

## Peace in the midst of the storm in times of the pandemic COVID-19

“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.” (John 14:27)

Most of us have never experienced a global pandemic, before. The way the current restrictions influence our everyday life, we feel uncertain how to process and respond to it. Nevertheless as Christians, we have the chance to apply Jesus’ help in any circumstances in which we find ourselves. This way, we feel not be alone, will honor Jesus Christ and will draw others to Him. Before we can share His peace with others, we first need to cultivate it within ourselves. Jesus’ words remind us that it is not man-created peace, but the peace of God, which calms our hearts in this troubled world. As often as we feel uncertain, for example when hear the fast changing news or confusing mixes of facts and its fakes in the social media; we need to exchange our fears for confidence in God’s sovereignty. We whisper to our hearts: “God is in charge- not COVID-19.” This, we need to do it very purposefully.

In the Bible, we find the examples of Moses and Jesus Christ<sup>1</sup> who both as small children were in danger of death. Nevertheless, thanks to God’s sovereign directions, they could be delivered. The way the Almighty protected them, reveals several truths about His methods of guiding His people. Both families needed to cooperate. Still today, God’s safeguard requires our obedience. At the moment, this can be to follow the guidelines the government gives us to protect ourselves and others from infecting with the virus.

In some cases, God may allow special hardship to enter into our lives. For example, Martin Luther King Jr. or Dietrich Bonhoeffer fought for others and in the end, died themselves. Both of them are being memorized, today, and are honored very highly by politicians and all church denominations. The Bible regards suffering as normal<sup>2</sup>. Part of it comes from the fact that we live in a fallen world, and calamities hit Christians and non-Christians, alike. It is true that God in His incredible mercy undoubtedly protects us from many dangers. However, He does nowhere in His word promise that He will keep us from all physical injury or illness. Torments are part of everyone’s life.<sup>3</sup>

In John 16:33, Jesus says: “I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world, you will have trouble. However, take heart! I have overcome the world.” One can say that Jesus “promises” us to endure persecutions. Christian life is not yet paradise, no never-ending happiness. It also doesn’t mean to have trials, all the time. Jesus promised His followers something in between these extremes. He encouraged us that in the midst of our struggles like when COVID-19 seems to be everywhere, we can look unto Him for His peace and power, which have already overcome the evil in this world. This way, we receive strength to also encourage others, help them and pray for them.

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<sup>1</sup> Exodus 1:22; 2:3; Matthew 2:16

<sup>2</sup> Mark 10: 17-31; Romans 8: 18-22; 2nd Timothy 3:12

<sup>3</sup> Acts 12: 1-19; John 21: 17-23

What can we pray?

- Pray for our leaders

The politicians and other people in responsible positions have to take many difficult decisions, weighing the pros and cons of each one of it. They have to think forward and try their best to stop the pandemic, help their nations to recover physically and prevent their economies from collapsing.

We pray that they will acknowledge their inability to control the situation, themselves, and recognize their desperate need for God's guidance.<sup>4</sup> We ask God the Father of all humankind to protect them and give them wisdom and strength for each day.

- Pray for healthcare workers<sup>5</sup>

Most doctors and nurses are overwhelmed. They watch the COVID-19 cases pour in and wonder how long they will be able to care for everyone. Many of them are exhausted, working long shifts with little time to eat or rest.

We pray for God's hand in their lives, drawing them to depend on Him for their strength and comfort. We ask God to give them the clarity and energy they need to help their patients. We ask Him to give them rest and receive the encouragement they need to keep moving forward.

- Pray for the sick<sup>6</sup>

This virus has affected so many in the world and they all need our prayers, today.

We ask Jesus, the great physician, to lay His hands on them and heal them. We ask Him to strengthen their bodies and enable them to fend off the virus. We pray that, while they are lying in hospital beds or at home, God would speak to them in the stillness so that they would recognize His voice and cry out to Him. We ask Him to fill their lungs with air and their hearts with the warmth of His loving presence.

Yours Pastor Peter

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<sup>4</sup> Ezekiel 22:30; Jeremiah 29:7; 1st Timothy 2: 1.2

<sup>5</sup> Exodus 15:26; Isaiah 41:10; Matthew 8: 14-17

<sup>6</sup> Isaiah 53: 4.5; James 5: 13-16; Matthew 4: 23-24