

Living Water Assembly of God

76 North Street * Brandon, Vermont * 05733

(802) 247-4542
livingwateraog.org

Thank you for taking a moment to better understand our response to the coronavirus pandemic. One of the difficulties that can arise with any large-scale emergency is that different sources of information can cause confusion.

Therefore, before we discuss an appropriate spiritual response, to this crisis, I would like to take a moment and clarify some information. I want to assure those of our community, here in Brandon and the surrounding area, that our church leadership takes this very seriously. We will continue to follow the Center for Disease Control's guidelines and monitor Governor Scott and President Trump's recommendations. On our coronavirus response page, you can find a link to the CDC website. Please familiarize yourself with these guidelines and adhere to them. We must all do our part to stop the spread of this deadly virus.

However, I would suggest that just a natural response is not enough. Throughout recorded history humanity has faced large-scale catastrophes. History is replete with examples of widespread tragedy costing thousands and, in some instances, millions of lives. The 20th century has been especially perilous. The influenza epidemic, a century ago, took an estimated 50 million lives. WW I saw another 19 million deaths and the fatalities during WW II are estimated between 70 and 85 million people.

Today around the globe, thousands of innocent lives are lost daily through violence, malnutrition, abortion, disease, neglect and tragic accidents. Death and uncertainty seem to lurk all around us. What can we possibly do? There are, of course, many answers to that question. Some suggest we live life to the fullest and get all that we can as fast as we can from life. Others say we must make the world a better place for future generations. Some determine we must prepare for the final cataclysmic event that will change humanity forever. Others simply pray for this to all end and life to return to "normal", whatever that may entail.

While there may be some aspect of truth in all those thoughts, I would like to suggest an alternative. Jesus said, in the Gospel of John chapter 10 verse 10,

"I have come that you may have life and life abundantly".

Jesus seems to be suggesting life is to be lived fully and happily. How can one have abundant life during this time? In fact, isn't it a bit ridiculous, even callous to suggest one may have abundant life while people are suffering all around us? Perhaps, this verse proves Christians and the One they esteem and claim to follow, Jesus Christ is out of touch with reality. If we view "abundant life" as purely a life filled with material prosperity and physical health, than the answer is yes !! The claims of Christ are out of touch with reality.

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However, I do not believe Jesus was suggesting abundant life was inherently related to wealth, physical health or even mental stability. Life has heartache and tragedies, for which, none of us are immune. An “abundant life” begins with inner peace from God that becomes reflected in our lives. Some might ask what exactly does that mean?

In the Gospel of Luke chapter 10 verse 27, Jesus said:

"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind"; and, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'"

One of the great things occurring in many communities, including ours, is that we see neighbors displaying love for one another. Delivering food, feeding underprivileged, helping the sick, elderly, and young is occurring daily. It is truly AWESOME to see this and be a part of it. Yet, first Jesus said we are to love the LORD with all our heart, soul, strength and mind. In other words, with everything within me I am to love God. Yet, the best news is He first loved us. As others have said, God is not in heaven wringing His hands trying to figure out how to end this calamity. However, some may ask if the Lord is in control, why does tragedy exist? I cannot give an answer to that question which will satisfy everyone, but I can agree with Saint Paul as he spoke to the Roman church.

I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from God's love. Neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither our fears for today nor our worries about tomorrow—not even the powers of hell can separate us from God's love. 39 No power in the sky above or in the earth below—indeed, nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8: 38-39)

What a wonderful promise in this time of uncertainty. While I cannot promise that we will live free of heartache in this world, I can promise you that God's peace is available to you. Please take a moment and ask Jesus Christ to bring His peace into your life. You can pray a very simple prayer asking Jesus to make Himself known to you and asking Him to become Lord and Savior of your life. This is a time of fear and uncertainty; however, Jesus Christ is waiting to become the greatest source of inner strength you could ever imagine. Won't you invite him into your life today?

If you would like to know more about Jesus, His promises or you have any questions about God or our response to this pandemic, please email me today at pastorscott@livingwateraog.org or call me at (802) 247-4542. Let me leave you with a blessing found in the Old Testament.

"The LORD bless you and keep you; the LORD make His face shine upon you, And be gracious to you; the LORD lift up His countenance upon you, And give you peace." (Numbers 6: 24-26)

Sincerely,
Pastor Scott R. Carlson