

Daily View

“But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called ‘today’” Hebrews 3:13

October 6, 2020

Don't Let Covid-19 Become Your Master

There's a story about a soldier in the Civil War who wore a blue coat and gray pants and he was shot at by men on both sides. I've been there, both by accident and intentionally (after all, the truth is often in the tension, right?).

So, at the risk of being quarantined by some of my brethren, I'm going to say this: it's one thing to do what you can to prevent catching the virus — that's sensible, not only for your health but for those around you. But if it's motivated by a morbid fear of death, how does that harmonize with your commitment to living in Christ?

Jesus asked Martha a question in John 11:26 — and we need to answer it, personally and honestly. Jesus said, “everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. *Do you believe this?*” Given life's uncertainties, isn't that a relevant question every day? After all, James said, “*You are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes*” (James 4:14).

There are good reasons we desire to live on. I have mine and you have yours. Even Paul had his: “*to remain in the flesh is more necessary on your account*” (Philippians 1:24). If you want to remain here for your kids' sake or because you want to proclaim the gospel to more people, that's good, that's commendable — and *normal*. But Paul also said, “*to live is Christ and to die is gain*” (Philippians 1:21). If you want to stay only to better feather your nest and acquire more stuff... well, “*Fool! This night your soul is required of you, and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?*” (Luke 12:20).

If you're still with me, let's talk Covid-19 for a bit. Set aside, for a moment, all the conspiracy theories, the politics, the inconsistencies and the hyperbolic reporting — the truth is that the coronavirus is *a real, deadly disease that has caused havoc all over the world*. It's not a hoax. While 95-99% of those who catch it recover, it has killed, worldwide, over a million people and its deadly work is far from over.

By now, most of us personally know people who have had the disease. I know of at least 7 or 8, all youngish people who have fully recovered. Just last night, we learned President Trump and Melania tested positive for it. While treatment options have improved significantly, it is still an especially virulent disease since there is no known cure and no universally accepted preventative measures available as yet.

So, we continue to harbor a healthy fear of this disease and do what we can to prevent an outbreak, especially among the most vulnerable among us. That's what

reasonable people do. That's what Christians do. That's what Jesus would do. You don't have to agree, but I believe he would wear a mask if he came into an assembly. After all, he was baptized even though he didn't need it—he did it to “*fulfill all righteousness*” (Matthew 3:15). And although he was the Master, he still washed the feet of his disciples. Why? To give them an example (John 13:15). I also happen to believe he would sing hymns in the assembly, regardless of what the governor says. After all, he did lots of stuff on the Sabbath that the “governors” told him not to. But you are entitled to your own opinion on that and on anything else that falls into a similar category.

But let's forget all of that for a moment. Is this virus running your life right now? Are you so afraid of it, that you have isolated yourself from your brethren and done nothing to help others deal with the issues they may be facing? Has Covid exempted us from Galatians 6:2, “bear one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ?” Is it possible that we are so concerned with fulfilling the law of the governor that we have stopped fulfilling the law of Christ?

Death is coming for all of us. When we stop and think about it, that's a major reason we became Christ-followers in the first place: “*...and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery*” says the writer of Hebrews (2:14). Just remember: we are all going to die unless—*and wouldn't this be great!?* — Jesus comes back before we die.

This may be the most difficult challenge we've ever faced, at least in terms of how we serve our King. We know we are to love our brethren. There are at least 59 “one another” passages in the New Testament. Part of carrying that command out is by not exposing others to the virus. Yet, keeping our distance and talking to each other from behind a mask (if we talk at all) makes it more difficult to do our loving work. And we should not minimize the temptation to look at each other with suspicion, wondering if you are carrying a secret weapon that could kill us. That changes our relationship at a fundamental level.

My question is (and it's a question for me, too): *how do we do all of that without allowing the virus to become our Master instead of Jesus?* It's safe to say that the devil prefers that we substitute anything or anyone else as our Master, in place of Jesus. But Jesus says, “*no one can serve two masters*” (Matthew 6:24). So we have to choose.

*Unless otherwise indicated the opinions expressed in this publication and images used are solely those of David Posey.
Email me at dpaulposey@mac.com or text me at (530) 558-5057