

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus the Christ.

We are in a place where we have never been before. I recently read the story of Noah and the Ark. God warned the people for 120 years before the flood that some sort of disaster was coming and there was no time like the present to get your life right with God. Noah preached for 120 years and no one other than his family listened. When the flood came only those on the ark were saved from the flood. It came down to only one righteous family on the face of the earth. Unbelief can spread like wildfire. It is so much easier not to believe in God. It is so much easier to ignore God. It takes discipline and work to open your Bible and read God's Holy Word and hear God has to say to you.

The virus has flooded not only our local community but the entire world. So what are we to learn? How is God using this virus to get our attention and the attention of the entire world? Now this is being totally honest; I cannot answer those questions. I have no idea what God is trying to say to you during this time of the quarantine. I have my own thoughts what I am learning these days and I hear from others what God is teaching them, but I do not presume at all to know with absolute certainty what God is saying to you. Only you can discover that as you listen to God through your discipline and effort of opening your Bible. I cannot speak for God.

What I can address in a few short words is how we are to live our Christian lives until God brings us home or Jesus comes again. In recent devotions going through first Peter it has been stated that God is calling all of us to live Holy lives. This is how I define living holy. It means God has separated us, called us, chosen us, yes adopted us into His family. God calls us to be distinctly different from those who do not know Jesus. It means we live this life according to the will of God and not the spirit of this age. I define the spirit of this age as the way of thinking and living that is completely contrary to God and to God's Word. The spirit of this age hates God, hates the Word of God, ignores the church, and does all that it can to be destructive to Christianity. It mostly hates Christians and wants to shut us up in the public square. To speak

boldly of our Christian faith is entirely an offense to them for they do not want to hear it. The Bible says they do not have ears to hear or eyes to see. Deaf and blind to the things of God they really don't know what to do with us for we are entirely different and live every day to put God first and live holy lives. God's holy love through you and me can penetrate their hardness toward God and people will feel drawn to what we have in the Lord Jesus Christ.

I do see this time of the virus as an opportunity for us Christians to shine brightly for Christ in a dark time. So many of you have safely reached out to your neighbors to see if they needed help. We have church volunteers who are making a huge difference in the community by displaying Christian love and safely picking up food and medicines for those who have asked for help.

I see the virus as a huge reminder that we live in a fallen world. Until Jesus comes again there will be devastating illness and diseases. This has been true since the fall of Adam and Eve. I do not blame God for the virus, but it is wise to ask God, "What are you trying to say to me during this time?"

I see the virus as a huge reminder letting us know that we are not in control. The technology of our time has never been better. Our health system may be the envy of the world. Yet a virus comes that has changed the daily routine for all of us. Luke 13 speaks of disasters and tells us it is time to repent of our sinful ways because none of us are guaranteed a tomorrow. It is dangerous indeed to ignore God and God's ways for one's eternal life is at stake.

I see the time of the virus as having time to reconnect with family and friends that we have let slip due to the business of our lives and more. Phoning friends and family across the nation can be wonderful and uplifting. I sense God's pleasure in this as He sees His children truly enjoying one another's time together on the phone or on zoom.

God promised Noah that He would never again send a calamity that would wipe out the existence of all people except the believers. The rainbow is God's sign to us that the earth will

always be here until we hear the trumpet sound and there will be a new heaven and a new earth. In the meantime, how are we to live? 1. Holy lives putting God first. "Be ye holy I as I am holy" (1 Peter 1:16). 2. "Let your light so shine before others that they may see your good works and glorify the Father in heaven" (Matthew 5:16). Helping those in need in our own neighborhoods is a way to do this. It is the second great commandment to love one's neighbor (Matthew 19:19). 3. God is in control and we are not. Do not think you can ignore God (mock God) and get away with it (Galatians 6:7). God will go to the greatest ends to get our attention. 4. It is good to reconnect with family and friends nation wide either by phone, face time, zoom, letters, emails, and other social media outlets.

5. I conclude with this. I see this as a time to be absolutely immersed in the love of God. God's rich grace is ours. We have been blessed with every spiritual blessing. Jesus did die on the cross and rose from the dead. We are completely forgiven. You are loved with an everlasting love and underneath are the everlasting arms. God has not forgotten you and God has not deserted you. God has His eyes on you and wants you to be closer to Him than ever before. He has so much good instore for you for God is good and He can do no other. Amen and Amen.