

A Pastoral Letter Concerning Coronavirus

Even folks living under rocks have heard about the coronavirus. The news of it is everywhere and it is everywhere in the news. Close up pictures of scary looking germs and men in full protective suits are causing panic and hysteria. It is causing stocks to be unstable, schools to close, and travel to come to a grinding halt in many places.

First of all, don't panic. Be sensible, yes. Take precautions, yes. (Wash your hands, well and often!) But don't panic. Get the facts, don't listen to the rest.

If you are sick, stay home from church. If you have other health problems or are older and worried about going out, stay home for now. If you need the sacrament, Pastor will bring it to you.

What can you do at this time?

(1.) **Remember** how fragile life is and what a gift from God it is. Things can change quickly in this world and life. But as Christians we also know that our life is safe and secure in Christ for both now and eternity. Whatever happens here and now - from germs, disease, accidents, terrorism, or natural disasters - we can trust and rely on our Lord through it all. He is greater than it all.

(2.) **Pray**. Pray for those who are sick. Pray for those who are worried for the peace of Christ. Pray for our leaders, that they will make good and wise decisions. Pray for the researchers who are working to find a vaccine. Pray for the Lord to work good in the midst of this, that His Word and promises will comfort people and bring them to faith in Him.

(3.) **Reach out** to your fellow Athanasians. Make sure they are okay. Ask if they need anything. Reassure them. Be there for them.

(4.) **Don't panic**. (I think I said that before . . . :-)

(5.) **Rejoice** in being a child of God. He loves you so much more than you could ever know or imagine. He sent His Son to die for you, so yes, He will provide everything else you need (Romans 8:32) and take care of you.

(6.) **Remember**, as we heard at the beginning of this Lenten season, that *dust you are and to dust you will return*. But also remember what we will proclaim at the end of this season: that *Christ is risen! He is risen indeed!* And you will rise too, from the dust of death to life again. Even if (when!) you die, your life will not end, but will continue on the other side of eternity.

So people loved by God, redeemed by the blood of His Son, and sanctified by the Holy Spirit, don't panic. (Did I say that before? :-) Be sensible. Take precautions. Get the facts. And trust your Father in heaven. Nothing can separate you from His love. Nothing.

Pastor Douthwaite