

REFLECTIONS FROM CORONAVIRUS AND CHRIST

PART 3

Christ's reign is sweet and comforting

Quote: “The same sovereignty that could stop the Coronavirus, yet doesn't, is the very same sovereignty that sustains the soul in it” John Piper

The reason why we ought to receive the news of God's sovereignty over the coronavirus, and over our lives as sweet, comforting and good is because (as the quote says above) **“He (God) sustains the soul in it.”** Through every situation, circumstance and scenario in life – however bitter, difficult, hard and insurmountable they may appear; God is holding us, and through those bitter realities, is orchestrating, our good, and His glory. **Romans 8: 28 “And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.”**



God is not dethroned!

If as Christians we have a low view of God's sovereignty, and think that he might not be in complete control of the coronavirus pandemic or any other calamity that blights this world or our lives; that is not good news, because, Satan, sickness, fate and chance etc.... have the final say in our lives. However, God's reign is great news! Why? Because the sovereignty that rules in sickness is the same sovereignty that sustains us in loss. The very sovereignty that takes life is the same sovereignty that conquered death and brings every believer home to heaven and Christ. The fact that God reigns is also good news because he is holy, righteous and infinitely wiser.

Job 12:13 “With God are wisdom and might; he has counsel and understanding”



Nothing surprises our God! He cannot be confused or baffled in any way. His infinite power rests in the hands of his infinite goodness, holiness and wisdom, all that stands in the service of those who have put their trust in Jesus. What God did in sending Jesus to die for sinners has everything to do with the Coronavirus. Here is the connection...

God has secured all things for sinners

Romans 8:32. “He who did not spare his own son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?” The fact of the matter is that because of the reality of Christ's death and resurrection in our lives, we have been graciously given- all things! Everything we need to glorify him, do his will, and maintain our joy and peace in His presence. When God's infinite rubber stamped, blood certified commitment to give us “all things” meets the coronavirus, here is what he says....

Romans 8: 35-37. “who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or sword (OR THE CORONAVIRUS)? As it is written,

**“For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered.”
No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.**

What Satan means for evil

In every season of life, but particularly during “this crisis” Satan (the arch- enemy of our soul) is looking to; steal, kill and destroy (**John 10:10**) ...

- **steal** our joy
- **kill** our peace
- **destroy** our hope

What the book of Job and the story of Joseph reminds us of is that Satan is on a lead. He cannot do anything without God’s permission and limitation (**Job 1:12; Luke 22:31**), neither can he do anything without God meaning/intending it for good. God hasn’t been caught off guard by this virus and is now thinking, “how can I make the best of a bad job.” But rather God had a good purpose at the very beginning of this pandemic and will see it through to completion.

What is God doing through the Coronavirus?

Before I consider the first of six answers that John Piper gives in the second part of his book I would like to offer some preliminary thoughts...

Assuming that God has not been dethroned, but rather continues to govern **“all things according to the counsel of his will” (Eph.1:11)**, and this devastating virus is in His holy, righteous and good hands, what then is He doing? What are His purposes?

Not man’s wisdom but God’s

I think we can often be tempted to arrogantly presume that we know what God is thinking, and so we offer our thoughts and say that “God has spoken.” More often than not though, what we presume are God’s thoughts is really our wisdom and opinions. What we think out of our own heads (particularly during this pandemic) is of little significance. The Bible says, **“whoever trusts his own mind is a fool” (Prov. 28:26)** instead we are told to **“Trust the Lord with all of your heart and do not lean on your own understanding” (Prov.3:5)**. Fortunately, though, we finite, sinful, culturally conditioned humans do not just have our own wisdom to rely on in this season, but God’s Word. We have His final and authoritative word (the Bible) but secondly, we have the prophetic. God really isn’t on mute in this season; He continues to speak and we as Christians need to trust in what He has said.

God’s reality, not our imagination

“KNOWING”! The scriptures were written that we might know the realities that God has revealed. Particularly about suffering – including the coronavirus outbreak. The reality is that God is always doing far more than we can see- and even what we can see, we would not have seen if He had not revealed it. The coronavirus demands hard reality, not more wild speculation or fertile imagination. God and His word are the reality that we need – the rock under our feet.

Answer 1

Picturing Moral Horror

Quote: “God is giving the world the coronavirus outbreak, as in all other calamities, a physical picture of the moral horror and spiritual ugliness of God -belittling sin” (John Piper)

SIN is in fact the ultimate reason why physical suffering and misery exists – such as that afflicted by the coronavirus! The third chapter of Genesis describes the entrance of sin into the world. It shows sin to be the origin of global devastation and misery (Gen. 3:9). Paul summed it up in **Romans 5:12** “sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and death spread to all men because all sinned.” The world has been broken ever since. All its beauty is intermingled with evil, disasters, diseases and frustrations. God had created it perfect (**Gen. 1:31**) but from humanity’s fall into sin to this very day- John Piper says, “for all its wonders, is a conveyor belt of corpses.”

The fall is judgement for everyone:

John Piper in the sixth chapter of his book talks about God’s judgement on the world. The Bible does not see the brokenness of a world full of sin as just natural, but as God’s judgement on the world. See Romans 8:20-22. Even we as the children of God are not immune from the effects of that judgement. Christians are swept away in tsunamis, killed in terrorist attacks and get the coronavirus. However, the difference for us as Christians is that the judgement for us is purifying, not punitive. God allows us to go through and experience the effects of His judgement on this fallen world as a way of transforming us into the image and likeness of His son. We have the comfort of knowing that whatever happens in this life, He promises to always be with us, and that when we experience death, we will be with Him for eternity.

Key Question

A question that we could ask at this time, that brings the meaning of the coronavirus into sharp focus is this Why did God bring a physical judgement on the world for a moral evil? Adam and Eve defied God, preferring their own wisdom over his and chose to do what they wanted rather than His will. In response to their moral and spiritual rebellion God has subjected this physical world to physical disasters such as the coronavirus. Why?

An Answer

I wonder whether God might be sovereignly subjecting us to the physical disasters and horrors such as the coronavirus to paint a vivid picture of how morally repugnant our sin against God is. Nobody outside of Christ really feels the weight of their sin and defiance of God. Perhaps physical pain is God’s trumpet blast to tell us that there is something wrong in the world and pointing beyond itself into a spiritual realm.

Thoughts for Reflection

- Think about how God is sovereignly sustaining you in this season
- How are you specifically drawing comfort from the fact that God hasn’t been dethroned by the Coronavirus?
- Think about how you might specifically seek Gods wisdom and understanding rather than leaning on your own in this season

Prayer

That God gives you fresh revelation of the fact that he is ruling and reigning over the coronavirus, and that he continues to show you the Good that he is intending to bring out of this season.

