



## **GOD'S FAITHFULNESS AND COVID-19 PANDEMIC: THE CHRISTIAN ETHICAL OBLIGATION**

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### **Abstract**

From Biblical times to contemporary time, there have been diseases which have had negative effects on humanity the most recent of which is the COVID-19 pandemic. It is argued that Christians have not done enough to help ameliorate the effects of the pandemic on people. The focus of this paper is not primarily a scientific discussion on COVID-19 pandemic, but on God's faithfulness in keeping humanity alive despite the stings of the ravaging deadly virus and the imperativeness of Christians' ethical response. Hermeneutical and descriptive methods were adopted to achieve the aim of this paper. It argues for Christian ethical compliance in helping to ameliorate the adverse effects of the pandemic. By doing this, the paper believes that God's faithfulness would have been reciprocated by Christians.

**Keywords:** God's Faithfulness, Covid-19 Pandemic, Christian, Ethical Obligation.

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### **Introduction**

All through human history, from Biblical times to contemporary time, there have been diseases which have had negative effects on humanity. The influenza pandemic that struck in 1918 affected one-third of the world's population. That would be 2½ billion people in today's population. It is estimated to have killed about 50 million people when the population was much less than it is today. Today, the corona virus pandemic is defining global health issue and the greatest challenge humans have faced since the dawn of humankind up to the Second World War. And since its emergence in Asia late last year, the virus has spread to every continent of the world. The corona virus now dominates the news all over the globe. It has now been



classified as a pandemic. Extreme actions are being taken by governments to contain the spread of this disease. It is driving the stock market down. It is affecting commerce, travel, entertainment, religious houses and sports. These statistics explain why governmental responses across nations to the current pandemic are so dramatic.

However, epidemics and pandemics will come and go until Jesus Christ returns; and amidst these turbulent God's faithfulness remains intact. There will be diseases which will disrupt daily life and may lead to the destruction of many lives including human, animal and plant lives. At a time like this, what determines one's peace and eternal destination is the faith a person (a believer) live out before the God of heaven and earth, one's personal relationship with Jesus Christ and one's sensitivity to the Holy Spirit according to the Christian faith. However, the focus in this treatise is not primarily a scientific discussion on the COVID-19 pandemic, but on God's faithfulness in keeping humanity alive despite the stings of the ravaging deadly virus.

### **An Overview of Covid-19 Pandemic**

The corona virus pandemic code-named “COVID-19” (“Corona Virus Disease 2019”) is an ongoing global pandemic caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome corona virus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) (Lau, et al, 2020). The outbreak was first identified in Wuhan, China, in December 2019. On 30 January 2020 the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the outbreak a “public health emergency of international concern” and “a pandemic” on 11 March of the same year (McNeil Jr. & Donald, 2020). As at 7 July 2020, over 12 million cases of COVID-19 have been reported across 118 nations and territories of the world resulting in over 538,000 deaths. The virus is believed to primarily spread between people during close contact, most often via small droplets produced by coughing, sneezing, and talking (Velavan & Meye, 2020). However, as of June 2020, research has revealed that speech-generated droplets can linger in the air for tens of minutes, and that people can become infected by touching a contaminated surface and then contacting their face (Ottuh & Jemegbe, 2021). It is most contagious during the first three days after the onset of symptoms, although spread is possible before symptoms appear, and from people who do not show symptoms.

Common symptoms include fever, cough, fatigue, shortness of breath and loss of sense of smell eventually resulting to complications which may include pneumonia and acute respiratory distress syndrome (Velavan & Meyer, 2020). For now there is no known vaccine or specific



antiviral treatment except treatment in the form of symptomatic and supportive therapy. Recommended preventive measures include hand-washing, covering one's mouth when coughing, keeping distance from other people, wearing a face mask in public settings, and monitoring and self-isolation for people who suspect they are infected. Government authorities worldwide have also responded by implementing travel restrictions, lockdowns, and facility closures.

The epidemic, however, is far more than a health calamity; it is also a socioeconomic disaster on a scale never seen before. It puts a strain on every country it comes into contact with; it has the potential to have disastrous social, economic, and political consequences that will leave deep and long-lasting scars. Every day, people are losing jobs and income, with no way of knowing when normality will return. Small island nations that rely significantly on tourism have abandoned beaches and vacant hotels. According to the International Labour Organization, 195 million jobs could be destroyed (Ottuh & Jemegbe, 2021). According to the World Bank, remittances will drop by US\$110 billion this year, leaving 800 million people unable to pay their basic necessities. At a time like this, the world needs God whose faithfulness endures forever. It is therefore, imperative for humankind, especially believers of Christ to appreciatively respond to this kind gesture of God. In this presentation, human response to God's faithfulness is discussed from ethical perspective.

### **Defining Faithfulness**

It is crucial to understand that faith and faithfulness are not synonymous. The term faithfulness is derived from the phrase "to be faithful," which implies to be:

- i. Steadfast in attention or commitment, which refers to loyalty.
- ii. Consistent in keeping pledges or performing duties; this refers to being diligent.
- iii. Consistent with the facts, a standard, or an original.

Therefore, "faithfulness" is the concept of remaining unfailingly faithful to someone or something, and putting that loyalty into reality on a regular basis despite adversity. The Hebrew root for the Old Testament words "loyal" and "faithfulness" means "to set up," "to stay," or "to uphold". When applied to a person, it refers to someone who can be trusted. *Aglow's Bible Study* (2017; Henry, 1994) defines the Greek term used in the New Testament as trustworthy or dependable . Stability, consistency, certainty, and permanence are all characteristics of faithfulness. Faithfulness is a solid foundation that may be built on without fear of future



changes. In the Bible, God and humans are both described as having the trait of faithfulness. However, the scope of this dissertation is confined to a discussion of the biblical teaching on the nature of faithfulness in relation to God.

### **Theologizing “God’s Faithfulness” in the Light of the Old Testament**

This characteristic is assigned to God in the Old Testament in sections where the Hebrew words for fidelity do not appear. It is implied in the covenant name “Yahweh”, as revealed in Exodus 3: 13-15, which not only expresses God’s self-existence, but also places God’s immutability in special relation to His gracious promises, thus denoting God’s unchangeable faithfulness, which is emphasized in the Old Testament to awaken trust in God (Dt. 7: 9; Ps. 36: 5; Isa. 11: 5; Hos. 12: 6, 9). Furthermore, in those places where God is referred to as a rock, it is God’s faithfulness as well as His immutability that is implied as the secure object of religious trust (Dt. 32: 4, 15; Ps. 18: 2; 42:9; Heb. 10; Isa. 17: 10). When God reveals Himself to Moses and Israel as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and the God of their fathers, this same attribute is suggested (Ex. 3: 6, 15-16). (Ex. 3: 6, 15-16). The truth about God presented here is not just that He was gracious to the Patriarchs, but that He is faithful to His gracious promise to their fathers, and that what He was to them, He will continue to be to Moses and Israel. This is the essential concept of God’s faithfulness in the Old Testament.

This is also evident in the Hebrew terms used to convey this aspect of God's essence and activity. These words are *ne'eman*, the *Niphal* participle of the verb *aman* employed as an adjective of "faithful" and the nouns "*emeth*" and "*emunah*" faithfulness, and the verbal stem *aman* signifies "to be secure or firm." It implies the firmness of something which supports something in the *Qal* (in Hebrew grammar, the *qal* is the simple paradigm of a verb), and is employed in the participle of a nurse carrying a kid (Num. 11: 12; 2 Sam. 4:4; Isa. 49: 23). It signifies the firmness of something which is sustained, such as a kid carried (Isa. 60: 4); a well-founded building in the *Niphal* (1 Sam. 2: 35; 25: 28); A kingdom securely established (2 Sam. 7: 16); men secure in political place (Isa. 7:9); a heart that is trustworthy (Isa. 22: 23); a wall that firmly holds a nail (Isa. 22: 23; Neh. 9:8). As a result, in the *Niphal*, the verb comes to imply "true" in the sense of "words and statements agreeing with reality," as in "words and revelations" (Gen. 42:20; Hos. 5:9); and "persons" (Gen. 42:20; Hos. 5:9). (Isa. 8:2; Jer. 42:5). It also carries the connotation of being faithful when applied to men in Numbers 12:7; Psalms 101:6; Nehemiah 13:13, etc. In this meaning, the term is applied to Yahweh, who keeps His



covenant promises, to emphasize the truth that He is firm or continuous, that is, true to His covenant pledges, and will certainly fulfill them.

The nouns *emeth* and *emunah* are used in a similar way (Henry, 1994). Apart from the instances in which *emeth* denotes the idea of truth or the correspondence of words and ideas with reality, and the instances in which it denotes the agreement of acts and words with the inner disposition, that is, sincerity, it is also used to denote the idea of faithfulness as defined above. Apart from a few verses where it is unclear whether the noun *emunah* refers to truth or loyalty, it normally refers to the latter (Henry, 1994). Both of these nouns are used to express the concept of faithfulness, i.e., consistency or firmness, particularly in the performance of all commitments. These words are used to emphasize not only the idea that humans are always true to their covenant pledges, but also the belief that God is always true to His covenant commitments. The Psalmist declares God's attribute in this way (Ps. 40:10), and he recognizes God's magnificence by claiming that God's faithfulness goes to the clouds (Ps. 36:5). This is what he commends (Ps. 89:1-2), and this, he claims, should be praised and revered by all humans (Ps. 89:5, 8).

God's faithfulness, if we may say so, is distinguished by constancy; the Psalmist states that it endures to all generations (Ps. 100:5). As a result of being a trait of God, it also describes His salvation, and it provides the foundation of faith in God's ability to hear prayer. It so becomes the religious person's safety net; and the source of God's assistance to His people (Ps. 31:5). According to prophesy, the covenant people's salvation is based wholly on Yahweh's mercy, grace, and faithfulness, not on any claim or merit of their own. When Israel was subjected to God's judgments, it may have appeared that his promise would be broken, but this is far from the case; as Yahweh, he is true to his word of promise, which stands eternally (Isa. 40:8). His counsels have always been marked by faithfulness and truth (Isa. 25:1), and Yahweh blotted up Israel's trespasses not because of Israel's loyalty, but for his own sake (Isa. 43:22-25; Micah 7:18-20). Furthermore, the King James Version asserts this same trait of Yahweh in many places where the Hebrew terms *emeth* and *emunah* are translated as "truth."

In Ex. 34:6 it is God's faithfulness (*emeth*) that is mentioned, because it clearly indicates his consistency from generation to generation; and in Dt. 32: 4. Because God's faithfulness (*emunah*) is contrasted with Israel's lack of faith, it is also mentioned. Furthermore, God's faithfulness in the Old Testament is directly linked to his righteousness in this regard. God is credited with righteousness in the second half of Isaiah's prophecy, as well as in many of the



psalms, because he arrives to save and save his people. As a result, God is credited with righteousness, which is a trait similar to grace, mercy, and fidelity. It appears to broaden out beyond its solely judicial or forensic connotation in many places, becoming a quality of God as Saviour of His people. As a result, the Psalms appeal to this attribute of God as a source of hope for salvation and rescue (Ps. 35:24; 71:2; 143:11) (Henry, 1994). However, it is important to note that this tight relationship between righteousness and faithfulness should not be pushed to the point of identifying righteousness with covenant fidelity in these passages from the Psalms and the second half of Isa. The notion appears to be that Israel has sinned and has no claim to Yahweh, and that her only hope of salvation is via Yahweh.

The Old Testament's focus on this quality of God is defined by the fact that throughout the Old Testament, Yahweh's covenant relationship with His people is based exclusively on God's grace, not on their own merit. If this covenant relationship had been founded on Israel's claim, God's faithfulness might have been taken for granted. But, because Yahweh's covenant relationship with Israel and His promises of salvation are based purely on God's mercy, this unchangeable faithfulness of Yahweh provided absolute comfort that the past experience of God's mercy will continue in the future. It gave the fathers' experience a religious value for Israel, which was passed down from generation to generation. And, just as God's faithfulness provided a link between the past and the present, it also provided a link between the present and the future. As a result, it becomes the firm basis of Israel's hope; compare Psalms 89, which describes God's faithfulness in its greatness, firmness as the basis of the covenant, and the ground it provides for hope for future help from Yahweh, as well as trust that His covenant would last forever. When God's people turned away from Him, even more emphasis was placed on His faithfulness, so that His wayward people's only hope lay not only in His kindness and mercy, but also in His faithfulness, which contrasted sharply with His people's faithlessness and inconstancy.

### **Theologizing “God’s Faithfulness” in the Light of the New Testament**

The same idea of God's faithfulness to His gracious promises is reinforced and set up as the object of a confident trust in God in the New Testament teaching on God's faithfulness. The adjective *pistos* and the word *pistis*, which has a more active connotation of faith or confidence, are both used to describe this idea (Henry, 1994). Scholars such as S. K. Wendt have attempted to interpret the words *aletheia* and *alethes* as denoting faithfulness and rectitude in many



instances, particularly in Johannine writings, based on the Septuagint rendering *eleos kai aletheia* for the Hebrew phrase "mercy and truth," in which truth is equivalent to faithfulness (Henry, 1994). However, the fact that the Septuagint employs the Greek word *aletheia* to translate the Hebrew word *emeth* in nearly half of the occasions where *emunah* appears suggests that those Greek terms may have been prepared for use in the New Testament. While there is one ethical application of these words in John's writings that appears to be based on the Old Testament use of *emeth* and *emunah*, the Greek words do not have this meaning when used to signify a God trait (Henry, 1994). Neither is the adjective *alethinos* so used.

The word *aletheia* appears frequently throughout Paul's epistles to describe the truth revealed by God to man through reason and conscience, as well as the doctrinal content of the gospel. However, the words *alethes* and *aletheia* appear to represent God's faithfulness in two verses (Rm. 3:4, 7; 15:8). The words *alethes*, 3:4, and *aletheia*, 3:7, appear to denote the same Divine trait as the word *pistis*, 3:3, in the previous chapter, Paul is contrasting God's faithfulness with men's faithlessness. In the latter section, (Rm. 15:8), The objective of Jesus Christ's mission to the Jews was claimed to be the vindication of God's covenant faithfulness through the fulfillment of His promises to the fathers. Paul emphasizes God's faithfulness to His covenant commitments several times, using the noun *pistis* (once) and the adjective *pistos* to do so. Paul uses the term *pistis* in this usage only once (Rm. 3:3). Paul is arguing here that the Jews' disbelief cannot render God's faithfulness void. Both Jew and Gentile, the apostle had said, are on the same footing as regards justification. Nevertheless, the Jews had one great advantage in that they were the people to whom the revelation of God's gracious promises had been committed. Despite the fact that some Jews were unfaithful, these promises will undoubtedly be fulfilled, because the fulfillment of these promises is contingent on God's faithfulness, which cannot be nullified by human faithlessness and disbelief.

And to the notion that man's lack of trustworthiness has no effect: "let God be faithful (*alethes*) and every man a liar" (Rm. 3:4), Which Paul means to suggest that, despite men's lack of trust, God's faithfulness will be abundantly vindicated in the fulfillment of God's promises, even if every man would be exposed untrue and faithless in the process. Not only that, but human faithlessness will provide an opportunity for God's faithfulness (*aletheia*) to be manifested, abounding to His glory (Rm. 3:7) (Henry, 1994). God's faithfulness here refers to His unwavering consistency and fidelity to His covenant promises; and it is this fidelity to His



promises, or the fact that God's gracious gifts and election are without change of mind on His part, that gave Paul the assurance that all of Israel would be saved in the end (Rm. 11:25-29).

Furthermore, God's covenant faithfulness is rooted in His very nature, so Paul's assurance of eternal life is based on the fact that God, who cannot lie, promised it before the world began (Titus 1:2), and the certainty that God will remain faithful despite human faithlessness is based on the fact that God cannot deny Himself (2 Tim. 2:13). God's promises in Christ are yea and amen because He is faithful (2 Cor. 1:18-20). Furthermore, Paul's assured assurance that God will preserve the Christian in temptation (1 Cor. 10:13); and establish and safeguard him from evil is based on this quality of God (2 Thes. 3:3). (2 Thes. 3:3). And because God is reliable and his gracious promises are trustworthy, this attribute clings to the Pastoral Epistles' "reliable sayings" that summarize the gospel, making them worthy of trust and acceptance (1 Tim. 1:15; 4:9; Titus 3:8). The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews presents God's faithfulness in the sense of loyalty to His promises as a source of secure trust and hope (Henry, 1994). It was the foundation of Sarah's trust that she would bear a child when she was past childbearing age (Heb. 11:11), and it is because God is loyal to His promise in Christ that we can approach near to Him with full assurance of trust, holding fast the profession of hope without wavering.

This trait is also attributed to God by John. Since one of the most precious of God's promises through Christ is the pardon of sin through the "blood of Jesus Christ," John says that God's faithfulness, His righteousness, as well as His mercy, is demonstrated in the remission of sins (1Jn. 1:9). When Peter informs his readers that individuals who suffer as Christians and in accordance with God's will should "submit their souls in well-doing unto a trustworthy Creator," he is taking a slightly different approach to God's faithfulness (1 pet. 4:19) (Henry, 1994). The quality of faithfulness, which is more frequently ascribed to God in His relationship to man as gracious Saviour and as the ground of hope in His gracious promises in the Bible, is here applied by Peter to God in His relationship to man as his Creator, and is made the ground of comfort in the face of persecution and suffering. The absence of the article before the words "faithful Creator" emphasizes that this is a feature of God as Creator, and the placement of the words in the phrase emphasizes this trait of God as the source of solace in times of suffering. "You suffer not by chance, but in accordance with God's plan; He, the almighty Creator, made you, and since your suffering is in accordance with His plan, you ought to trust yourself to Him who, as your Creator, is faithful," Peter seems to be saying to suffering Christians. Of course, Christians are to



take consolation from this, but God's fidelity is expanded here to encompass all of His relationships with His people and to pledge all of His characteristics on their behalf.

In the New Testament, Christ is also given this attribute. Where Jesus is called a faithful high priest, the idea expressed is His devotion to God's commands and to the Savior's work (Heb. 2:17; 3:2, 6). However, when Jesus Christ is referred to as the "faithful witness" or the "Faithful and True" in the Book of Revelation, it is apparent that the trait of fidelity, in the most absolute meaning in which it is a feature of God in contrast to human changeability, is given to Christ (Rev. 1:5; 3:14; 19:11). This is particularly evident in the last passage. The skies open to reveal the glorified Christ, who appears not merely as a triumphant warrior whose name is faithful and true, but also as the one in whom these traits are realized to their fullest extent, and in whom they are so distinctive as to constitute the exalted Lord's name. This definitely implies Jesus' divinity.

### **Faithfulness as God's Characteristics**

This definitely implies Jesus' divinity. God's Characteristics of Faithfulness One of the hallmarks of God's ethical nature is faithfulness. It refers to God's firmness or consistency in His dealings with humans, particularly His people. As a result, it is one component of God's truth and exchangeability. God is trustworthy not only because He is truly God in contrast to all that is not God, and because He understands the concept of Godhead, but also because He is consistent or faithful in keeping His promises (see Ps. 89: 1-2). In His ethical character, God, too, is immutable. The Bible frequently associates God's immutability with His love and kindness, as well as His consistency in regard to His covenant commitments, and this is what the Old Testament meant by God's Faithfulness (Forlenza & Vallada, 2018).

There are four different ways to describe God that are worth understanding according to Elwell and Comfort (2001):

- i. **Most High (Elyon):** He cannot be compared to anybody else because He is above all things, owns everything, and reigns over everything.
- ii. **Almighty (Shaddai):** Makes us aware of God's all-powerful, all-sufficient nature as a Sovereign monarch who is always present.
- iii. **Refuge (Yahweh):** Expounds on God's essence in the broadest sense, emphasizing His ultimate faithfulness to keep His promises.
- iv. **Fortress (Elohim):** Demonstrates God's zeal in demonstrating His strength, preservation, and planning.



God has the final say in everything because He is faithful in character and behavior. "For just as rain and snow fall from heaven, saturating the land, making it germinate and sprout, and supplying seed to sow and food to consume, so My word that comes from My mouth will not return to Me empty, but will accomplish what I want, and will prosper in what I send it," says Prophet Isaiah(Isaiah 55:10-11). In other words, whatever God speaks, happens. Because He is the never-changing God, what He says goes. One day, the Bible tells us, the very foundations of this earth will perish. Hebrews 1:10-12 says that the universe in which we live will "wear out like clothing. You will roll them up like a cloak, and they will be changed like a robe. But You are the same, and Your years will never end". Jesus Himself put it straight this way in Matt. 24:35: "Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will never pass away." That means the Word of God is His bond. It means He will keep all His promises. It means that God will fulfill every prophecy He has made. "He never forgets, never fails, never falters, never forfeits His word," wrote Pink. The Lord has faithfully followed through on every promise or prophecy, and He will keep every covenant or threat He has made, because 'God is not a man, nor a son of man, that He should change His mind.' Has He stated it, and will He not follow through? 'Has He said and will He not carry it out?' God does not alter because He is perfect. As a result, what He says today will be just as true a million years from tomorrow. You may trust Him to keep His promises to you. Remember Jeremiah's words: "We are not cut off because of the Lord's unwavering love." When Paul wrote to the Corinthians about it, he said that in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ, our Lord Jesus Christ will also confirm you to the end, blameless" (1 Cor. 1:8-9). The assurance of your salvation is that God will personally see to it that you remain believing and that He will support you to the end; He will make your hope robust and stable until the finish. He will motivate you to keep going. That is his promise.

### **Christians' Ethical Obligations**

Ethics, also called moral philosophy, is the branch of philosophy that systematizes, defines and endorses conceptions of good and wrong behaviour are all part of this process. Ethics as an Ancient Greek word derived from *ethos* (habit or custom) (Henry, 1994). The branch of philosophy axiology comprises the sub-branches of ethics and aesthetics, each concerned with values. The ethics of belief encompasses a group of topics centered on rational belief, intellectual excellence, and conscientious belief construction (Mishra, Togneri, Tripathi & Trikamii, 2017). The following are some of the issues that have been raised in the field:



- i. Are there any criteria ("epistemic norms") that should govern how we create beliefs and pursue intellectual goals like the pursuit of truth or understanding?
- ii. What kind of conventions, if any, do you have? Moral - is it solely intellectual or Prudential?
- iii. If such norms exist, how powerful are they? Are they categorical (that is, they apply regardless of our wishes or commitments) or hypothetical (that is, they only apply if we have certain aims and goals)?
- iv. Do they bind indefinitely or only if particular criteria are met? Is it possible for us to choose our views, or do we just believe whatever we think is best supported by the evidence?
- v. What should our goals be as believers? Getting to the heart of the matter? Avoiding a major blunder? Getting to know something? Pleasure? Do you want to be at ease?
- vi. Is it always necessary to have sufficient proof for one's ideas (a perspective called "evidentialism" by philosophers), or is it sometimes okay to believe without sufficient proof - or even without any proof at all?

Epistemic (or "doxastic") norms are standards that appropriately control responsible belief formation and the pursuit of intellectual excellence. The following are widely recognized epistemic norms (Albers, Echteld, de Vet, Onwuteaka-Philipsen, van der & Deliens, 2010):

- i. Do not base your decisions on scant evidence.
- ii. Match the strength of your views to the proof.
- iii. Do not disregard or overlook relevant evidence.
- iv. Be willing to change your mind in the face of new evidence.
- v. Stay away from wishful thinking.
- vi. Be objective and open-minded.
- vii. Be cautious of beliefs that serve your own self-interest.
- viii. Acknowledge your lack of knowledge.
- ix. Be on the lookout for egocentrism, prejudice, and other cognitive biases.
- x. Draw logical conclusions with caution.
- xi. Make your decisions based on reliable, well-supported evidence.
- xii. Maintain a level of consistency.



- xiii. In the quest of knowledge, be curious and enthusiastic.
- xiv. Make clear and accurate decisions.
- xv. Look into any statements that you are concerned about.
- xvi. Seek for perspectives that are different from your own.
- xvii. Appreciate constructive critique.
- xviii. Your assumptions should be questioned.
- xix. Consider the consequences of your beliefs.
- xx. Stick it out through tedious or tough mental tasks.
- xxi. Stand firm in your convictions despite peer pressure, mockery, or intolerance.

### ***Exercise Common Sense***

The Bible has a lot to say about plagues, and we can draw counsel from the word of God as to how we should respond to the current situation where the fear of COVID-19 has become the beginning of wisdom (Stilley, 2014). As Christians, what should be our ethical responds to God's faithfulness at a time like this? What should we personally do about the current crisis? When Satan persuaded Jesus to jump from the temple, Jesus responded by quoting Deuteronomy 6:16. "You shall not tempt the Lord your God," Jesus declared (Luke 4:12). To try or challenge God by doing something so dumb is to force God's hand. The moment believers do something to prove God, they are proving that they are not confident of God. Trust never uses deception to determine whether or not the person being trusted is trustworthy. It is one thing to take a courageous step of faith in obedience to God; it is quite another to do it for one's own gain, as Satan offered. In Numbers 13, when Israel arrived in Kadesh-Barnea, God gave them the country (Num. 13:2) and commanded them to possess it. Caleb and Joshua insisted that the twelve spies obey God and enter Canaan courageously when they returned from their search. Because God had commanded them to do so and promised to be with them, doing so would have been an act of faith. When the country opted not to trust God and perform what He had ordered them to do, it was an act of unbelief. When God stated they would not enter the Promise Land (Num. 14:22-30) and they tried to do so on their own, the same behavior became presumption, not faith. That was disastrous (Num. 14:39-45).

In John 8, the Jews gathered stones to hurl at Jesus in an attempt to kill Him. The response of Jesus was intriguing. He had the potential to perform a miracle. He has the ability to paralyze those individuals. He could have easily killed them. What exactly did He do? He went



into hiding. He got away by slipping through the mob. Something similar happened in Paul's life when the authorities attempted to arrest him. He took action that was quite realistic. In a conversation about humility, Paul told the story including how he escaped (2 Corinthians 11:33).

God could have done something more spectacular, surely. No, Paul was to employ the practical means at his disposal in this circumstance. The idea is that, in the absence of a supernatural directive to the contrary, one should just use caution. We should not act in presumption. Presumption is driven by subtle pride. Faith acts in humble obedience. Sometimes one should be guided by common sense.

### ***Stay Informed***

It does not take a lot to cause a panic. It takes even less for people to fall into fear or turn to their own self-preservation. Right now, we are seeing a lot of reactions, and not all reactions are positive or even rational. The present situation is a medical emergency, and there are many people around the world who are sick and suffering. Ignorance and complacency are deadly, but so can terror, and our reaction to a pandemic can be just as deadly as the disease itself (Ryan, 2020). That is why Christians can help by seeking out accurate information from medical organizations like your nation's Covid-19 control team and WHO and only sharing facts and truthful information, not more hysteria or misinformation through social media or word of mouth (Phil. 4:8; Prov. 11:14) (Harrington, 2016). This is a medical crisis, but a world living in fear is also a spiritual crisis. After all, no one benefits from a confused, fearful, and self-centered world more than Satan.

### ***Exercise Fearlessness***

While the world lives in fear, Christians should look to the peace and power of God and be the living the hope found in His name. Faith can be an antidote to fear, and nothing strengthens a believer's faith like the promises of God that says that believers should fear not because He is always with them (Isa. 31:10).

### ***Exercise Compassion for Others***

As mentioned before, a global pandemic like the corona virus impacts more than just our physical health and well-being (Mishra, Togneri, Tripathi & Trikamii, 2017). To reduce the



spread of the virus, most event centers, sporting arenas, and public gatherings have been temporarily closed and their events canceled or postponed. While this may feel extreme, canceling or postponing large public gatherings, even ones we enjoy, dramatically reduces the number of people who will be exposed to the corona virus in the coming months. In doing so, lives will be saved. Our personal comforts and entertainment may be restricted or put on hold, but not going to choose places is a small price to pay for the health and safety of others around the world, even those we have not met. Christians who whine about all the things they have to give up at this season while others suffer are not demonstrating the love and compassion of the Jesus they claim to follow (Rom. 12:15). Believers should not look out only for their own personal interests, but also for the interests of others and have the same mentality in yourself that Christ Jesus had(Phil. 2:4-5).

### ***Exercise Prudence***

Christians should be considerate and not buy more than they require when prepared to sacrifice for the sake of others. While it is wise to plan for the future (Proverbs 6:6-11) Christians should not hoard things that are sorely needed elsewhere. The sorts of shortages we've witnessed in our neighborhood in recent weeks are the result of "panic purchasing" and stockpiling. Christians can help in a circumstance like this by:

- i. Avoiding the purchase of breathing masks. Surgical masks are required for doctors and nurses to adequately treat sick patients, particularly those infected with the corona virus.
- ii. Whenever possible, washing their hands with soap and reserving hand sanitizer for nurses, first responders, and trauma centers.
- iii. Saving bottled water for those who do not have immediate access to clean running water.
- iv. Baby wipes should be saved for babies. Cleaning and sanitizing one's home can be done in a variety of ways.

### ***Donate to Save Lives***

With most schools shut down and many businesses closed, a lot of people are out of work for the foreseeable future, and many parents, who would normally be working, are now forced to stay home to take care of their children. Shutdowns and temporary quarantines have had an unintended effect on the financial stability of families and the well-being of the children in them. In many cities, schools provide the only meals children get each day and with parents forced to



stay home from work, things can get even tougher for families struggling to make ends meet. So, in this circumstance, Christians can do the followings:

- i. Be generous and give to families in need.
- ii. Donate money to help children and fund shut-down schools.
- iii. Pray for Congress to pass more legislation guaranteeing paid sick leave for families out of work.
- iv. Ask about the needs of your neighbors and go out of your way to meet them (Peteet, Zaben & Koenig, 2019).
- v. Turn to out-of-work parents, artists, performers, and educators for childcare and other jobs.

### ***Associate with the Body of Christ***

Christians should stay in touch with fellow believers and encourage them by text messages, phone calls, and even Facebook or Skype, even if they are unable to meet in person in their customary buildings or in small groups. Thankfully, there are still many resources available, the greatest of which is prayer. The Apostle Paul was often prevented from meeting with churches and believers in person. This did not stop him from writing to fellow believers or praying for them from where he was (Rm. 1:8-11). Today, believers have the same spiritual resources available to Paul and even in more communications resources.

### ***Exercise the Power of Prayer***

There are many ways to react to a public health crisis like the corona virus. But in this season, Christians have the power to do more than react. Now is the time for Christ's followers to truly go on the offensive and unleash the power of prayer.

### ***Exercise Hope and Trust***

While the corona virus may impact our health, our economy, and our very way of life, we serve a God who is bigger and stronger than any sickness, fear, darkness, or weapon of the enemy, and He has a plan (Jer. 29:11). God is a healer (Ps. 30:2), provider (Phil. 4:19), and King (Ps. 47:7). To a sick and terrified world, believers should be the church, the light and love of Jesus Christ.



## Further Charge to Christians

Believers' spiritual conditions should be in good order if they wish to enjoy resting in God's peace in the mist of epidemics and pandemics. God's guidance, protection, and enablement are enjoyed by the child of God who has his mind on the Lord's will, who considers how the Lord feels about his life (Philippians 1:27) and thoughts (1 Corinthians 2:16) (Spence-Jones, 1999). Christians who dwell in the Lord's shelter are at home where God reveals His will, and they return to the Lord when the world perspective and devil's falsehoods tempt them to live outside of God's purposes. They familiarize themselves with the call God has placed before them and give it a real effort to work over what the Lord has entrusted to them as stewards. Christians have not only admission, but also residency, since they live under God's provision and protection, resting and enjoying His refuge indefinitely.

God is the one to look to when living through an epidemic or pandemic. He rules over all, He is the only true God who is above all, having the power to control and guide the government in all the decisions needing to be made as well as implementing the plans which have been set in place. He is all-powerful, capable of providing everything needed to develop a therapy, as well as to empower caregivers and individuals who are affected. He has the ability to provide wisdom to the medical community, businesses that have been harmed, and all those whose lives have been interrupted or relocated. To those who ask, he promises wisdom (James 1:5). While resting on all of His promises, He can prepare His church to minister to all who are in need. He is omnipresence, present even if the earth cannot perceive Him (Anderson, 1996). The Lord's eyes are everywhere, keeping watch on the evil and the good (Proverbs 15:4). God cannot be stopped from functioning in the midst of humanity by unbelief or spiritual coldness (Acts 17:27) (Puchalski, Ferrell, Virani, Otis-Green, Baird, Bull, *et al.*, 2009).

Under the prevailing circumstance, the followings are imperative for believers:

- i. Trust in Christ as your personal Savior and Lord.
- ii. Seek God for His guidance, protection and favor.
- iii. Ask the Lord what He wants us to learn in this trial.
- iv. Ask the Lord to bring this country to repentance.
- v. Ask God to give wisdom to our government.



- vi. Ask God for a cure.
- vii. Ask God to guide our medical research teams, give strength to all caregivers and protect them.

## Conclusion

In unsettling times, such as a pandemic just as humanity is experiencing today, one can find peace in the presence of God. He is the only one who can effectively prevent the contagious epidemic of fear. Nonetheless, we live in a broken world that keeps us stepping cautiously from one catastrophe to the next. Every day appears to bring a new threat: a viral pandemic, new flu strains, Ebola, recessions, earthquakes, tornadoes, tsunamis, floods, fires, or any other natural calamity, as well as the threat of foreign countries attacking us. Then there are our own financial, physical, relational, health, and personal crises that often catch us by surprise and strike terror into our hearts. As circumstances spiral out of human control, they feel helpless. Three points stand out when it comes to the Bible's teaching on God's faithfulness. To begin with, this trait of God is frequently associated with His gracious promises of salvation, and it is one of the characteristics that distinguish God as a firm and secure object of religious confidence. The religious importance of God's faithfulness is highlighted, as it is in all of Scripture's teaching about God.

Second, coupled with the so-called incommunicable traits like as Omnipotence, Omnipresence, and immutability, the so-called moral traits, of which this is one, are required to make God the focus of religion. If you take away either of these traits from God, He ceases to be God, the object of religious adoration and faith. Third, while these moral traits, which include loyalty has been dubbed "communicable" in order to distinguish them from the "incommunicable" traits that distinguish God from all that is finite. It is important to remember that, according to the Bible, God is faithful in such an absolute sense that He contrasts Himself with human beings who are faithful only in a relative sense, and who appear to be fickle and faithless in comparison to God's faithfulness.



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