SENIORS MONTHLY FELLOWSHIP ACTIVITIES



By: Dot Branson

There will be NO Ladies' Luncheon in April.

MEN'S LUNCH

By: Dave Ruths

There will be NO Men's Lunch in April.



JOY SINGERS

Joy Singers will not meet until further notice.

SPRING FELLOWSHIP LUNCHEES AND DINNERS

Submitted by Lucille Ruths

Given the current Coronavirus situation, we will not have the Spring Fellowship lunches and dinners. We look forward to having these wonderful get-togethers again in the Fall. Thank you for your understanding and stay healthy!

MESSAGE FROM PASTOR BRUCE

Dear Folks,

I know that I speak on behalf of each of you, as well as our senior adult elders and deacons. We miss not being together in Sunday School, Lord's Day worship, and the all the other activities that have been cancelled due to the coronavirus. I miss talking with you, shaking hands, and the fellowship that we enjoy so much.

It appears that we may be in our homes during the month of April and our worship services to continue to be on-line streaming. Even though you are homebound, may I encourage you that in light of the postponed activities to stay in touch with each other, making use of email, the phone, and snail mail. Your elder and deacon are available to be of any help you may need. Please keep me informed with any prayer requests so we can pray for another.

Continue to pray for one another. The Coronavirus prayer on page 6 is a good model to pray during these days in which we live.

In closing, I say to you what Paul said to the saints at Philippi in chapter 1:3-11 of Philippians:

³ I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, ⁴ always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy, ⁵ because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. ⁶ And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ. ⁷ It is right for me to feel this way about you all, because I hold you in my heart, for you are all partakers with me of grace, both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel. ⁸ For God is my witness, how I yearn for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus. ⁹ And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment, ¹⁰ so that you may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, ¹¹ filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God. Amen!

Coram Deo Sunday School Class:
Sundays: 9:00 AM, WC 201 (Choir Room)

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EASTER WEEK



April 5th



April 9th



April 10th



April 12th