

## Helping each other suffer Christianly amid Covid-19

### Truth from God's word: to believe, to share & to pray

With thanks to Andy Mason and Mike Reith

#### **1. We still have God as our Father, and live under his daily care, provision & protection**

Isaiah 43:1, But now thus says the LORD, he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: "Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine.

Luke 12:7, Why, even the hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not; you are of more value than many sparrows.

Psalms 34:4-6, I sought the LORD, and he answered me and delivered me from all my fears.

Those who look to him are radiant, and their faces shall never be ashamed.

This poor man cried, and the LORD heard him and saved him out of all his troubles.

#### **2. Our Father is still in control of his world, and of every single thing in our lives**

Matthew 10:29, Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father.

Psalms 115:3, Our God is in the heavens; he does all that he pleases.

#### **3. Our infection depends not on statistics or risk factors or age, but on the Lord's explicit decision and permission to allow it**

Isaiah 45:7, I form light and create darkness; I make well-being and create calamity; I am the LORD, who does all these things.

#### **4. Fear the Lord more than Coronavirus, and love the Lord more than health**

Luke 12:4-5, "I tell you, my friends, do not fear those who kill the body, and after that have nothing more that they can do. But I will warn you whom to fear: fear him who, after he has killed, has authority to cast into hell. Yes, I tell you, fear him!

Mark 8:34-35, And calling the crowd to him with his disciples, he said to them, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel's will save it.

## **5. Sin is far more deadly, keep staying clean of that more than infection**

Romans 6:23, For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

## **6. Beware of how fear can drive us to self-centredness (& stockpiling!), so keep serving & caring for other as they deal with the virus. Share resources. Be generous**

Acts 4:34-35, There was not a needy person among them, for as many as were owners of lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold and laid it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need.

## **7. Read the Scripture and think on God's word more than obsessing about the latest news!**

Colossians 3:16, Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God.

## **8. Give thanks for God's gracious provision of the NHS, wise medical advice & government care**

James 1:17, Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.

## **9. Pray for our government and leaders around the world**

1 Timothy 2:1-2, First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way.

## **10. However let your ultimate sense of safety & comfort come more from the Lord's care & control, than the government & NHS**

Psalms 44:6, For not in my bow do I trust, nor can my sword save me.

## **11. In God's mysterious plan, the appearance of this virus will be one of God's means to make us dependent on him**

2 Corinthians 12:8-9, Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it should leave me. But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

**12. The reality of Coronavirus can wean us off worldliness as it reminds us of the falseness of this world, the reality of death and the provisionality of everything here**

Romans 8:22-23, For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.

**13. My ultimate hope isn't to be free from infection, but to be found in Christ and glorifying him**

Philippians 1:20-23, ... as it is my eager expectation and hope that I will not be at all ashamed, but that with full courage now as always Christ will be honored in my body, whether by life or by death. For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me. Yet which I shall choose I cannot tell. I am hard pressed between the two. My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better.

**14. What my mind meditates on is worship - beware a mind overrun and obsessed by fears and anxieties about infection**

Philippians 4:8, Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.

Mark 4:18-19, And others are the ones sown among thorns. They are those who hear the word, but the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches and the desires for other things enter in and choke the word, and it proves unfruitful.

**15. Our true hope isn't health in this world, but the face of God forever**

Revelation 22:1-4, Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him. They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads.

**Psalm 121** from "Sing Psalms" (Free Church of Scotland): suggested tune "Trewen" / A debtor to mercy alone

1. I lift up my eyes to the hills—  
Where am I to look for my aid?  
My help comes to me from the LORD  
By whom earth and heaven were made.  
Your foot he will not leave to slide—  
His watch over you he will keep.  
The LORD over Isr'el keeps watch,  
And he will not slumber or sleep.

2. The LORD will keep watch over you—  
Your shade from the heat and the light.  
The sun will not harm you by day;  
The moon will not harm you by night.  
The LORD will protect you from harm—  
Your life he will ever defend.  
He'll guard every step that you take  
Both now and for days without end.

