

8 Reminders in the Face of the Coronavirus Pandemic

The Cure for Latent Anxiety

These are strange days, days of fear, days of hysteria. In other words, days that simply bring all our latent anxieties up to the surface; anxieties that were there all along but are now made visible to others.

What do we need to remember in these days of alarm?

1. The World of the Bible

Now we know how the people of God felt throughout the Bible, especially in the Old Testament. The Prophets and many of the Psalms speak to people who are caught up in mass hysteria or subject to pandemics. Maybe the current cultural moment is precisely the hermeneutic we need to read the Old Testament, which can otherwise feel so foreign, deeply for the first time.

2. Our True Trust

Times of public panic force us to align our professed belief with our actual belief. We all say we believe God is sovereign and he is taking care of us. But we reveal our true trust when the world goes into meltdown. What's really our heart's deepest loyalty? The answer is forced to the surface in times of public alarm, such as we're wading into now.



3. Neighborly Love

When the economy is tanking, opportunities to surprise our neighbors with our confidence and joy because of the gospel surge forward. Now is the time to be outside more, to be loving more, to be hospitable more. Love stands out strongest when it is least expected, rarest, but needed most.

4. Family Discipleship

Our kids' teachers are telling them to wash their hands longer. Why? Their teachers won't tell them, but it's because there is a dangerous virus infecting thousands of people around the world right now—both young and old—and some of those people will die. Heaven and hell are staring every fourth-grader in the face. That's why they're being told to wash their hands for twenty seconds. We have an opportunity to instill in our kids a deeper awareness of eternity than they have ever known. There is a salutary effect to all of this because either heaven or hell awaits every fourth-grader, either taken out by a virus next month or taken out by old age decades from now. Ten thousand years from now, the difference between dying at age ten or age eighty will seem trivial. This is an opportunity to disciple our families into the bracing reality of eternity.

From heaven's shore we will see how eternally safe we were all along.

5. Eschatological Hope

Maybe this is the end. I doubt it, but maybe. Jesus said no one knows the day or the hour (Matthew 24:36). Maybe the sight of Jesus descending from heaven, robed in glory, surrounded by angels, is right around the corner. If so, hallelujah. If not, hallelujah. We're being reminded that he will indeed return one day. Either way, let us rejoice our way through the chaos.

6. Invincible Providence

No infected molecule can enter your lungs, or your three-year-old's lungs, unless sent by the hand of a heavenly Father. The Heidelberg Catechism defines God's providence as, "The almighty and ever-present power of God by which God upholds, as with his hand, heaven and earth and all creatures, and so rules them that leaf and blade, rain and drought, fruitful and lean years, food and drink, health and sickness, prosperity and poverty—all things, in fact, come to us not by chance but by his fatherly hand." That truth is like an asthmatic's inhaler to our soul—it calms us down, allows us to breathe again.

7. Christ's Heart

In times of turmoil, in seasons of distress, Jesus is more feelingly with his people than ever. Hebrews tells us that Jesus experienced all the horror of this world that we do, minus sin (Hebrews 4:15). So apparently he knows—he himself knows—way down deep, what it feels like for life to close in on you and for your world to go into meltdown. We can go to him. We can sit with him. His arm is around us—stronger than ever—right now. His tears are larger than ours.

8. Heaven

From heaven's shore we will see how eternally safe we were all along, even amid the global upheaval and anxieties that loom so large as we walk through them. The dangers out there are real. The cautions are wise. Our bodies are mortal, vulnerable. But our souls, for those united to a resurrected Christ, are beyond the reach of all eternal danger. How un-harm-able we are, we who are in Christ. Be at peace. All is assured.

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