

Theme: We should respond to times of sickness and suffering with faith in God rather than fear, and act with love for our fellow humans, looking for how God is working to draw people to Himself.

I. Intro - Unusual Times!

- A. This Coronavirus has spread very quickly
- B. Unprecedented actions by the government, business
- C. Some are responding with fear; others with scoffing
- D. What is a godly response in a time such as this?
- E. Psalm 46 (Read) - Psalmist response; A Mighty Fortress

II. A Response of Faith Not Fear

- A. We live out of faith in God, not fear of circumstances
God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. ² Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea, ³ though its waters roar and foam and the mountains quake with their surging. Selah Psa 46:1–3
 - 1. God is our refuge and our strength!
 - 2. God is ever-present with us - even in trouble!
 - 3. For this reason, we do not fear - no matter what!
 - 4. Even if the whole earth is quaking and it seems as if everything is falling apart - God is Sovereign!
 - 5. Right now many are fearful for a variety of reasons
 - a. The virus is spreading so rapidly!
 - b. You can't even see it, so how can you fight it?
 - c. The stock market is in free fall

- 6. But we are called to live in faith rather than fear!
 - a. God is still Sovereign, and He controls our days
 - b. Our trust is not in our physical body, the stock market, or anything other than God Himself!

B. We live in faith for God is with us!

There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy place where the Most High dwells. ⁵ God is within her, she will not fall; God will help her at break of day. ⁶ Nations are in uproar, kingdoms fall; he lifts his voice, the earth melts. ⁷ The Lord Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress. Selah Psalm 46:4–7

- 1. Our faith is not positive thinking; it is in God Himself
- 2. God dwells with us, He is among His people
- 3. God surrounds us like a fortress, so we have faith and hope!
- 4. This is true even if everything else is in an uproar around us, if nations everywhere seem to be falling apart - our protection is in God!

C. Tough situations are a chance to see and experience God!

Come and see the works of the Lord, the desolations he has brought on the earth. ⁹ He makes wars cease to the ends of the earth; he breaks the bow and shatters the spear, he burns the shields with fire. ¹⁰ "Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth." ¹¹ The Lord Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress. Selah Psalm 46:8–11

- 1. This faith does not come from ignoring or denying what is happening - come and see the desolations on the earth

2. Sometimes God is shattering the false things we have foolishly trusted in - bow, spear, shields are gone
3. In the midst of uncertain times of suffering and sickness, God's people are called to be still and to know that He is God
4. As we do this we experience afresh the reality that God is with us!

D. Why this is critical

1. Jesus constantly called us to faith rather than fear
2. Fear shows that our focus is on something other than God Himself.
3. We can't possibly love our neighbors and promote the cause of the Gospel if we are living in fear rather than faith.

III. A Response of Love For Neighbor

A. Faith does not lead to foolish actions

Then the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. ⁶ "If you are the Son of God," he said, "throw yourself down. For it is written: "He will command his angels concerning you, and they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.""

⁷ Jesus answered him, "It is also written: 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'" Matthew 4:5-7

1. Satan assumed real faith leads to foolish actions to require God to act in miraculous ways to protect us
2. Jesus declared that this is not faith - it is testing God, which is wickedness!

3. Our faith in God is not opposed to following the advice of medical professionals who have been called and gifted by God to help us understand our bodies, diseases, and practices that bring health rather than sickness.
4. Our faith in God does not call us to ignore the things requested or demanded of us by the civil government, but rather to obey them whenever possible.
5. Right now true faith will apply the biblical medical advice we are being given in James 4:8!
Wash your hands, you sinners... James 4:8
6. All joking aside - true faith does not test God, but rather listens to the advice of those gifted by God with the appropriate knowledge and also those placed in authority over us. Anything else is not faith but rather sinful presumption.
7. NOTE: PLEASE get your information from OFFICIAL sources, not social media and blogs, and do not pass on information from unofficial sources.

B. Faith prompts love for our neighbor

Seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the Lord for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper. Jer 29:7

1. We are exiles, for this city and world is not our ultimate home
2. But we are called to pray and labor for the shalom of the city where God has placed us!
3. We need to be praying for our leaders to have wisdom to lead well through this situation.

4. We need to pray that the spread of this virus will be contained, and for healing for those who have contracted it.
5. We need to look for ways to serve right here in our own community.
 - a. Times of plague, famine, and difficulty in the past have been when Christians stood out in their response of caring for the sick and dying
 - b. This is why we must live out of faith rather than fear
 - c. If others respond in fear, we must respond in faith, and be willing to care for and serve those around us
 - d. Christians in history have done this, even at the cost of their own lives, knowing the resurrection awaits!
 - e. We must remember that our hope is in God and eternity, not this world and this life; our hope is in the resurrection, not this frail, fallen body.

C. We love our neighbor by praying for the spread of the Gospel

“Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth.”

Psalm 46:10

1. In tumultuous times God can be exalted in the earth
2. We not only pray for the spread of the virus to be stopped, we also pray for the spread of the Gospel to be increased!
3. Right now people are thinking about the FACT of their own mortality, and we need to pray for the Gospel to break through to them to give them hope
4. This is not opportunism - our frailty and mortality are a FACT, but we usually are able to foolishly ignore it. But God can use events such as this to remind us

5. If you are in conversation with those who are fearing, share with them the Good News - death does not reign, Jesus does!
6. Coronavirus has not stopped the mission of God. He is on mission, and we must be on mission with Him!

IV. Applying the Word - A Mighty Fortress

A. A time for true, robust, biblical faith rather than fear

1. We are the people of God, and He is our mighty fortress!
2. We have every reason to live in faith, not fear
3. Our God is mighty - to protect, to heal, to restore
4. Most important He is Lord over death
5. We will all die someday, but He will raise us up!
6. So we can live in bold faith, loving and serving others, being on mission, for He will never fail!

B. Response song: A Mighty Fortress

A Godly Response to the Corona Virus

Psalm 46:1-7

March 15, 2020

A Mighty Fortress Is Our God

Psalm 29:11

Teaching keywords: Sovereignty of God; fear; anxiety and worry; love; two kingdoms

The Lord gives strength to his people; the Lord blesses his people with peace. Psalm 29:11

God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. ² Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea, ³ though its waters roar and foam and the mountains quake with their surging. Selah ⁴ There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy place where the Most High dwells. ⁵ God is within her, she will not fall; God will help her at break of day. ⁶ Nations are in uproar, kingdoms fall; he lifts his voice, the earth melts. ⁷ The Lord Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress. Selah ⁸ Come and see the works of the Lord, the desolations he has brought on the earth. ⁹ He makes wars cease to the ends of the earth; he breaks the bow and shatters the spear, he burns the shields with fire. ¹⁰ "Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth." ¹¹ The Lord Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress. Selah Psalm