

A Christian Response to Pandemic

It is reported on the news that some grocery stores around the nation are beginning to run out of supplies as people worry about Coronavirus COVID-19 becoming a pandemic in our country. Hand sanitiser and facemasks are the two big items that are in short supply. Australia has recorded its first death from this disease, as an elderly man succumbed to the virus in Perth. He had been a passenger on the Diamond Princess cruise ship when cases of Coronavirus began to emerge. Experts are beginning to agree that containment of the virus is no longer an option. People are beginning to panic.

But not everybody. Some aren't worried. They don't think it's a big deal. They think people are overreacting. They think the virus isn't as dangerous or deadly as some are portraying it, but is just another form of the flu.

Most people simply don't know how to react or what to think. Social media is full of funny memes about the outbreak. News articles about the virus – some trustworthy, others not so reliable – are overtaking many Facebook feeds.

So how should we react as Christians living in Australia? I claim no degrees in virology or medicine, but from what I can glean from reliable sources, the Coronavirus will most definitely spread throughout the world.

The Coronavirus has killed more than 3,000 people so far, the vast majority in mainland China. There are now more than 88,000 known global cases, with infections on every continent except Antarctica.

If the experts are correct, hundreds of thousands of people around the world are going to die from the Coronavirus – and we are still months away from a vaccine.

This is serious.

Yet, we shouldn't panic. The world has learned a lot over the years about the spread of such viruses. Scientists have already made great strides toward a vaccine. Just like with the flu, the overwhelming majority of healthy adults seem to be surviving the virus just fine.

Most importantly, though, we don't need to panic because God is still in control.

His promises are still true. He will be with us every moment of every day (Matthew 28:20). He will make all things – even catching the Coronavirus – work for our eternal good (Romans 8:28). No matter what happens to us here on earth, we have a home waiting for us in the perfection and happiness of heaven because of Jesus (John 3:16).

So how should we react as Christians living in this country? We should be concerned. We should be wise. We should be cautious. But we need not worry.

Listen to these words from Jesus, *“Therefore I tell you, stop worrying about your lives, what you are to eat, or what you are to drink, or about your bodies, what you are to put on! Is not life more important than food, and the body more important than clothing? ²⁶ Look at the birds of the sky! They do not sow, reap, or gather into barns, but your Father in heaven keeps feeding them. Are you not worth more than they are? ²⁷ Which of you can, by worrying, add a single hour to his length of life? ²⁸ Why, then, do you worry about clothing? Observe how the lilies of the field grow! They do not toil or spin. ²⁹ Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendour was clothed like one of these. ³⁰ If God in this way clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into an oven, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? ³¹ Therefore do not begin to worry, saying, ‘What are we to eat?’ or ‘What are we to drink?’ or ‘What are we to wear?’ ³² For the Gentiles try to get all these things. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. ³³ Rather, first be eager to have the kingdom of God and His righteousness; and all these things will also be given to you. ³⁴ Therefore do not begin to worry about tomorrow! For tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own”* (Matthew 6:25-34).

Worry doesn't help. Panic makes everything worse. Besides, God's got you.

So be smart in the upcoming weeks and months. Take the necessary precautions. Buy some hand sanitiser. But then trust. God is still in control.