

Daily View

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

May 14, 2021

Update: Covid & Masks

BY DAVID POSEY

You have all heard, by now, that the CDC (and President Biden) made a major announcement yesterday regarding face coverings. The elders are looking at this closely to see when and how it affects the church. Meanwhile, I want to share some positive signs that I’ve seen recently on the Covid-19 front. I’m doing my best to stay with the facts here; when I share an opinion, I’ll label it as such.

Cases & Deaths

I don’t need to tell you that Covid has not been extinguished. It is still a deadly disease that is affecting people all over the world. India has been hit the hardest in the last month but, fortunately, cases there are starting to drop. Most countries in the world are far below where they were in November 2020 to March 2021.

In the United States, cases have been falling steeply since January and, according to Johns Hopkins, they are at the lowest level since January/February. The case rate was low two weeks ago, but the rate is down 31% even since then. In the last two weeks, deaths are down 8%.

California now has the lowest daily case rate in the United States at 5 daily cases per 100,000 (according to the *Center for Systems Science and Engineering at Johns Hopkins University*). In the last 14 days, cases are down about 47% (<https://covidusa.net>).

Again, Covid has not gone away; it is still a health problem around the world. However, the recovery rate — world-wide — is 96.67%, as of May 13th and 98% in the US (“recovery” does not mean people are not still suffering after-effects from the disease; it just means they did not die from Covid). In Sacramento County, over the last two weeks, the seven-day average of new cases has decreased 11.8% and 47% have been at least partially vaccinated.

Face Coverings

As mentioned above, the CDC made a major announcement, repeated by President Biden, relaxing the mask mandates for those who have been fully vaccinated (“fully” means two weeks after you’ve received your second shot of Pfizer or Moderna or two weeks after getting the Johnson and Johnson shot). Here is the actual language from the CDC website:

- Update that fully vaccinated people no longer need to wear a mask or physically distance in any setting, except where required by federal, state, local, tribal, or territorial laws, rules, and regulations, including local business and workplace guidance.

- Update that fully vaccinated people can refrain from testing following a known exposure unless they are residents or employees of a correctional or detention facility or a homeless shelter.

In a news report...

“[CDC Director] Walensky highlighted, in particular, three recent studies that demonstrated the impact of the vaccines on symptomatic and asymptomatic infections and one study published just last week on the effectiveness of Covid-19 vaccines against two variants that are known to be circulating in the United States. The findings all add to a growing body of evidence that the vaccines are effective at preventing severe illness and death from Covid-19 and that they help prevent people from spreading the virus to others.”

This is exciting news for all of us who have been fully vaccinated and are mask-wearers. Yesterday, many people in Lowes Hardware were not wearing them and one lady said, “*the President said we don’t have to wear them anymore.*” We did not see any Lowe’s employee tell anyone to put their mask on. [Opinion] It seems it would be politically expedient for the governor to issue a statement that aligns with the CDC.

An editorial in the *LA Times* today (5/14/21), that was encouraging caution in adopting the CDC guidelines, made this statement: “*Science and data back up the CDC’s overall point that vaccinated people are in little danger if they hang out with unmasked and unvaccinated people indoors.*” If that’s true, there is no reasonable argument for wearing a mask if you’ve been vaccinated. **But we are still bound to obey the local government, so we’ll have to wait and see how the state reacts.**

[Opinion] A Land Without Mask Mandates

Imagine a world without mask mandates and where most restrictions on businesses have been removed. Based on what we have heard about masks for the last year or more, we would expect that Covid case rates would be appreciably higher in such a place, correct? Yet, on March 2, 2021, before a majority of people were vaccinated, Texas Governor Greg Abbott issued an executive order to provide that, in all counties not in an area with high hospitalizations, no person may be required by any jurisdiction to wear or to mandate the wearing of a face covering. Texas has a population of almost 30 million people yet, as of today, Texas has one of the lowest case rate per 100,000 in the U.S. I could be wrong, but that’s a pretty large sample size over a relatively long period which *may* suggest that masks are not the solution that some have argued they are.