

David Jeremiah: The Answer That Brings Peace When All Others Fail

Personally, I have encountered many sobering seasons throughout my lifetime. I've seen wars begin and end. I've witnessed religious persecution break out in totalitarian regimes with surprising speed and violence.

I was among those who watched the news each night, breathless with tension, during the Cuban missile crisis at the height of the Cold War. I have lived through the entire HIV/AIDS epidemic, which began when I was a young pastor in the 1980s. And I can still remember watching helplessly as United Airlines Flight 175 crashed into the south tower of the World Trade Center on Sept. 11, 2001.

But I can say I've haven't seen anything quite like the coronavirus pandemic that is currently squeezing every nation in its quick and deadly grip.

At the time of this writing, more than 2 million people have been diagnosed with COVID-19. More than 125,000 have died from the disease. Because of the speed and virulence of the coronavirus, more than half the people on this planet are "sheltering in place" under government- mandated instructions not to leave their homes for any nonessential activity. The world has been locked down.

To make matters worse, the virus' rapid spread has isolated people from the communities they typically turn to in times of tension and fear. Churches have been forced to close their doors. Restaurants are still making meals, but only for delivery. Movie theaters, bowling alleys and most retail stores are out of operation. And in a move that feels especially surreal to me as a California resident, Disneyland

closed its doors to the public on March 14—something that has happened only three times in its 65-year history.

Right now, the questions weighing down my mind and heart are the same questions burdening people all over the world—including even those sheltered residents of Zahara [a castle and fortress in southern Spain]: Why is all this happening? Do I have what it takes to get my family through? When will everything go back to normal as a nation? As a church?

And perhaps the most pressing question of all: Where is God in the midst of these difficult times?

Such questions are not unique to the coronavirus, nor are they limited to global pandemics. These are the questions we grapple with whenever disaster falls upon us— especially when disaster strikes seemingly without warning.

Frankly, I don't know the answers to the first four questions I mentioned above. Outside of conspiracy theories, no one can say why the virus is here. I'm anxious to lead my family during this time, but as a man in my 70s, I feel personally threatened by the coronavirus in a way I haven't experienced since my recovery from cancer.

And as much as I hope life will return to normal in a matter of weeks, I see little hope for that reality on the horizon.

Thankfully, I do know the answer to that final question, and it brings me peace when all other answers fail.

Where is God during these difficult times? He's right here. Right next to me, and right next to you. The same place He always has been and always will be.

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and host of Turning Point. Turning Point's 30-minute radio program is heard on more than 2,200 radio stations daily. A New York Times' bestselling author and Gold Medallion winner, he has written more than 50 books.

The above is an adaptation of Dr. Jeremiah's newly released book, Shelter in God.