

# Looking to the Lord amidst the Coronavirus Crisis

L Mak - 22 Mar 2020

# Happy Mother's Day

Original message: Follow up on what was mentioned last year....

- Jesus asked John to take care of his mother;
- the mystery as Jesus had other brothers and sisters
- Why did he ask John...when he had other brothers and sisters – what was that about?
- Save it for next year....

# The world has changed:

- 1) Many deaths and ill (China, Italy, Iran, S Korea) – concern for poorer countries & medical personnel
- 2) Whole cities/countries on lockdown/self-isolation
- 3) Panic-buying, stockpiling – impossible to buy sanitizers, toilet paper, UHT milk, etc
- 4) Economic crises (aviation, tourism/hospitality; many businesses collapsing, job losses, etc) – The economic tragedy may be bigger than the health tragedy
- 5) Interconnected and globalised world (great advantages) – has also brought us unparalleled challenges
- 6) New terms: social distancing, contact tracing, self-isolation
- 7) IN UK: education (GCSE, A levels), factories producing ventilators, unprecedented gov't support for economy
- 8) Positives: Climate, kindness (civic duty),

# Key question: Why does good God allow suffering?

- Won't go too deep into this question but to say:
  - 1) Somehow the pain, suffering and tragedy of this broken and decaying world can bring about the beauty and glory of God.
- Story of the cross: the worst/most tragic – Jesus on cross – is the greatest thing in history that expresses the beauty and glory of God. Somehow that is the narrative of God. (we can sort of identify: in films – great suffering results in great triumph - that can be most beautiful and glorious)
- Corrie Ten Boom (survivor of the Nazi death camps during WW2, after her family arrested for hiding Jews in their house in the Netherlands)

**“No pit is so deep that He is not deeper still; with Jesus even in our darkest moments, the best remains and the very best is yet to be.”**

2) The beauty and glory of God can be revealed when He demonstrates His love for us by going through the suffering with us. The answer to this question is not explanation but incarnation:

- Hebrews 4:15: For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are--yet he did not sin.
- Do we feel physical suffering? So did he. Bereavement. Rejection. Betrayal. Death. So did he. This God of all creation identifies with our pain – somehow that reveals even more His love, grace and glory.

# Key question: Are we ready to die?

- Italy news report (dire situation) – severe form of illness affecting the young population too
- Big question – Are we ready to die? Am I ready to die?
- Reflection: how I've lived, achieved, family, impact, etc.
- Paul's words:

Phil 3: 7-9: But whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. <sup>8</sup> What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ <sup>9</sup> and **be found in him**

Encouraging words from songs:

**All I once held dear** (Graham Kendrick)

- All I once held dear, built my life upon  
All this world reveres, and wars to own  
All I once thought gain I have counted loss  
Spent and worthless now, compared to this  
Knowing you, Jesus  
Knowing you, there is no greater thing
- Now my heart's desire is to know you more  
To be found in you and known as yours

**Who am I** (Casting Crowns, written by Mark Hall)

- Not because of who I am  
But because of what you've done  
Not because of what I've done  
But because of who you are
- I am a flower quickly fading  
Here today and gone tomorrow  
A wave tossed in the ocean  
A vapor in the wind  
Still you hear me when I'm calling  
Lord, you catch me when I'm falling  
And you've told me who I am  
I am yours

# We have trouble in this world

- John 16: 33 “I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.” – **Look to the Lord today to overcome**

Who is God at this time?

God our:

- Healer

- Hope

- Help

- Home



# God our:

## • Healer

- Romans 5:12
- Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way **death came to all people, because all sinned** – (Death is our destiny - Response to Boris Johnsons saying 'we will lose many of our loved ones before their time; Ecc 3: 1-2: There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens: a time to be born and a time to die)
- Romans 8:1-2

Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life has set you free from the law of sin and death.

- 1 Peter 2:24

and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; **for by His wounds you were healed.**

- Matthew 10:28

Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell.

- **Jesus** heals the broken-hearted (emotional) and mends relationships
- Whole world looking for vaccine to fight virus; There is a far better vaccine to deal with the sickness of our souls (sin) and eternal suffering - Jesus

# God our:

- Hope
- Economic collapse – stock market collapse worst than 1987 - recession
- Psalm 20:7: Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the LORD our God.
- Mt 6:24: No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money.

# Our Help

- Hoarding, stockpiling – self-isolating – no food
- **Philippians 4:19.** "And my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus."
- **Matthew 6:31-33.** "Do not worry then, saying, 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What will we wear for clothing?' For the Gentiles eagerly seek all these things; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you."
- **Ps 121: 1-2:** I lift up my eyes to the hills. From where does my help come? 2 My help comes from the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth.
- Hope we can be a help to one another...

# Our home:

## 1) As we self-isolate – some of us might be lonely so we remember:

- Heb 11:16: But they were looking for a better place, a **heavenly homeland**

## 2) Worst part about illness we might die alone – but our home is Jesus – the **heavenly homeland** (Phil 3:18-21: Many live as enemies of the cross of Christ.

<sup>19</sup> Their destiny is destruction, their god is their stomach, and their glory is in their shame. Their mind is set on earthly things. <sup>20</sup> But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>21</sup> who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.

## 3) Home is a place to develop Christlike character: Sometimes home is hard – live with others (lots of conflict when we see each other more – cramped together) but:

Col 3: 2 Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. <sup>13</sup> Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. <sup>14</sup> And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

Who is God at this time?

God our:

- Healer

- Hope

- Help

- Home

# Thoughts while handwashing

## 1. "Wash us clean."

We remember the words of Psalm 51, "Wash me, and I will be whiter than snow... Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me."

## 2. "We are in your hands."

We are in God's hands, whatever our circumstances, today. "The life of every living thing is in [Your] hand," Job said (Job 12). Commit yourself afresh to God.

## 3. "Help us be your hands."

As Teresa of Avila once wrote, "Christ has no body now on earth but yours. no hands no feet... but yours."

# Corona means crown

- Did you know we receive crowns when we see Jesus?
- Crown of thorns – His sacrifice enables us
- **Crown of Life**; James 1:12: Blessed is the one who perseveres under trial because, having stood the test, that person will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love him.
- **Incorruptible Crown**; 1 Corinthians 9:24 Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way as to take the prize. 25 Everyone who competes in the games trains with strict discipline. They do it for a crown that is perishable, but we do it for a crown that is imperishable.
- **Crown of Righteousness 2 Tim 4:8**: Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day – and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.
- **Crown of Joy** 1 Thess 2:19: For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Is it not even you, before our Lord Jesus at his coming?
- **Crown of Glory**; 1 Pet 5:4: being examples to the flock. 4 And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away
- Give them all back to Jesus

Rev 4:10: the twenty-four elders fall down before him who sits on the throne and worship him who lives for ever and ever. **They lay their crowns** before the throne and say: