

"The Coronavirus through the Lens of Scripture"**Philippians 4:6-9**

Introduction: This morning we are facing a situation which we never thought we would see. Last week when we gathered here no one could have predicted what was going to happen this week. Schools are shut down. NBA has suspended the season, NHL has suspended the season, baseball's spring training is placed on hold, travel to Europe has been stopped panicked has overtaken the minds of many people.

On Friday we went to Mechanicsburg to see our grandsons and they wanted to eat at Cracker Barrel, so we did. It was about 4 o'clock on Friday afternoon and there were only about 5 other people in the restaurant besides us. When I questioned the waitress, she told me it has been that way for 1 ½ weeks due to the response to the coronavirus.

So, this morning we are going to look at a message from God's Word and consider what is happening today and look at some Biblical lessons based upon what we are seeing today.

I. It is a test for the church.

With all that is happening there is much panic among the masses. People are cleaning off the shelves in the stores across the nation. I understand that you cannot buy hand sanitizer anywhere and medical masks are all sold out. There is a global panic among many people because of what is happening. Fear has begun to grip the planet in many areas.

This then becomes a test for those who know Jesus Christ as Savior. Remember what the people were going through whom Peter wrote to? They were under the persecution of Nero and because they were believers they were suffering greatly. Notice what Peter wrote to them:

1 Peter 1:3-7

³ *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,*

⁴ *To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you,*

⁵ *Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.*

⁶ *Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations:*

⁷ That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ:

In the midst of the severe persecution they were to walk by faith and so are we. The world is moving toward panic mode, but we who are believers are not to follow the ways of the world. We must exercise wisdom and common sense, but we are not to be controlled by fear and panic. This is a time when the church can be a lighthouse to the rest of the world.

Matthew 5:14-16

¹⁴ Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid.

¹⁵ Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house.

¹⁶ Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

In the Old Testament there were appointed certain cities that were cities of refuge. They were places of escape that God provided for those who were fleeing from the avenger of blood. They were certainly pictures of Jesus Christ. They can also be seen as pictures of the church. We, who make up the body of Christ, are to be a light to a world that is submerged into darkness. Much of the world is living in fear because of what is happening today but as the church we are not to live in fear. We are to have faith in our God in the midst of what is happening.

Notice what David wrote when the Philistines took him to Gath.

Psalm 56:1-4

Be merciful unto me, O God: for man would swallow me up; he fighting daily oppresseth me.

² Mine enemies would daily swallow me up: for they be many that fight against me, O thou most High.

³ What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee.

*⁴ In God I will praise his word, in God I have put my trust; **I will not fear what flesh can do unto me.***

Then we see again what he wrote in Psalm 23 and 27.

Psalm 23:4

⁴ Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, **I will fear no evil: for thou art with me;** thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

Psalm 27:1-3

The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? **the LORD is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?**

² When the wicked, even mine enemies and my foes, came upon me to eat up my flesh, they stumbled and fell.

³ Though an host should encamp against me, **my heart shall not fear:** though war should rise against me, in this will I be confident.

Now let me show you what Paul commanded to the Philippians.

1. The Proper Response

Notice Philippians 4:6

The idea here is that we are not to be anxious or we are not to worry about anything. But instead of being consumed with worry we are to take our concerns to our God. He is our Father and we are His children, so we are to trust Him with whatever we face including the coronavirus.

God is in complete control of what is going on in our world today. This is not out of His control. He has permitted this to happen and it is our responsibility to rest our faith in Him and to be a testimony to the world around us.

2. The Promise

Notice Philippians 4:7

Here is a wonderful promise which the world knows nothing about. We are assured that when we commit the situation to our Lord, He will give to us a peace that passes all understanding and it will keep our hearts and minds. The word "KEEP" means "TO GUARD". Faith and trust in God in the midst of what we are going through guards our minds from fear and panic.

This is what we need in this time and it is what God promises to us when we walk by faith. We must trust Him with this virus and all that is going to happen. But as I said we are not to be foolish. We must exercise wisdom and common sense.

John 14:27

27 Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

3. The Proper Thoughts

Notice Philippians 4:8-9

Here we see that our minds are to be focused upon that which is true, honest, just, pure, lovely, good, excellent and worthy. Let me just say you will not get these thoughts from CNN, CBS, NBC, ABC, or FOX NEWS.

If you have a steady stream of one of these channels flowing into your life, there is no way you will have the peace of God. The things which we are to focus on are not what the world is giving out. Let me remind you of something;

2 Corinthians 4:4

4 In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.

Satan is the God of this world so he will sow nothing but confusion, lies, fear and panic. So, we must be careful about what we allow to enter our minds. The mind is a battlefield.

2 Corinthians 10:4-5

4 (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;)

5 Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;

II. It is a warning to the world.

God never brings a judgment without warning the people first. I personally believe that what we are seeing in our nation is a warning of what is to come.

I am not saying the Rapture will happen in the next weeks, but it certainly could. But at the same time, it may be many years down the road.

What we see happening with this coronavirus is a small glimpse of what the world will experience in the Tribulation period. Let me point out some things that are obvious:

1. The quickness of how things can change.

Last week if someone would have told us all that was going to happen in the last few days, we would have never believed them. I point this out because many people believe that all

the pieces need to be in place for the Tribulation to begin. Let us learn from what has happened in the world the past couple of days that God can move everything into place overnight. Let me show you from the book of Daniel how it can change overnight.

Daniel 5:1,5, 24-28, 30-31

Belshazzar the king made a great feast to a thousand of his lords, and drank wine before the thousand.

⁵ In the same hour came forth fingers of a man's hand, and wrote over against the candlestick upon the plaister of the wall of the king's palace: and the king saw the part of the hand that wrote.

²⁴ Then was the part of the hand sent from him; and this writing was written.

²⁵ And this is the writing that was written, MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN.

²⁶ This is the interpretation of the thing: MENE; God hath numbered thy kingdom, and finished it.

²⁷ TEKEL; Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting.

²⁸ PERES; Thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians.

³⁰ In that night was Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans slain.

³¹ And Darius the Median took the kingdom, being about threescore and two years old.

2. The panic.

I am willing to say that the way people react to the news of the coronavirus is far more alarming than the virus itself. Let me refresh your mind about the Tribulation period that is to come.

Revelation 6:7-8

⁵ And when he had opened the third seal, I heard the third beast say, Come and see. And I beheld, and lo a black horse; and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand.

⁶ And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts say, A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny; and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine.

⁷ And when he had opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth beast say, Come and see.

⁸ *And I looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him. And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth.*

When the 3rd Seal is opened famine will sweep the earth. When the 4th Seal is opened one fourth of the population will die by:

- a. Sword - People killing one another for food.
- b. Hunger- starvation
- c. Death - Disease
- d. Beasts- wild animals.

I have watched what people did under this virus and it is frightening. They fought in the aisles at Cosco and other stores. What will it be like when these Seals are opened?

What we are seeing today is a prelude to what is to come.

3. The frailty and vulnerability of the human race.

In all of what is taking place it has reminded me that when God decides to bring a judgment man is completely helpless. You can be strong and healthy, but you are not exempt from the risk. Every person has an idea, but there is nothing that can stop what is going on. This is all to remind the world of how frail man is. The bottom line is that man needs God.

James 4:13-15

¹³ *Go to now, ye that say, To day or to morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain:*

¹⁴ *Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.*

¹⁵ *For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that.*

4. The governmental control over the people.

I am sure you have noticed that in the midst of all that is going on the government has been able to control and move the masses in any direction they desire. This is setting the stage for the Anti-Christ and his reign along with the false prophet.

Revelation 13:6-8, 16-17

⁶ *And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven.*

⁷ *And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations.*

⁸ *And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.*

¹⁶ *And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads:*

¹⁷ *And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.*

The Anti-Christ will rule the world and by his side will be the false prophet. We see here that the false prophet will CAUSE many to take the Mark of the Beast. If you have ever wondered why they would do this it will be so they can buy and sell. We have seen under the coronavirus how people have reacted and so it explains how people will receive the Mark of the Beast willingly. Those who receive the mark will seal their destiny.

Revelation 14:9-10

⁹ *And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand,*

¹⁰ *The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb:*

Conclusion:

If we know Jesus, we do not need to live in fear. God is in control and if we die Paul tells us it is GAIN.

If you are not saved this is a warning. This virus is nothing compared to what is coming upon this world.