

How the COVID-19 Pandemic Reveals God's Sovereign Hand

Our busy culture has birthed an industry of time management experts offering tools and tips to be more effective. One of the first things they advise is for clients to reject interruptions. But that's difficult to do when our whole world has just been interrupted.

We've been blindsided by COVID-19. The sudden onslaught of SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes this disease, has removed any illusion of control we thought we had. COVID-19 is rampant, as it targets the most vulnerable of our population: the elderly and those with underlying health conditions.

Schools are closed. Businesses shuttered. Supermarkets stripped bare. Demand for health care equipment and testing kits is outpacing supply. And of course, there's fear. Lots and lots of fear.

We may have been caught off guard, but this widespread virus did not surprise God. The one who hung the stars in place is still sovereign over His creation. So why hasn't He stopped this pandemic?

That question implies I have a right to judge what God is doing. That I have the right to blame Him for what goes wrong in a world corrupted by sin—sin humanity brought on itself.

A Lesson From Job

And then I think of Job. After much suffering and questioning—along with less than helpful advice from friends—Job is finally answered by the Lord Himself. And in Job 38:2-4 God's first words to Job were: "Who is this who darkens counsel by words without knowledge? Prepare yourself like a man; for I will question you, and you shall answer Me.

'Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth? Declare, if you have understanding.'"

After multiple descriptions of His own creative sovereignty, the Lord asks Job (40:8): "Will you indeed annul My judgment? Will you condemn Me, that you may be righteous?"

Ouch! Where did we ever get the idea that God is answerable to us? Humanity wasn't satisfied with life in a heavenly garden, and now humanity isn't satisfied with the result of our sin: a broken, corrupted, groaning world. Then we have the nerve to blame God for the mess we made!

Grace, Mercy and Sovereignty

Yet even in a pandemic, there are signs of God's grace and mercy, if we only open our eyes to them. People slowing down long enough to talk to each other. Neighbors helping neighbors. Folks appreciating the simple things. Acts of compassion among strangers.

Most important of all, many are taking the time to renew relationships not just with each other, but with the Father they had pushed aside when they were just too busy. And God is using this experience to grow His children in ways we would not have been open to in better circumstances.

Let's pray this pandemic ends soon. Pray for healing for those who are ill and for the health care workers and first responders who are on the frontlines. And pray our nation's leaders will put aside their differences to work together for the common good.

How and when will this crisis end? I don't know. But there is one who not only *knows* the future, He *holds* the future. Jesus is Savior and Lord of all. Regardless of our situation, He is still in control.

God's plans always prevail. And even though it may be

difficult to see now, He is using even this to work for our ultimate good and His eternal glory. {eoa}

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