

**Spiritual Encouragement Message from Johnson Avenue**  
**By Randall Jarrell**  
**March 18, 2020**

Most of us are worried about the coronavirus. That is as it should be. We are concerned about so many things. What should our reaction be in situations like we are facing today? Many are anxious, fearing the worst. Will I catch the virus? Will I be able to get the food and sundries that I need? Will basic medical treatment be available? What if someone close to me contracts the virus, will they have to go into isolation? How long will this last? Then there are the Biblical questions we would ask. If services are cancelled, are we sinning? What would the first century Christians have done? How can we take the Lord's Supper if we are not assembled together?

Those are all perfectly predictable questions and I wish we could answer them all definitively. But the truth of the matter is that much is unknown about what will happen in the foreseeable future. It is okay that we are worried, for worry brings action. But it is not okay that we respond to all this with anxiousness. Being anxious about the future paralyzes us, it causes us to lose our way and respond to crises in irrational ways.

Perhaps for a moment, we can re-examine our spiritual purpose as Christians. When we do that, we come to understand that God has prepared good works for us to do (Ephesians 2:10). In His wisdom, He has actually prepared us for days like these. He has made it so that His spiritual people will show the immeasurable riches of his kindness through simple acts of Christian courage in a world paralyzed and consumed by fear.

Christians take seriously what is happening around us. We educate ourselves and take appropriate precautions. COVID-19 serves as a warning to us all. But it should also serve as a reminder as well as a commission for all of us who love and follow Christ. Will those of us who have been freed from the fear of death take the risks many in the world will refuse to take? Will we display our hope among the fearful, infected, and dying? Will members of Christ's body, at the right moments and with great wisdom, rally to meet the needs around us?

The kind of courage that will lead us to act where others fear to act will not be reckless or dismissive, nor will it ignore wise public precautions. To our brethren at Johnson Avenue Church of Christ we observe that one of the most loving things we can do in the present situation is to limit and slow the spread of the virus. This is the reason the elders have acted in the way that they have. The kind of courage that comes by being children of God will be ready in the days to come to step in where needed when few others will. Christians, freed from the fear of death, could be the first to step forward.

Will we answer if that call comes?