

Jesus' Healing Antidote to Coronavirus and Mass Panic

Overnight, the Mormon Church decided to suspend gatherings of its 16 million members. In Singapore, the Roman Catholic Church suspended public Masses, and 70 mosques followed suspension of public gatherings.

The Church of England issued guidance notes broadly following National Health Service recommendations, though also recommending that its priests telephone rather than visit any virus contracted parishioner.

Public gathering for services remains intact, although Britain seems to lag behind others generally, despite the prime minister's announcement that "many will now lose loved ones."

The news brought to mind the response of Jesus en route to Jerusalem as described in Luke 17:11-17. On this journey, He came across 10 male lepers. These lepers saw Jesus, and we are told they stood at a distance but cried out to Him to have pity on them. Clearly they had confidence in His ability to heal, to do something about their problem, and they also respected the need to distance themselves for fear of contagion.

Jesus, meantime, did not approach them to touch them but instructed them to "go show yourselves to the priests" (Luke 10:14b).

The account then tells us that as they did, as they moved and followed His instruction, they were cleansed and healed. Of the 10 men healed, only one of them returned to thank Jesus, and He used that to point out how fickle humanity so often is when we receive an answer to our cry for help. Jesus pointed out that the return of one leper was even more spectacular because the one who returned was a foreigner. The story ends

when Jesus tells him his faith healed him, along with the nine others, of course, but they lacked gratitude.

We see here the practical step of distancing, but we also see here the vital step to cry out for help to Jesus at this time. In doing so, we show faith, and we know from elsewhere in the Bible that only our faith pleases God. Healing, we see, is available to all who cry out to him including foreigners and those from other beliefs.

When we do, we too may be one of the 90% who don't return to thank Him. But Jesus is bigger than man's weakness and gracious to forgive all. He knows what we are truly made of, for He cast our mold. At this time, this story from Luke reminds us that the healer and helper is out there today. He's still walking, and He's waiting to hear from those in need.

These times will scare many, but fear is a worse virus than corona, and the antidote is still available today. We've got the guidance notes, we've got the solution and, yes, we should follow the practical steps from the scientific experts, but try the cry—and don't forget it.

Jesus, too, often self-isolated, but He often did so in prayer alone on a mountain or elsewhere and, after doing so, He came back down and was ready for whatever came next.

Try the cry. {eoa}

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