

# **COPING WITH CORONAVIRUS**

*Notes of a talk by David Meredith,  
Director of Mission of the Free Church of Scotland,  
at the Men's Breakfast on Saturday, 14 March 2020  
at  
Wooler Evangelical Church*

## COPING WITH CORONAVIRUS

The Bible is God's message to us. Here are some things it says that are very relevant as we face the pandemic of coronavirus.

### 1. We are weak

Bill Bryson's book about the wonder and complexity of the human body has a striking title: *The Body: A Guide for Occupants*. This reminds us that we are temporary occupants of our bodies, not permanent residents. The Bible speaks of our weakness and the shortness and uncertainty of life:

God 'remembers that we are dust. As for man, his days are like grass; he flourishes like a flower of the field; for the wind passes over it, and it is gone, and its place knows it no more' (*Psalms 103:14-15*).

'So teach us to number our days that we may get a heart of wisdom' (*Psalms 90:12*).

### 2. We are equal

Faced with this virus, we are all affected. We all face the same danger. This reminds us of what the Bible says that we all face the same danger because of the wrong things we have done. This spiritual virus of sin causes eternal death, separation from God for all eternity.

'All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God' (*Romans 3:23*).

'The wages of sin is death' (*Romans 6:23*).

### 3. Control is an illusion

This is an illusion created by modern technology. Using my phone in Edinburgh I can control the heating in my house on the Isle of Skye. In spite of technology we are not in control. Coronavirus is affecting our pension funds. *God* is in control.

#### **4. The pain of exclusion**

Being excluded from normal social contact because of coronavirus reminds us that in the UK Christianity is being excluded. Several venues cancelled the bookings of the American evangelist, Franklin Graham. Jesus himself is the great example of exclusion. He was 'despised and rejected of men' (*Isaiah 53:3*). Faithful Christians also suffer some exclusion.

#### **5. Fear and faith**

There is no need to be afraid. The Christian believer 'is not afraid of bad news; his heart is firm, trusting in the LORD' (*Psalms 112:7*). Christians cope with crises differently.

#### **6. We need to pray**

We need to bring the problem to God. Make prayer a daily habit. Read your Bible, pray every day – and you will grow. This is not being legalistic; this is basic Christianity.

#### **7. We need to prioritize**

What really matters? Our pension fund? No! The things of God are what is really important.

#### **8. There is hope**

Sin is an even greater pandemic. Spiritual death leads to eternal death in hell. Most people have not read the Bible. So read it – and encourage others to read it. In the Bible *there is hope*. Jesus ate with sinners. He has time for those who are hopeless – or think they are hopeless. It is a great time to share our faith! It is a time for people to believe!

Boris Johnson was right to say that people will die. The crematoria could be working 24/7.

People told Charles Wesley that Methodist people died well, confident in the risen Saviour. Jesus said to Martha and to us:

‘I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. **Do you believe this?**’ (*John 11:25-26*).

For the Christian, forgiven and certain of eternal life, there **IS** hope:

‘Though the fig tree should not blossom, nor fruit be on the vines, the produce of the olive fail and the fields yield no food, the flock be cut off from the fold and there be no herd in the stalls, yet I will rejoice in the LORD; I will take joy in the God of my salvation. GOD, the Lord, is my strength; he makes my feet like the deer’s; he makes me tread on my high places’ (*Habbakuk 3:17-19*)

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### **Wooler Evangelical Church**

Sunday services at 11.00 a.m. and 6.00 p.m.

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**All services and activities suspended until further notice because of coronavirus. Consult the church website.**