

Facing Coronavirus in Christ

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Here are 14 truths to think on and apply to our lives in the face of the coronavirus. My suggestion is that we read them slowly, including the verses, and pray through them bit by bit.

1. Coronavirus does not mean that God has stopped being our Father.

We still live under his daily care, provision and protection.

Isaiah 43:1 But now thus says the Lord, he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: "Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine."

Luke 12:7 Why, even the hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not; you are of more value than many sparrows.

Psalms 34:4-6 I sought the Lord, and he answered me and delivered me from all my fears. Those who look to him are radiant, and their faces shall never be ashamed. This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him and saved him out of all his troubles.

2. Our Father has not lost control of his world, but he is absolutely in control of every single thing in our life and in his world.

Psalms 115:3 Our God is in the heavens; he does all that he pleases.

Matthew 10:29 Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father.

3. Our infection with coronavirus will ultimately depend, not on statistics or risk factors or age, but on the Lord's explicit decision and permission to allow it.

Isaiah 45:7 I form light and create darkness; I make well-being and create calamity; I am the Lord, who does all these things.

Job 2:4-7 "Skin for skin!" Satan replied. "A man will give all he has for his own life. But now stretch out your hand and strike his flesh and bones, and he will surely curse you to your face." The Lord said to Satan, "Very well, then, he is in your hands; but you

must spare his life." So Satan went out from the presence of the Lord and afflicted Job with painful sores from the soles of his feet to the crown of his head.

4. Fear the Lord more than coronavirus and love the Lord more than health.

Luke 12:4-5 "I tell you, my friends, do not fear those who kill the body, and after that have nothing more that they can do. But I will warn you whom to fear: fear him who, after he has killed, has authority to cast into hell. Yes, I tell you, fear him!"

Mark 8:34-35 And calling the crowd to him with his disciples, he said to them, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel's will save it."

5. Sin is far more deadly than coronavirus, so worry more about that than infection.

Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin is death.

Isaiah 1:4-6 Ah, sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, offspring of evildoers, children who deal corruptly! They have forsaken the Lord, they have despised the Holy One of Israel, they are utterly estranged.....The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even to the head, there is no soundness in it, but bruises and sores and raw wounds.

6. Beware of how fear can drive us to self-centredness, so keep serving and caring for others as they deal with the virus. Let's share our resources and be generous.

Acts 4:34-35 There was not a needy person among them, for as many as were owners of lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold and laid it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need.

7. Read the Scripture and think on God's word more than obsessing about the latest news report.

Colossians 3:16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God.

8. Give thanks for God's generous provision of the NHS, wise medical advice and government care.

James 1:17 Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.

9. However, let your ultimate sense of safety and comfort come more from the Lord's care and control than the government and the NHS.

Psalms 44:6 For not in my bow do I trust, nor can my sword save me.

Isaiah 31:1 Woe to those who go down to Egypt for help and rely on horses, who trust in chariots because they are many and in horsemen because they are very strong, but do not look to the Holy One of Israel or consult the Lord!

10. In God's mysterious plan, the appearance of this virus will be one of God's means to make us more dependent on him.

2 Cor 12:8-9 Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it should leave me. But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

11. The reality of coronavirus can wean us off worldliness, as it reminds us of the fallenness of this world, the reality of death and the provisionality of everything here.

Rom 8:22-23 For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.

12. My ultimate hope isn't to be free from infection, but to be found in Christ and glorifying him.

Phil 1:20-23 'it is my eager expectation and hope that I will not be at all ashamed, but that with full courage now as always Christ will be honoured in my body, whether by life or by death. For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me. Yet which I shall choose I cannot tell. I am hard pressed between the

two. My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better. '

13. What my mind meditates on is worship - beware a mind overrun and obsessed by fears and anxieties about infection.

Phil 4:8 Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honourable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.

Mark 4:18-19 Still others, like seed sown among thorns, hear the word; but the worries of this life...come in and choke the word, making it unfruitful.

14. Our true hope isn't health in this world, but the face of God forever.

Rev 22:1-4 Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him. They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads.

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