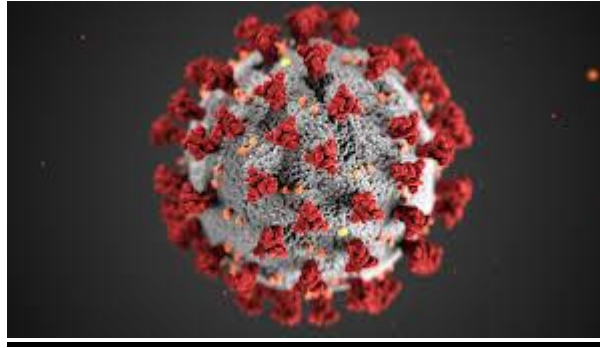


Coronavirus Positives – A Spiritual Perspective



COVID-19. The Coronavirus. The Wuhan Flu. Today, it is almost impossible to avoid being bombarded constantly by news, by conversations and by internet posts regarding the pandemic of our day. Since the discovery of this virus late last year, until its arrival on our fruited plain, and its rapid spread across the world, we find ourselves often at a loss to fully understand the total impact of this tiny virus on our lives. Our lives have, to a great degree, been totally displaced by this tiny invader. The economic impact of social distancing and the fear of contracting this virus have led many to despair. Our means of making a living, our work location, and the manner in how we perform our jobs has changed. The security of our jobs and the lifestyles that those jobs provide have been impacted. Some are out of work and wonder how they will make ends meet, others face newfound risks as they perform their “essential” jobs, health care workers are placed in peril by this new threat even as they attempt to save the lives of those effected by it. Others have seen the value of their retirement accounts that they have worked decades to obtain, plunge to new lows. A new vocabulary has come into being. Prior to a few months ago, words such as social distancing, essential employee, N95 masks and risk mitigation were rarely, if ever, heard.

As we try to come to terms with this microscopic invader, the many opinions concerning it have been as varied as we are. Some feel this is a sign of the end-times, some feel this is God’s punishment for a world that has become too materialistic and, more often than not, doesn’t seem to have time in their busy schedules for Him. Some view this as the next inevitable epidemic, nothing more and nothing less. Rumors and false information are rampant. In just a few days, I have heard rumors that the Covid-19 virus is being transmitted and contracted through the new 5G broadband network! Another was fearful that the upcoming coronavirus vaccine would contain a

microchip which will, when injected, give its receiver the mark of the beast. Others view this as the next black death, while others view this as only a minor virus, however, they are concerned that the many sweeping changes that are taking place in this time of group panic and crisis will lead to greater governmental control of our lives.

Whatever your view of this virus is, it is evident that fear is rampant and that we are constantly receiving a barrage of negative media, which may or may not be warranted. While these may indeed be dark times and we are often tempted to be discouraged by what we see, hear and feel, as always, there are positives to be found, and this is especially true if you are a child of God. As Christians, we must always realize that, just as the faithful who have gone on before us, we are only pilgrims and sojourners here (Heb. 11:13-16, 13:14), and that our earthly life is only preparing us for our heavenly home. As Christians, we should have a different view of this world and a peace that will allow us to overcome the trials and troubles of this short life (Ps. 29:11, Is. 26:3, John 14:27, 16:33, Philp. 4:6-7). An eternal view will allow us to overcome the many speed bumps and hills and valleys of this life. Because we realize that God is always in control, we can put our full trust and confidence in Him to see us through (Ps. 118:8, Pr. 3:5, Is. 26:4). Because Christ has overcome death (Rom. 6:9), we can be confident that we no longer pass through the valley of death, but instead, only through the valley of the shadow of death (Psalms 23:4), and shadows can not harm us.

Great comfort can be found in the fact that God will not allow Satan to try us above what we are able to bear! “There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above what ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way of escape, that ye may be able to bear it.” (1 Cor. 10:13). This applies not only to sinful temptations that we face, but also to the daily struggles of life, including this current one. As with Job, God limits what Satan is allowed to try us with. (Job 1:12, 2:6) It is Satan’s desire to steal from us many things, including our joy and our direction and purpose in life, to physically maim and kill us, and finally, to spiritually destroy us. Thankfully, God not only limits Satan, but has also sent us Christ, who came to give us life, and not any life, but an abundant one (John 10:10).

Is there a more positive verse than can help us through life’s difficulties, including this one, than Rom. 8:28? “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to

his purpose”. While this verse does not apply to the whole world, it does apply to Christians. What greater joy could a Christian have when dealing with difficult times than this assurance from God? What greater joy can we have as we go through this present crisis? We may not see it as we are going through the difficult times in our lives, but, if we are Christians, we can rest assured that God, through his divine power and providential grace, is taking Satan’s negatives and turning them into positives. All things in our lives may not be good, but we can be assured that God can and does work all things for good.

As the writer of Ecclesiastes struggled to find meaning in life, so it is with us, especially in times when our usual routine of life is shaken up. Times of change always take us out of our comfort zones and challenge us. As this coronavirus pandemic disrupts so much of what we have come to view as our normal routine, it is natural that we may feel that life itself is void of meaning and purpose. The author of Ecclesiastes certainly felt this way. Through the first 11 chapters of Ecclesiastes, he struggled with the meaning of life. “Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher, vanity of vanities; all is vanity” (Eccl. 1:2). “I have seen all the works that are done under the sun; and, behold, all is vanity and vexation of spirit” (Eccl. 1:14). While this last verse may seem at first glance, in it we see the key for how to properly view life, with all of its triumphs and tragedies, its beginnings and endings. If we view this life as most of the world does, as only what is “under the sun” – the physical world that we see and daily live in – then indeed, our lives can only be vanity. We are born, we grow, we mature, we marry, we work, we have children and grandchildren, we grow old, we die. All of the physical work we do and all the material possessions that we obtain, we leave to another when we depart this life. And certainly all would be vanity, if this was all our lives consisted of. But, thanks be to God, our lives are not only what is “under the sun”! This life is only a short, finite amount of time, to allow us to prepare for the next. And this is what the author discovered and recorded in the concluding chapter of Ecclesiastes. This is also one positive of this current coronavirus epidemic: we have been given the opportunity to either truly learn for the first time, or to refocus our attention on, what is most important. “Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgement, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whither it be bad” (Eccl. 12:13-14).

The Covid-19 pandemic. So many huge changes in our lives due to something so tiny. 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 continue to place your hope and trust in Him, and in Him alone.