

Coronavirus Positives – A Spiritual Perspective

BE STILL AND KNOW I AM GOD



**“Be still and know that I am God:
I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the
earth.” (Ps. 46:10)**

COVID-19. The Coronavirus. The Wuhan Flu. Nonexistent a few months ago and yet such a large part of our lives today. So many huge changes in our lives due to something so microscopic. While we do not diminish the threat of this tiny invader, as God’s children, we can rest assured that God is still in control and that God will work all things out for good for those that love Him (Rom. 8:28). Over the next few weeks, we hope to share several positives from this current crisis that we believe God has given us as He works this for good. May God bless you and allow you this unique opportunity to look for good, to reprioritize your life, and may God lead you to place your hope and trust in Him, and Him alone. Today, we will look at the idea of being still and knowing God.

Surely, one of the first positives that has come from our present crisis is an opportunity simply to slow down and to know our eternal Father, perhaps at a level that we have never known him before. Due to this pandemic, many of the usual activities of life have been halted temporarily and we suddenly find ourselves with more “free time” than we have had in a long, long time. I enjoy biking, running and walking for exercise, often on the same roads that I drive daily as I go to work. Even though I may drive the same road daily, if I bike on that same road, I begin to notice things that I had

overlooked before. If I run or walk on that same road, even more details come to view that I had missed while driving or biking. Perhaps initials carved in a tree, turtles sunning on a log, the colors of a wildflower on the side of the road, the busyness of an anthill or a surveyor's spike driven in the road. All those details escaped me when I'm driving my car at (or maybe just over) the speed limit, as I rush to get to my next destination. What makes the difference in what I am able to see? Simply the speed that I am traveling and the thoughts that cloud my mind as I hurry along. The faster I am traveling and the more thoughts that race through my mind, the less details of life that I am able to notice. A slower speed always equates to a greater perspective. Surely the Holy Spirit had this in mind when he penned Psalms 46:10, "Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth."

How many things, great things, do we miss in life, simply because we are traveling at break neck speed from one activity to another? One of Satan's ploys is to tempt us with sinful things, the works of the flesh (Gal. 5:19-21), and, for many, this is how Satan ensnares us. However, if Satan cannot tempt us with evil things, he will often make us so busy with the everyday things of this life that we simply do not have time for the most important things of all. How many days, months, years, or decades, do we completely fill our lives with things and activities, often good things, at the expense of great things? Work, sports activities, hobbies, and entertainment may be good things, but nothing is of greater importance than our relationship with God. No external event can separate us from the love of God (Rom. 8:38-39), however, by our own actions and decisions we ourselves can, just as some of the Jews did in the first century (Acts 13:46). God seeks a deep, intimate relationship with us. He always has and He always will. Through this present crisis, God has given us a rare, rare opportunity to slow down the pace of our lives, to see Him and His blessings with a new perspective, to re-evaluate what our priorities in life are, and to make Him Lord on the throne of our lives, perhaps for the first time ever.

"The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge. There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard." (Ps. 19:1-3). The natural world declares God's presence, God's glory and God's power, because they were created by Him. The first verse of the Bible tells us "In the beginning God created the heaven and the Earth" and Job 26:13 states, "By his spirit he hath garnished the heavens". "The

heavens declare his righteousness, and all the people see his glory” (Ps. 97:6). The apostle Paul, in speaking to the Athenians who had built an idol to the unknown God, declared that God is near every one of us and that, in fact, in Him we live and move and have our every being (Acts 17:22-30). God has provided ample evidence of Himself in the physical world in which we live, yet, often, we are so busy with the things of this life, that we do not slow down to contemplate God and our relationship with him. As the old hymn goes: “This is my Father’s world, And to my listening ears, All nature sings and round me rings, The Music of the spheres. This is my Father’s world, I rest me in the thought, Of rocks and trees, Of skies and seas, His hand the wonders wrought”. May we always have listening ears to what God constantly sings to us and may we allow that to draw us ever closer to Him.

Stillness is often essential to the receiving of God’s instruction and direction in our lives. (Num. 9:8, 1 Sam. 9:27, Job 37:14, Ps. 4:4) After being freed from slavery in Egypt by God’s power, the Israelites found themselves at the water’s edge, being closely pursued by the Egyptian army with little hope of escape. As the Israelites neared the shore of the Red Sea and looked up and saw Pharaoh and the Egyptian army closing in on them, they feared and cried unto the Lord. Their last instinct was to be still, yet that is exactly what Moses told them to do. “And Moses said to all the people, Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, which he will show to you today... The Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace.” (Ex. 14:10-14). After the miracle of the Israelites crossing the Red Sea and the destruction of the Egyptian army, we have these words, “Thus the Lord saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians; and Israel saw the Egyptians dead upon the sea shore. And the people saw that great work which the Lord did upon the Egyptians: and the people feared the Lord, and believed the Lord, and his servant Moses.” (Ex. 14:30-31). For the Israelites, their stillness and their willingness to rely on God when nothing else could save them, led to a greater understanding, a greater faith, and a greater reverence for and reliance on the Lord. The same is true for us. Often, when things in our life seem most grim and most hopeless, times when our fears are greatest, this is the very time we should be still and learn to know God at a deeper level. And, because we gain a deeper knowledge of the character of God and His goodness, we are able to exalt and lift God up higher than we ever have before.

How often in scriptures do we find Christ taking time from His busy schedule to slow down and seek solitude with God? After the miracle of feeding the 5,000, Jesus constrained his disciples to get into a ship and cross the Sea of Galilee, then he sent the multitudes away and finally he went up into a mountain alone to pray (Matt. 14:22-23). Even as Christ's fame spread and many great crowds came to him, he continued to practice his habit of withdrawing himself into the wilderness to pray (Luke 5:15). Certainly, Christ saw the value of solitude, of being still and seeking God's will and drawing strength from God in prayer, and then going on to serve his fellowman with the abilities God had given him. And as Christians, shouldn't we?

We are not just commanded to be still, but instead to be still and know God. And here lies a problem for many. Even though God has given us ample evidence of Himself, both in creation and in His written word, we must be intellectually honest in order to recognize both for what they are. "The fool has said in his heart, There is no God" (Ps. 53:1). This was the problem with many in the first century, and it continues today. Rom. 1:19-20 states, "because that which is known about God is evident to them; for God made it evident to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse". Yet even when presented with the evidence of God, they denied it, were ungrateful for what God had done for them and became conceited, "For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God, or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools" (Rom. 1:21-22). May that never be the case for us. The proof of God is obvious, if we are open to it. God said if we are still, we may know that He is God, not merely think that perhaps He might exist. We find the definition of faith in Heb. 11:1, "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen". Did you catch that? Faith is the substance..., the evidence. Sure, certain things, not just merely possibilities. And if we are still and honest with what we observe and with ourselves, we may know that God exists and that we can put our full trust, our full faith, and our eternal destiny into His hands.

And finally, if we are still, if we then know God for who He truly is, it naturally flows that we will exalt Him. But what does that mean, to exalt God? Does it not simply mean to put him in the proper place, the place that

He, and He alone, deserves? (Ps. 21:13, 99:5, 108:3-6, 118:28-29, Is. 12:2-5, 25:1, 33:5-6) Does it not mean to truly make Him the lord and the master of our lives? Sadly, for many who proclaim to be Christians, this is where we get stuck – in spiritual no-man’s-land. We’re too Christian to enjoy sin, and yet too sinful to enjoy Christ. We’ve got just enough Jesus to be informed, but not enough to be transformed. Yet, of all the faiths we may have, a lukewarm one most displeases Christ (Rev. 3:15-16). We want everything God has to offer without giving up anything. God’s grace costs us nothing, in the sense that we can never earn it (Eph. 2:8), yet it demands everything. The same Holy Spirit who tells us that we are not saved by works, lest any man should boast (Eph. 2:9), also tells us that faith without works is dead (James 2:20) and that by works a man is justified, and not by faith alone (James 2:24). God deserves and demands our best, including for us to exalt Him on the throne of our lives, and that requires us to present ourselves as a living sacrifice to Him (Rom. 12:1). If we are not exalting God as we should, perhaps we do not know Him as we should.

Through this present crisis, God has given us a unique opportunity to slow down the pace of our lives, to be still, to know Him, to see Him and His blessings with a new perspective, to re-evaluate our priorities and to change them where needed. Why not take advantage of this rare opportunity to slow down and reflect on God and your commitment to Him? Spend time in God’s creation. Contemplate the goodness of God seen in the design of nature. Invest more time studying God’s word to learn more of God and his desires for you. Allow him to speak to you through His word. Spend more time in prayer with our Heavenly Father. Evaluate the talents that God has given you and determine to use those more fully or, perhaps, for the first time, to serve Him. And then, as was Christ’s example, go forth and serve God and your fellowman to the best of your God-given ability! God demands and deserves nothing less.