

My Corona Virus (COVID-19) Response

There is no denying the ubiquitous state of pandemonium pertinent to the Corona Virus (COVID-19). As such, we find it imperative, primarily as Christian Pastors, to address our personal perspective and offer measures for your consideration, as a child of God. We will address two sides of the proverbial spectrum. That is, that on one side of the spectrum we have the issue of fear. There is no question, that when people begin to hear news such as those disseminated via news outlets and social media, fear can creep in. On the other side of the spectrum, we must be cautious with negligence. In other words, we must take all the precautions necessary to make certain that we are not adding to an already escalating challenge. So, where is the balance between fear and negligence?

Practical Solutions

Let's address the practical side first. The best way to minimize risk is to adhere to many of the things you may have already heard:

- Wash your hands as often as possible with soap and water for at least 20 seconds (the equivalent of singing "Happy Birthday" twice).
- Refrain from touching your mouth, nose, or face in general, especially after any contact with others or with hard surfaces.
- Cover your mouth when you cough.
- Maintain an approximate distance of six feet with people.
- Do not connect with people if you have been sick or are feeling sick; self-quarantine and maintain social distance.

Note: We as a church, continue to implement precautions in order to serve the Body of Christ in a safe way; such as:

- Increasing our cleaning and sanitizing measures throughout the sanctuary and all rooms that house our ministries.
- We are asking, both children and adults, to wash their hands before entering any classroom space.
- Our children's ministry staff will be screening parents and guardians upon check-in regarding any recent health concerns with the children, or anyone in the household.

Spiritual Solutions

While we take precautionary measures, how should we respond emotionally and spiritually? Do we refrain from attending church? Do we go clean out the supermarket and store a year's worth of toilet tissue (those of you that have been watching the news, know what that is all about)? Should we live in fear? To the attendance question, our suggestive answer is - no! To the supermarket question, we would also say - no! To the fear question, our answer is - YES! Wait! What? Yes! We should implement a level of fear. However, we do not refer to the debilitating, hide-in-your-house, I'm-losing-my-mind kind of fear.

Look at what Scripture reveals in Proverbs 14:27, “The fear of the Lord is a fountain of life, to turn one away from the snares of death” (New International Version). Also, “the fear of the Lord leads to life, and he who has it will abide in satisfaction; he will not be visited by evil” (Proverbs, 19:23, NIV). We love that word *abide*. Psalms 91 begins with, “He who *dwells* in the secret place of the Most High shall *abide* under the shadow of the Almighty.” What are we telling you? We are encouraging you to dwell, and therefore abide in a safe place; even while you go on with your life and fulfill your God-given purpose. Does that mean that you won’t get sick? Does it mean that bad things won’t happen to good people? No! As long as we live in a fallen world, we will face all sorts of opposition and attacks. However, when you remain “under the covering,” God has a way of protecting you in ways you never thought possible. God protected the people of Israel from a plague as long as they remained in a household marked by the blood (Exodus 12:12). God protected Rahab and her family when the city she dwelt in was overtaken, as long as she remained in the household marked by the scarlet cord (Joshua 2:1-22). If it is raining outside and you don’t want to get wet, what do you do? You remain covered under an umbrella!

To run around uncovered is to run around in fear, anxious, disconnected and leaning on your own understanding (Proverbs 3:5-6). However, to remain covered is to, “be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your request be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts in mind in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:6-8, NIV). There it is! To remain covered is to remain confident! That is, that even if you are facing a difficult situation, your heart and mind is at peace! That God’s promise for your life!

So, as we navigate through these tumultuous times, we refuse to lose my equilibrium! We refuse to add to the pandemonium spreading throughout the world! We refuse to disconnect from the family of Christ – the rest of our body (1 Corinthians 12) – and expose ourselves to the evil elements of this world! God’s covering, therefore, becomes by balance between fear and negligence. In other words, we will take ALL the precautionary measure necessary to remain healthy and safe, while living boldly and fearlessly, knowing that we live safely in the shelter of an Almighty God!

At the end of the day, if the Body of Christ – the Church – cannot offer hope, guidance, love, and a way to connect in moments like these, then we must reevaluate what we preach. WE ARE THE CHURCH, and the gates of hell, have not and shall not prevail against [us] (Matthew 16:17-19).

We are praying for you and walking this journey alongside of you!

-Pastors Charles & Reina Olmeda