

Gospel Truth

Biblical Instruction and Encouragement for the
Mission Field Worldwide.

THE CONSTANT AMID COVID-19

An outbreak of the coronavirus, COVID-19, began in Wuhan, China in November 2019. Since that time, the virus has spread rapidly infecting people around the globe. As of this writing, there are hundreds of thousands of diagnosed cases with tens of thousands of deaths. There are thousands of new cases daily with the number of infections and deaths expected to rise rapidly.

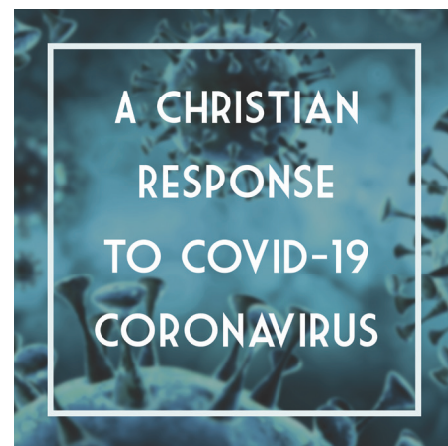
In an effort to slow the spread of the virus, many governments around the world have ordered businesses to be shut down and meetings are prohibited. Many cities are requiring their citizens to stay in the house except for travel to get food and to perform essential services. This has caused the world economy to spiral

downward and many people have lost their jobs and sources of support. Physical social interactions are curtailed, and the doors of many chapels are closed by government ordinance. Life as we know it has abruptly changed in several ways. It is a time of many questions and even fear.

There have always been many variables in life, but with the disrupting changes taking place so quickly around the world, we are much more cognizant of the variables—life, death, health, worship, relationships, jobs, retirement, and even the basic needs such as food and water.

Variables are a part of life, but with all the disruptions taking place, one thing is constant and will not change—God. “For I am the LORD, I change not” (Malachi 3:6). His love and care is unchanging for His people. He remains a refuge in the time of trouble and a provider in the day of hunger. Many people are struggling with fear and a sense of hopelessness. Child of God, although you may be in the middle of uncertain days, remember that we are just pilgrims and strangers in this life. We can daily trust in the constant that will see us through with peace and spiritual victory.

As one song writer penned, “God said, ‘You’re going to make it!’” —mws



DO THE FIVE



HELP STOP CORONAVIRUS

1. **Hands** Wash them often.
2. **Elbow** Cough into it.
3. **Face** Don't touch it.
4. **Space** Keep safe distance.
5. **Home** Stay if you can.

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WHAT THE BIBLE TEACHES ABOUT...

Word of God

2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21; Matt. 24:35

Relationship of Love

Matt. 22:37-40; John 14:21-23; 1 John 4:7-11

Repentance

Acts 3:19; Acts 17:30; 2 Cor. 7:10

New Birth

John 3:3-7; 2 Cor. 5:17; Rom. 6:1-4;
Eph. 2:1, 5-6

Freedom From Sin

1 John 5:18; Matt. 1:21; John 8:11

Infilling of the Holy Spirit

Acts 19:2; Acts 15:8-9; Acts 1:8

Holiness

Luke 1:73-75; Heb. 12:14; 1 Peter 1:15-16;
Titus 2:11-12; Rom. 6:22

Kingdom of God

Luke 17:20-21; Romans 14:17; John 18:36

The Church

Acts 2:47; Eph. 4:4-6; 1 Cor. 12:12-13; Col 1:18

Unity

John 17:20-23; Gal 3:28; Rev. 18:2-4

Ordinances

Matt. 28:19-20; Matt. 26:26-30;
1 Cor. 11:23-27; John 13:14-17

Divine Healing

Luke 4:18; Isaiah 53:4-5; James 5:13-16

Sanctity of Marriage

Matt. 19:5-6; Luke 16:18; Rom. 7:2-3;
1 Cor. 7:10-11

Outward Appearance

1 Tim. 2:9-10; 1 Cor. 11:14-15; Deut. 22:5

End of Time

2 Peter 3:7-12; John 5:28-29; 2 Cor. 5:10;
Matt 25:31-46

Pacifism

Luke 6:27-29; Luke 18:20

Worship

John 4:23-24; Eph. 5:19; 2 Cor. 3:17

Great Commission

Mark 16:15

GODLY EXAMPLE OF GOOD CITIZENSHIP

The governments of many countries have requested or mandated that there be no gatherings of people during this time of instability due to the virus. The question has been debated recently, should we as Christians follow these guidelines and postpone our usual worship services or should we defy the ordinance of man to worship God in our chapels? As a body of believers, what example and message would we send to the world and our neighbors if we were to meet for worship in defiance of our civil government? Does it show devoutness to God or a stubborn, rebellious spirit?

On one hand, when Peter was forbidden to preach the gospel by the authorities, he responded, "We ought to obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29). Hebrews 10:25 reads, "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is." On the other hand, Jesus taught throughout the scripture to submit to those in authority. Paul, speaking of governments, stated in Romans 13:1, "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God."

Scripture clearly teaches that Christians are to be good citizens and to follow the ordinances and mandates of the government; this is not contingent upon whether you personally agree or disagree. If the government were to forbid preaching the gospel in an effort to curtail the message of Christ, as was in the case of Peter, Christians should heartily ignore the government mandate. Clearly, this is not the case or motivation with current governmental requirements in many cities to close the chapel doors for a short period. It is an issue of loving our neighbor enough to not spread the virus.

Christians have an obligation to be subject to the temporary ordinance of man in this present distress and use other avenues of community worship through digital means to connect with brothers and sisters in the Lord. Peter summed it up well in 1 Peter 2:13-17. "Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; Or unto governors....For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men: As free, and not using your liberty for a cloke of maliciousness, but as the servants of God. Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king." —mws

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—Editor, Michael Smith

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Editorial (Special Edition)



Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? ... Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

—Romans 8:35-39

What comfort and assurance there is in knowing that nothing can separate us from the love of God. Difficulties will come, but there is no power, virus, or lost job that can steal salvation from the child of God. There is an anchor of hope in Christ and a bright eternal future that lies ahead if we stay faithful to our Lord and Master.

This quarter the Lord directed me to publish a special edition of the Gospel Truth which is different in scope and format than the usual issues. Our world is in crisis due to the spread of COVID-19, and the saints of God are facing much uncertainty on many fronts. In a world of fear and question, the child of God can maintain a deep peace in knowing that God is in control. While we do not have the answer to every question about the reasons and purpose of events in this life, we know that God will work things to the benefit of the souls of mankind. This edition is a compilation of articles written by various Church of God ministers around the world for the edification, challenge, and comfort of the saints of God during this present distress. I trust this edition will be a special blessing and encouragement to God's people.

While some people are panicking and disturbed, I encourage you to place your trust in the Lord Jesus and live with calmness and serenity as you continue to walk with Him. In troublesome times, come life or death, there is a wonderful experience of peace that passeth all understanding. If you are not saved from your sin, this is a wonderful time to repent and accept the gift of salvation. If you are worried and fearful, know that God has a vested interest in you. The Holy Spirit was given as a comforter to soothe and calm the spirit despite the storms encountered in life.

Our world has faced many hardships and survived many a catastrophe. We do not want to be fearmongers nor do we want to ignore the seriousness of this current virus. Let us pray that the Lord will turn calamity into joy and that people will awaken to the spiritual needs of the soul.

Let us continue to pray for one another and draw close to the Lord. God is counting on us all to be those faithful pillars in the church and those stalwart soldiers of the cross who are steadfast and unmovable in the midst of hardship. God bless you my brothers and sisters.

With much love and prayers,

Michael W. Smith

April 2020



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“BEHOLD THE FOWLS OF THE AIR: FOR THEY SOW NOT,
NEITHER DO THEY REAP, NOR GATHER INTO BARNES;
YET YOUR HEAVENLY FATHER FEEDETH THEM.
ARE YE NOT MUCH BETTER THAN THEY?” MATTHEW 6:26

COMFORT IN THE PROMISES

BRO. VALERI GLAAS (GERMANY)



While the whole world is caught in distress, panic, fatalities and the things that will come until the time is fulfilled, God is the strength of His people, of those who are pure in heart.

“My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever. But it is good for me to draw near to God: I have put my trust in the Lord GOD, that I may declare all thy works” (Psalms 73:26, 28).

There are many promises in Psalms 91 that can be applied to the troubles of this day. Blessed is the one who puts his trust in the Lord and claims these promises. The almighty God promised to be our shelter and our shield in times of need, pestilence and disease; and we are safe to rely on His promises.

“For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us” (2 Corinthians 1:20).

Oh, what glory to keep the peace of God in our hearts in troublesome times and to be compassed about with songs of deliverance.

“Thou art my hiding place; thou shalt preserve me from trouble; thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance. Selah” (Psalms 32:7). May the Lord bless each one whose hope is in the Lord. May God fill you with courage and boldness to worship the Lord and praise Him even in times like these.

“Yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation” (Habakkuk 3:18).

CONCERNING THE PANDEMIC

BRO. CHINWENDU NWACHUKWU (NIGERIA)



Surprisingly, the world is faced with another killer disease of which if the Lord would not take mercy, many souls would surely be lost.

As children of God, we are called upon to make supplications to God in times like this. While there have been speculations about the source and target

of this disease, whether natural or man-made, one thing is certain, the Lord has allowed it. A couple of weeks ago before this was as widespread, my mind was led to the scripture in Ezekiel 14:12-20.

“The word of the LORD came again to me, saying, Son of man, when the land sinneth against me by trespassing grievously, then will I stretch out mine hand upon it, and.... if I send a pestilence into that land, and pour out my fury upon it in blood, to cut off from it man and beast: Though Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, as I live, saith the Lord GOD, they shall deliver neither son nor daughter; they shall but deliver their own souls by their righteousness.”

This must cause a great burden to the heart to seek for mercy from the Lord. The speed of the spread and the inability to contain it shows the frailty of man of which he never wants to acknowledge. This has caused a running, a fear, a failing of heart; but we pray the Lord help us and as many as He has called to “look up” as instructed in Luke 21: 25-28, for our “redemption draweth nigh.”

IN TIMES LIKE THESE

BRO. BARTH NWACHUKWU (NIGERIA)



“I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the LORD, which made heaven and earth. He will not suffer thy foot to be moved: he that keepeth thee will not slumber” (Psalm 121:1-3).

When the children of Israel were plagued in the wilderness by fiery serpents they cried to God for help. “And the LORD said unto Moses, Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole: and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live” (Numbers 21:8). The Lord Jesus Christ encouraged us with the same example. “Even so must the Son of man be lifted up: That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life” (John 3:14-15).

Let us be assured that we have a Father that loves His children in any given circumstance. In a time like this, let men pray everywhere “lifting up holy hands” to our God who answers prayers.

Arise & Pray



BRO. PETER AKWEYONA (KENYA)

All over in Kenya people are living in fear, not knowing what may befall them the next day. Daily things are being shut down, even worship services, in an effort to control the pandemic. The Lord is using the virus to bring the rich and the poor back to repentance. During this time, may the saints around the world not fear but rise and pray more for Satan to be rebuked. By the blood of Jesus Christ, we are healed.

Let us turn to the Bible verses that give comfort. "For I the LORD thy God will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee, Fear not; I will help thee" (Isaiah 41:13). With the threat of sickness and even death, there is divine healing. This is why the Church of God should take time to

fast and pray for the saints all over the world. God already has prepared an answer to this disaster and He is very ready and willing to save mankind. Thus, saints should not live in fear at all.

In Acts 27:22, Paul spoke during the storm at sea: "I exhort you to be of good cheer: for there shall be no loss of any man's life among you, but of the ship." We know that in some countries there will be loss of life, but in the Lord there is life after death. All believers, it is our time to awake... arise and pray for this deadly disease to cease in Jesus' name.

God bless the world, all His saints, and the work of the gospel. In Jesus' name we have prayed for you. Amen.

"IF I SHUT UP HEAVEN THAT THERE BE NO RAIN,
OR IF I COMMAND THE LOCUSTS TO DEVOUR THE LAND,
OR IF I SEND PESTILENCE AMONG MY PEOPLE;
IF MY PEOPLE, WHICH ARE CALLED BY MY NAME,
SHALL HUMBLE THEMSELVES, AND PRAY, AND SEEK MY FACE, AND
TURN FROM THEIR WICKED WAYS; THEN WILL I HEAR FROM HEAVEN,
AND WILL FORGIVE THEIR SIN, AND WILL HEAL THEIR LAND."
—2 CHRONICLES 7:13-14

BRO. SHAHZAD BABAR (PAKISTAN)



The Holy Spirit brought to my mind the scripture from 2 Chronicles 7:14. There is need to keep fasting and praying. These are great weapons. We need to be in obedience to the Word of God, and we need not be fearful but faithful.

We ask of the Lord that His holy blood be upon all of us and keep us safe. May the Lord protect you in Jesus name. Amen.

Greetings to all saints in the Church of God.

BRO. MASTER GUSTOR (MALAWI)



I write to you all over the world, as some countries are facing this COVID-19. We as Christians need to pray hard with faith as the scripture says in 2 Chronicles 7:13-14 and we should not be tired in these last days. God will do us favor. Remember David won the battle against Goliath when he depended on God. Everything that man cannot do, remember, God will do.

Please, Christians all over the world, let us unite together and pray for coronavirus. God will answer our prayers. May God bless our countries.

WHERE IS OUR FAITH?

BRO. IVAN ECK (KANSAS, USA)



We know that most people have questions about the worldwide pandemic we are facing. While there are good reasons to practice great carefulness, God would not want our spirits to be oppressed or tormented by our fears. So, I ask us this question, “What should we do in these times of uncertainty?”

The Bible has many examples of godly people who faced fearful times. Yet, in those fearful moments, they learned to trust in the God of heaven. As we look to the past and see all the examples of how God helped people, we should take a moment to look up and lay hold on courage!

We find some good instruction in the 12th chapter of Hebrews. We are told to lay aside weights and sinful things. These would keep us from having spiritual victory. Then, as we patiently run the race that is set before us, let us purposefully look unto Jesus who is the author and finisher of our faith!

I am convinced that the Lord would have us to let our troubles awaken our spirits to a greater trust in God. The Psalmist wrote, “What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee” (Psalm 56:3), and then again, “When thou saidst, Seek ye my face; my heart said unto thee, Thy face, LORD, will I seek” (Psalm 27:8).

Saints, be encouraged! I know our Redeemer liveth! The captain of our salvation is the very force which opened a way through the Red Sea! He is the one who made blind eyes to see and the lame to leap for joy! In great confidence He stood before dead men and called them back

to life! He has, by His very word, made raging seas to sleep! He utterly healed the hopeless lepers! He had mercy on the guilty and despised! He confounded wise men with the simplest of answers! He set Legion free from a host of devils and gave him back his right mind! He is our fortress and high tower! He is our captain and is not ashamed to call us brethren! He “is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother” (Proverbs 18:24). He fought the devil in the wilderness and won! He went to the cross and gave His life a ransom for many! He laid hold on death and removed the sting! He went into the grave dead and came out alive! He is risen! He makes strife to cease! He is the very Prince of Peace! He is the blessed and only potentate! He is King of Kings and Lord of Lords! He is the Alpha and the Omega! He is my Savior!

Joshua and the children of Israel were brought to a moment of choice. Joshua gave this clear answer, “as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD” (Joshua 24:15).

Oh dear ones, let me gently ask, “Where is our faith?”

God is calling to us. He would have us use these times for honest introspection; this simply means for us to examine ourselves, whether we be in the faith. Are we anchored in that Rock, the rock Christ Jesus?

Stay encouraged!

May God bless each one!

DIFFICULT EXPERIENCES

BRO. W. S. VEDHA (INDIA)



I am almost 65 years of age and have faced a lot of difficult experiences in my Christian life. The coronavirus pandemic has taught us many lessons the last two months. We pray to the Lord asking, “Is it the end of time and the second coming of Jesus?” [“But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only” Matthew 24:36.]

In forty-five years of ministry, we have never missed even one Sunday service, but last Sunday, we stopped our Sunday service by order of our government. It is very painful in my heart.

Kindly my beloved saints, pray for India. We are praying for the situations all over the world. Our God is Almighty. He does miracles for His children. Amen.

“MAGOR-MISSABIB”: FEAR ROUND ABOUT

BRO. JOHN VARGHESE (INDIA)



Jeremiah 20:1-3 reads, “Now Pashur the son of Immer the priest, who was also chief governor in the house of the LORD ... smote Jeremiah the prophet, and put him in the stocks.... Then said Jeremiah unto him, The LORD hath not called thy name Pashur, but Magormissabib” [fear or terror round about].

The whole world is under the fear or threat of COVID-19. It has taken the precious lives of thousands and many are suffering and struggling from the sickness. Government authorities and rulers have taken emergency steps to subdue or overcome this virus and to save the lives of people.

When God sent plagues to Egypt through Moses, the magicians of King Pharaoh tried their best to imitate and overcome those plagues, but they failed. Finally, they said “surely this is the finger of God” (Exodus 8:19). At the time of Noah, when God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, He decided to destroy the

earth through flood (Genesis 6:5, 6). Likewise, God decided to destroy Sodom by fire seeing the wickedness of the people there. According to the prophet Ezekiel, in addition to homosexuality, the sins of the people in Sodom included pride, gluttony, abundance of idleness or easiness, and oppressions (Ezekiel 16:49). Jesus said in Luke 17:26-30 that as in the day of Noah and Lot so it would be in the days of the coming of the Son of man.

Even after continuous plagues, King Pharaoh hardened his heart and perished. Instead of hardening the heart, let the whole world repent and turn to God for a complete remedy not only from the virus but also from the penalty of sin.

Let us pray to God until He stretches His hands of mercy towards mankind. Let us judge ourselves, discern the times, and watch over our souls. Our Lord is at the gate and will come back soon for the judgment.

Faith not Fear

YE ARE THE SALT OF THE EARTH

BRO. PAUL PHILLIPS (CALIFORNIA, USA)



“Ye are the salt of the earth...” How much have you thought about the worldwide current event of this day? What has it brought to your mind? I have observed the reactions of people around me. Some of their reactions are based in fear. Some reactions are based upon reasoning. Christian, what has been your reaction? Has it been one of peace? Have you a calm resolve within? We are to be a blessing; our lives are to be a saving and preserving of this world from total, universal corruption.

Musing upon what I have seen, I’ve concluded—this is not a time to fear. It is a time for growth. A time to realize the value of true salvation, giving a peace that passeth understanding, based upon a love for God that casts out fear of destruction. We are given the promises of the

Almighty! “What more can He say than to you He hath said...” Listen to His words! Where is your faith? Where is your hope? Where are you? What have you built upon? In the midst of storms, we find out what we have and what we lack. We are blessed to have such a standing with God, to show us what we have within! Is it not precious to know our standing in the light of His word?

I have a promise inscribed upon my personal checks to remind me and point out to others a true word of the Almighty: “For the Lord God is a sun and shield: the Lord will give grace and glory: no good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly. O Lord of hosts, blessed is the man that trusteth in thee” (Psalm 84:11-12).

SOCIAL DISTANCING OR SPIRITUAL CONNECTING?



“Social distancing” is a term that is being used frequently. It is deliberately increasing the physical space (i.e. six feet) between people to avoid spreading the virus. It includes avoiding large crowds and has caused governments to close businesses and schools. The result is that many people are staying in their homes with little social interaction and without the weekly fellowship and/or support of other people.

This is an opportune time for “spiritual connecting.” First, use this time to connect more closely to the Lord Jesus

and strengthen your relationship with God. Secondly, while you may not be able to physically be with someone, you can be a friend. Take time daily to reach out by text, social media, and phone calls to increase the spiritual connection you have with other people and point them to Christ. There are many people that are feeling isolated, alone, and fearful. The government is calling for social distancing and the Lord is calling for spiritual connecting. You can make the difference in someone’s life today.
—mws

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FOLDED GARMENTS



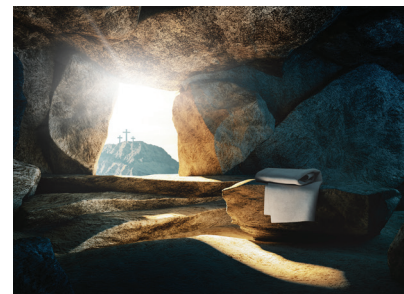
BRO. ED WILSON (OKLAHOMA, USA)

The resurrection story of Jesus tells us in John 20:6-8, “Then cometh Simon Peter following him, and went into the sepulchre, and seeth the linen clothes lie, And the napkin, that was about his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself. Then went in also (John)...

and he saw, and believed.”

John came to the empty tomb and found Jesus’ grave clothes folded neatly together, with the napkin that had been about His head laid apart from the rest. With a brilliant flash of illumination he grasped in a moment the silent message Jesus had left for them all: His body had not been hastily removed. This was not the work of hostile hands, seeking in death to deny even the small consolation of being once again near the departed loved one. Nor was it the work of friends, for they would not have dishonored the body of one so dear by carrying it away nude. No, the Man whom they had so recently seen in the final moments of mortal life must surely have done for Himself what He had bid to be done for Lazarus when He instructed for him to be loosed from the grave garments that bound him.

Nor did He go out like a man who was merely unconscious and, coming to His senses, realized afresh His peril and ran away. Calmly, deliberately, in the majesty of His lordship over death and with no need to be concerned with soldiers or Pharisees, He rose from His lying position and left order where there had been confusion. John’s sudden realization of what those empty garments meant are summarized with “he believed.” This was a major stride forward in his growing faith, and he was moved by the Spirit of God to record it that you and I might benefit.



HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD