**Surviving the Coronavirus Pandemic**

**Intro –** Much of the world, including our country, is being affected by a disease called Coronavirus. It is important that we, as Christians, take a circumspect approach to this trial. It is a real problem in real time in the real world. God did not cause this trial to start, but He will make use of it and bring ultimate good from it. An event of this scale is obviously not a direct blessing, so it must be a judgment against someone. This pastor’s opinion is that it is against the godless Chinese government for their persecution of the church. The pandemic is affecting the whole world secondarily, probably because God wants to get the attention of the proud, tech-worshipping, 21st century man across the entire world to simply say to him “I am.” How should the God-fearing person respond to this crisis?

**Eph 4:13** *…This will continue until we all come to such unity in our faith and knowledge of God's Son that we will be mature in the Lord, measuring up to the full and complete standard of Christ.* NLT

Jesus’ foremost work in this age is the building of His church. He will use all types of experiences, positive and negative, to form it into His bride. The church has experienced numerous renewals/revivals/reformations of its own as well as judgments and problems experienced by mankind through the years. Christians have been located in countries affected by plagues like the bubonic plague, typhus, smallpox and measles. It is a certainty that some Christians died in these plagues, as they have died in world wars, natural disasters, and other chaotic events throughout history. We have to have a mature view of these events, understanding that godly people sometimes suffer along with abject sinners. In Egypt, the Israelites likely suffered from the first three plagues God sent upon the land (blood, frogs, gnats or lice). From the fourth onward, their land was immune (Exodus 8:23-24). It is very possible that we will go *through* coronavirus and not be immune to it, just like our countrymen. However, the Christian does have certain defenses that the unsaved do not have. Let’s use all of the defenses God has given us!

**Prov 4:20-22** *- My child, pay attention to what I say. Listen carefully to my words. 21 Don't lose sight of them.*

*Let them penetrate deep into your heart, 22 for they bring life to those who find them, and healing to their whole body.*  NLT

*Wisdom* is an overlooked defense. It is not glamorous or visible, but it may be the most potent defense we have. Almost 10 chapters of Proverbs talk about it, connecting it to health and prosperity. For example, Paul told Timothy to drink wine for his stomach problems. He did not lay hands on him as far as we know. Naaman the Syrian captain was told by Elisha to bathe in the Jordan River seven times to be healed of leprosy. Naaman was disappointed because he really wanted to be healed in a more dramatic, convenient way by having Elisha extend his hands to him, praying over the spot. Similarly, the hope most Christians have is that all of our diseases will be healed by the laying on of hands instantly (**Mark 16:18).** If we are not sick, we claim Psalm 91, expecting all diseases to be kept from us. Frequently, they all aren’t kept from us. The problem is that we generally disregard *Wisdom*, eating and drinking whatever we want, indulging in the harmful abuse of stimulants like nicotine or the overconsumption of sugar, omitting healthy practices like regular exercise, going wherever we want and doing whatever we want. We just expect God to keep us well regardless. We absolutely do have a powerful tool in the laying on of hands and anointing with oil, but it was not meant to deliver us from our foolishness.

Concerning coronavirus, I believe that the Christian needs to take a two-pronged approach: 1) Use spiritual gifts of healing and prayer to heal those who are sick (laying on of hands, anointing with oil, intercession, deliverance) and to lift the infestation quickly and 2) combat the disease’s advance with wisdom. On The Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States (<https://www.pnas.org/content/early/2016/07/05/1601942113.full>) website, an article concerning the behavior of the common cold virus gives some relatively new insight about how the coronavirus may work. Another simpler article by Stephanie Castillo, a writer for Medical Daily (<https://www.medicaldaily.com/body-heat-kill-viral-infections-common-cold-391713>) says the same thing. Simply put, cold viruses respond to temperature changes inside our noses. An amazing biomechanism is worth understanding: The nasal cells have an alert chemical called interferon (same chemical used to treat cancer) which they emit when a virus attacks. The interferon alerts surrounding cells to go into defensive posture. The cells secrete, heat up, and flush out the invader. When the nose is cold and dry for extended periods, the interferon is inhibited, silencing the alarm and allowing the invader to multiply in the cells it attacks. This is probably why so many colds and influenzas happen in the cold months. Even a “summer cold” is usually the result of sleeping under an air conditioner or getting chilled in a summer storm. The coronavirus seems to behave a lot like a cold virus. It is a droplet-spread disease, meaning we inhale it, like we inhale visible dust particles hanging in the air in a dusty room. After someone sneezes, the droplets dry out quickly, leaving the invisible and infinitely smaller virus hanging in the air. It is virtually impossible to avoid these everywhere we go. Virus particles are so small they easily pass through drugstore masks.

Here are three simple things you can do to stave off the coronavirus, based on the wisdom found in these articles:

1. Sleep with a humidifier. It is harder for a virus to attach to a nasal cell which is moist. Even the thin coating of moisture from the condensing water vapor put out by your humidifier is like an ocean of water to a virus.

2. Turn your nighttime thermostat setting up a degree or two warmer. The interferon alert system gets more efficient as it warms up. The articles told us that viruses spread faster in mice at cooler temperatures than warmer ones. Warming the inside of your nose up for extended periods helps your God-designed defense system. Heat doesn’t kill the viruses, it just makes it harder for them to invade and reproduce.

3. Flush out your nose with simple saline solution occasionally (very cheap and simple at any drug store, $2.00). Your body is constantly flushing invaders back down your throat in an effort to get them to the gastric juices of your stomach. Don’t do like a South Korean church recently did: They used one spray bottle for a congregation of 150 people, many of whom got infected! Use your own sterile bottle.

These recommendations seem a bit more focused than the general handwashing and distancing we are told to do. I understand that the advice our government gives is meant to reach the broadest spectrum of society so everyone can easily understand and do something extremely simple with some measureable effect. We are able to ask God for wisdom. I think God helped me find the two articles referenced above around the middle of last week. I had actually suspected some kind of temperature-related phenomenon for years. I am obviously not a doctor, but I can read and judge between risky, radical, cures or sensible, low risk measures. Personally, I plan to focus more on the nose. I’ll probably limit handshakes, wash my hands a bit more, and limit hugs when possible, but will not be obsessed with it. I do not want to portray a cavalier or reckless attitude. We will certainly follow the president’s guidelines for our church. This is a disease which is killing the weak and elderly.

**Concl. -** Coronavirus will pass. Flu seasons in our hemisphere always start in the cold months and die off as the air warms. One last thought is the *wisdom* of **Isaiah 58:6-8** concerning healing:

*This is the kind of fasting I have chosen: Loosen the chains of wickedness, untie the straps of the yoke, let the oppressed go free, and break every yoke. 7 Share your food with the hungry, take the poor and homeless into your house, and cover them with clothes when you see them naked. Don't refuse to help your relatives. 8 Then your light will break through like the dawn, and you will heal quickly.* God’s Word

We Christians have something that unbelievers cannot have – communion! The modern church sorely needs the interdependent, supportive, loving, one-another life depicted in the book of Acts. Abundant healings and miracles were always present when God’s people died to their own needs and lived to love one another! This may be the ultimate coronavirus defense. May the Lord cause us to mature!