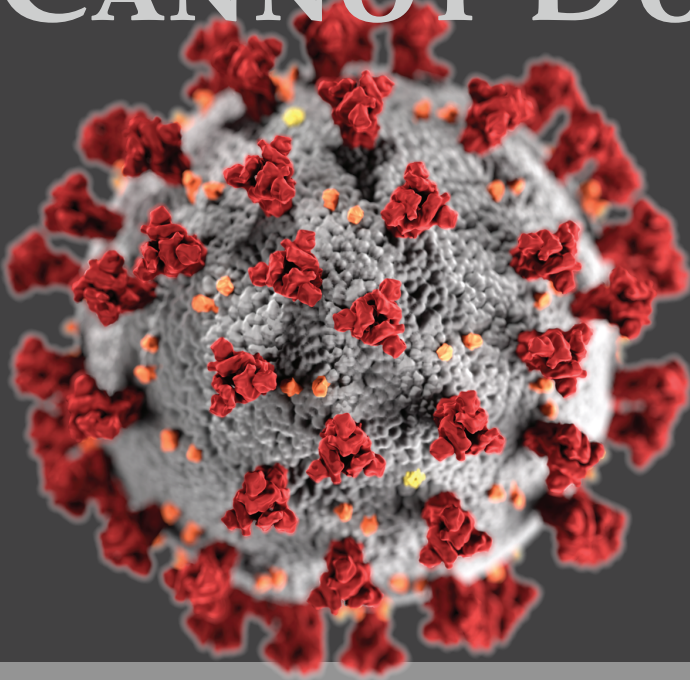


WHAT THE
NEW
CORONAVIRUS
CANNOT DO



**Finding Hope in Jesus Christ
amidst a Global Pandemic**

**WHAT THE NEW
CORONAVIRUS
CANNOT DO**

What the New Coronavirus Cannot Do

© Debbie Fetter 2020

All rights reserved. No portion of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopy, recording, scanning, or otherwise, except as provided for by USA copyright law, without the prior written permission of the publisher.

All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise indicated, are taken from the New King James Version®. Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Duluth Bible Church
201 W. Saint Andrews St.
Duluth, MN 55803
U.S.A.
(218) 724-5914

Printed in the United States of America

WHAT THE NEW CORONAVIRUS CANNOT DO

Our world is in the midst of a pandemic. A deadly strain of coronavirus known as COVID-19 has invaded our world. Millions of people are infected with it right now. Vaccines are available in limited supply to combat the deadly virus, but right now, many people can't get it or don't want to take it. We can still only mitigate the virus through staying at home, practicing social distancing, and quarantining the infected people. Still, millions of people throughout the world have died and the situation seems to be getting worse. It is very easy for people to feel very fragile, uncertain about the future, and to lose their hope, joy, peace, and faith in God. This is why there are so many who are extremely anxious during these dark days. How can we handle our emotions during this pandemic? Focusing on God's Word and not focusing on what COVID-19 is doing is a great medicine. God's Word has always been sufficient for every situation we may face. By looking at our situation from God's viewpoint, we can receive hope and strength. It is far better to store God's truths in your heart than to worry. Can we really trust God during this time? I would like to encourage you that you can! I will list for you several hopeful truths from God's Word to highlight what COVID-19 cannot do, followed by what God can do for you during this difficult time.

THE CORONAVIRUS CANNOT TOUCH YOUR SOUL

The innermost part of human beings is our soul. Even though adversity and suffering are part of the human condition, the COVID-19 cannot touch your soul. Regarding this new and deadly virus, you

need to know the Bible does *not* teach that all diseases are the outcome of our own sins. When Jesus' disciples encountered a man who had been born blind, they asked him, "Who sinned, this man or his parents?" Jesus bluntly answered "Neither!" (John 9:2-3).

Fear of the deadly virus may lead to worried, anxious questions in our minds, like "If I contract the coronavirus, does that mean I did something bad to deserve it?" or "Is this God's punishment on me and others?" or "What will happen to me if I die from the virus?" These fears are understandable. However, the Bible tells us that humans are not born spotless or sinless, but imperfect, with spiritual spots and wrinkles. Tiny children scream out "No!" to their parent's instructions, proving that even babies have an inborn spirit of rebellion. Being aware of our sinful nature leads many people to fear that their suffering is a personal punishment from God toward them for wrongdoings. But often, it's not. If it's not for punishment, then why do we get such terrible diseases?

Genesis, the first book of the Bible, tells us that God created Adam and Eve to live forever, but they sinned by disobeying God's one prohibition not to eat from a certain tree. Because of their sin, a curse was placed upon all mankind (Genesis 3:1-19). The aftereffect of the first sin was that all humans were, like their parents, born as sinners, too. Sickness and death were NOT part of God's original plan for mankind. But now, a repercussion of the first sin is that all people born into Adam's family suffer various forms of sicknesses and eventually, death. Physical disease is the result of Adam and Eve's sin. Later, God gave the 10 Commandments to tell us what sin is. Everyone inherits a sinful nature from Adam and Eve, and therefore is unable to keep any of the 10 Commandments adequately. Even while attempting to be good, we still sin daily in thought, word, and deed and fail to meet God's perfect standard. We judge murderers and terrorists to be sinners, but it only takes one sin to make us a sinner. Therefore, according to the Bible, God views you, me, and every other person on earth as being guilty of sin:

As it is written, "There is none righteous, not even one."
(Romans 3:10, NASB)

For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.
(Romans 3:23, NASB)

At some point, every one of us has rebelled against God's standards. We don't like to face this, but it is true! However, it is also true and so very comforting to know that the presence of disease in our bodies will never diminish God's great love for you and me, as demonstrated at Calvary's cross:

But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.
(Romans 5:8)

God truly understands the needs of your body and soul, and He genuinely loves you. He is able to heal your body, if it is part of His wise, eternal plan for your life. But for His own reasons He doesn't always heal us, though He always desires what is best for us and has promised the resurrection of our bodies one day. Right now, God is most concerned about our soul, the inner part of us that lives on throughout eternity. Apart from God's grace, all of us at death would be declared guilty sinners, and then each of us would receive God's just penalty toward sin and be separated from Him in a place called Hell. God's GRACE is the only "emergency provision" available to rectify our situation and to rescue our souls from Hell. Since grace is God's solution to our human condition, let's consider what He says about G-R-A-C-E: **God's Riches At Christ's Expense.**

THE CORONAVIRUS CANNOT CHANGE GOD'S GRACE

In view of what the Bible says about our sinful condition as previously explained, if we're honest before God we must admit that we deserve God's just judgment of Hell. He owes us nothing. But, many people try to be good to make up for their sins. Have you ever done this? I have; but in doing so, I never knew if I was good enough. After all, how good is "good enough"? Remember, the Bible states that since we have all sinned, we cannot earn God's favor or stand on our own merits before a holy God. We are now messy in His sight and stained with sin. If God were to judge each of us for our sins, then He would have to condemn us all to Hell. But if you are able to accept this bad news, then I want you to know that God also has good news for you!

We do not need to succumb to despair because God the Father gave us a perfect solution: He sent His only Son Jesus to become a sinless man as God in human flesh. Jesus had no sins of His own. He was therefore uniquely qualified to die in our place and to take the punishment that we, who have sinned against a holy God, rightly deserve. Jesus willingly chose to die in our place as our substitute. Upon the cross, Jesus Christ cried out, “IT IS FINISHED” (John 19:30) as He paid for *all* our sins—past, present, and future. Jesus cried out “It is finished!” because no more work was necessary to pay for sin. Having accomplished our redemption, God now desires everyone to take His offer of Heaven as a FREE GIFT.

Many people today are trying to pay for Heaven by doing good works or religious activities. Instead of attempting to earn Heaven by our accomplishments, or trying to pay God to let us into Heaven, or boasting that we are good enough, God wants us to come to Jesus Christ alone for forgiveness, trusting in what He has done for us. The Bible states in no uncertain terms that there can be no boasting in Heaven:

For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the GIFT of God, *not a result of works, so that no one can boast.* (Ephesians 2:8–9, ESV)

Right now, God is offering you Heaven for free, by His grace, even though you don’t deserve it! Grace is God’s unmerited favor that He lavishly bestows on sinners who are willing to receive His gift of eternal life by trusting in His Son, Jesus Christ. Accepting His amazing grace results in knowing that diseases like the coronavirus can never shatter your hope of Heaven. If you have trusted in Jesus Christ’s work on the cross to save you from sin’s penalty, realizing that you cannot save yourself, then Heaven is your eternal home and *no virus or disease can ever change that.*

THE CORONAVIRUS CANNOT DESTROY GOD’S SACRIFICIAL LOVE

Now let’s consider God’s perfect love, which is unlike anything this world calls “love.” God’s love is not a feeling that comes and

goes, nor something sensual, nor something deserved. Instead, it is completely selfless and sacrificial. God's love for you was demonstrated by His giving His Son, Jesus Christ, to die for your sins. In God's love, He looked past your faults, saw your need, and did all that was necessary in sending His Son to save you, regardless of the cost to Himself.

For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life. (John 3:16, NASB)

Imagine God's love illustrated this way. Imagine that you have a friend who loves you enough that he was willing to take all of the deadly, infectious virus out of your body and put it into his own body. He did this knowing that he was certain to die as a result but that you would get to live the rest of your life as a healthy person. Wouldn't that be wonderful for you but a great sacrifice for him? In the same way, Jesus Christ loved you so much that He took all of your sin upon Himself and died in your place. He died as your substitute, suffering the wrath of God that you deserved. The Bible says, "The wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23). "Wages" means something we have earned. The word "death" in the Bible means "separation." Biblically, death is separation from God in Hell. This death or separation is the necessary payment for our sins. We all have earned this death. But thankfully, Jesus died on the cross to pay your wages. Although Jesus had no sins of His own (because He is perfect), He did this to satisfy God's justice *so that the debt of your sins* could be paid, and so you as a fully-forgiven person could live forever in Heaven with God. Three days after Jesus died on the cross, He rose from the dead, showing that He is Lord over all (even death!) and that His sacrifice on the cross was an acceptable and sufficient payment for your sins. Now Jesus Christ, as a living and risen Savior, offers you eternal salvation as a free gift!

For the wages of sin is death; but the *free gift* of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 6:23, ESV)

God, in the person of Jesus Christ, has already loved you completely, and He has provided the solution to your biggest problem—where you will spend eternity. There is only one thing

you need to do to receive eternal life in Heaven with God: believe that Jesus died to pay for all your sins and rose from the dead to guarantee your eternal salvation solely by His grace and not by any merit of your own. If you haven't already accepted this wonderful free gift, why not consider doing so right now?

THE CORONAVIRUS CANNOT TAKE AWAY YOUR COURAGE

We will not have the courage to face the future if we trust in the *wrong objects* to get us to Heaven: self, religion, baptism, good deeds, sacraments, or the covering up of our sins, because then we will always wonder if we have done enough. Jesus died on the cross to make sufficient payment for every sin we have ever done or will ever do. The Bible tells us that believing in Jesus is the *only way* to Heaven:

Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." (John 14:6)

We don't need anyone or anything else to save us: no church, religion, minister, or priest is required because the Bible says Jesus Christ is the *one and only mediator* between us and God:

For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus. (1 Timothy 2:5)

Since the Bible is God's Word and the final authority, I encourage to you to believe its message of good news about Jesus Christ and stop trusting in unreliable objects like yourself, church, religious acts, good works, and rituals. Place your faith in the only reliable object to save you: the Lord Jesus Christ.

THE CORONAVIRUS CANNOT ROB YOU OF YOUR SALVATION

The Bible assures us that if we have placed our faith in Jesus Christ alone as our Savior, then we possess eternal life right now and WE CAN KNOW THIS:

And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, in order that you may know that you have eternal life. (1 John 5:11–13, NASB)

It is my hope that everyone who has contracted the coronavirus will be healed; but the fact is one day we all are going to die. That is why God gave us such assurances in the Bible, so we can *know* beyond a shadow of a doubt that when we die we will be in Heaven forever. Those who trust in Christ alone can, like the psalmist, say with confidence:

The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want....Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me. (Psalm 23:1, 4)

Once you have trusted in Jesus Christ to save you, God will never leave you nor forsake you, even when you fail or sin in the future (Hebrews 13:5). God NEVER takes away the gift of eternal life in Heaven that He has already freely given to you. He never goes back on anything that He has promised for He can never lie (Titus 1:2). You can trust Jesus Christ to remain your true friend during every trial you may face in life, even if you have contracted the new coronavirus:

Jesus said, “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. And I give them eternal life, and they shall NEVER PERISH; neither shall anyone snatch them out of my hand.” (John 10:27–28)

THE CORONAVIRUS CANNOT REMOVE YOUR PEACE

Once you have been saved by God’s grace alone in Christ alone, then you can navigate through any trial or adversity in life the very same way that you were saved—by faith alone in Jesus Christ alone. After you have trusted in Jesus as your Savior, then you are able to rely upon the *precious* promises of God in the Bible. Trust-

ing and relying on God's Word will strengthen your faith in the darkest moments and valleys of life. Your peace and confidence can be based on the fact that Jesus Christ is the only true way to God and that even now, He wants to guide you through your life on earth all the way into eternity. The moment we changed our minds and trusted in Christ alone to save us, we entered into everlasting peace *with* God:

Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. (Romans 5:1)

To be justified is a legal term that means to be declared righteous in God's sight, even though we are still sinners in practice. When we are justified or saved from the penalty of our sins, God no longer sees us as being guilty of our sins but He actually sees us in His Son Jesus Christ, possessing His very own righteousness. This is the believer's position "in Christ." If you have already accepted Jesus Christ as your Savior and been justified, then God wants you now to grow in your relationship with Him as you learn to walk by faith, trusting Him with all the circumstances of life.

In this pandemic, God wants you to trust Him, to grow in your relationship with Him, and enjoy the peace *of* God. Of course, we do not naturally do this, but God wants us to be dependent on Him, and to express each of our needs to Him in prayer. In this current trial facing the world, remember that God invites you to be:

Casting all your cares upon Him, for He cares for you.
(1 Peter 5:7)

Are you feeling anxious? Then take to heart this reassuring promise from God's Word:

Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:6-7)

COVID-19 will never destroy your peace *with* God through Jesus Christ; nor does it have to rob you of the peace *of* God as

a believer in Jesus Christ. We can experience the spiritual rest of soul that God provides and His peace that surpasses all understanding when we rely upon His precious promises to us.

THE CORONAVIRUS CANNOT ALTER YOUR ETERNAL PROGNOSIS

Though the news of a global pandemic is not good, the news God has for you in His Word is very good! He promises that eternal life is certain and guaranteed if you have trusted in Jesus Christ alone for your salvation. You do not have to promise God that you'll be good, try harder, or do more, for God accepts you solely by His grace just as you are the moment you trust that His Son died for your sins and rose again to save you. If you were a patient close to death in the intensive care unit and scientists discovered a medicine that was guaranteed to cure you, wouldn't you want to receive that medicine? God's offer of Heaven is available to anyone who is willing to believe on Christ alone to be saved. Anyone can change their eternal prognosis. All who trust in Christ alone can be assured that they are totally safe spiritually; they have eternal security right now, which means God has guaranteed that they will never suffer eternal punishment in Hell. We can know this for sure because the Bible repeatedly promises eternal security to every believer:

Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life. (John 5:24)

For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:38–39)

These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may *know* that you have eternal life. (1 John 5:13, NASB)

If salvation is all by God's grace and you didn't earn it or deserve it in the first place, then you cannot lose it later if you fail. The very moment you trust in Jesus Christ alone as your Savior, you receive the Holy Spirit, who then seals you in Christ forever as God's child. Once sealed, you can never lose the gift of eternal life. Also, one day you will receive a new glorified body at the resurrection that will not be subject to death or disease, and this body will be completely free from diseases like COVID-19 forever!

And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance. (Ephesians 1:13–14, NIV)

The Holy Spirit guarantees that you can never go to Hell once you've trusted in Christ for salvation. Salvation is not by our good works, but completely by God's amazing grace! Grace is contrary to human opinions, platitudes, psychology, and personal philosophies. But grace is real because the Bible says it's real. God wrote the Bible and He never lies. Have *you* agreed with God, and taken Him at His word that you are a sinner and that this free gift of salvation is exactly what *you need* right now? Salvation is a very simple solution provided by God, but we need to accept the gift of salvation that Jesus offers. It costs us nothing, but it cost God everything—the life of His very own Son.

If you have already come to Christ by faith and accepted the free gift of salvation, then you can begin experiencing the peace of God and the spiritual strength He provides through this trial.

And He said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. (2 Corinthians 12:9)

Once you place your faith in Christ alone, you are in the family of God forever (Galatians 3:26). You are sealed with the Holy Spirit as the guarantee of your salvation and glorious bodily resurrection (Ephesians 1:13–14). God promises that His strength and His grace will be sufficient if you rest by faith in

Him (Matthew 11:28–30). Entrusting your physical well-being to Jesus will allow you to experience God’s perfect peace (Isaiah 26:3–4). Your Savior, Jesus Christ, knows and understands your fears, and He feels your pain because He experienced great pain to save you (Hebrews 4:15). Now you can trust and rely on Him. He will never go back on His Word to you. Dear friend, if you still don’t know for sure that you are going to Heaven, please read this through again from the beginning until you have the assurance that you have been saved. What is going to be your eternal destiny? God wants you to know for sure today! “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved” (Acts 16:31).

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Debbie Fetter is a believer in Jesus Christ who currently attends Bear Creek Bible Church in Keller, Texas.