

Detailed Notes: COV001

My personal reflections on COVID-19 pandemic 10.4.20

Dear brethren,

Thank you for praying for me in my preparation to share with you on the theme: **Going through this period meaningfully**

The main thrust of what I am sharing are things **very important to the Lord** – that He wants His children to understand and be convicted and committed to

- relevant throughout our time on earth
- not just during this period.

I would appreciate your **prayers** together with me

- that what the Lord wants to say to us may reach our hearts as well as our minds
- clearly, meaningfully and effectively.

We know the **COVID-19** pandemic is very serious, with far-reaching implications – worldwide:

Health: huge numbers infected/many dying/died – going on unabated - health care systems are stretched, and some find it overwhelming - may not be able to cope.

Economic implications: world economy plummeting/national economies seriously disrupted, going downhill – heading in the direction of worldwide recession, many companies, businesses cannot function properly, many have difficulty keeping afloat, many going bankrupt or simply not viable to carry on – if not for massive governmental intervention and huge injection of funds.

Far reaching Social implications: with the world economy plummeting and business shutdown - many

unemployed/underemployed - many more may lose their jobs; significant travel restrictions, schools shutdown.

With social distancing, millions unable to go about life as usual – stay home, lockdown – are terms many keep hearing.

COVID-19 pandemic has been described as **unprecedented, global**, most serious global crisis since WW2.

Where is it heading?
How long will it last?

Important questions to ask:

What does it all mean?

What is the Christian, biblical perspective?

How should we view what is taking place?

How can we go through this period meaningfully?

We know:

- God is sovereign
- God has allowed what is taking place

- There are many indications we are living in the Last Days and nearness of Second Coming of Christ
 - COVID-19, climate change, various calamities, famines and earthquakes, tsunamis, wars/conflicts, false teachings, false prophets
 - COVID-19 is not the first pandemic
 - and may not be the last.

The Lord Jesus tells us in:

Matthew 24:6–7,11

6 “You will be hearing of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not frightened, for those things must take place, but that is not yet the end.

7 “For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and in various places there will be famines and earthquakes.

11 “Many false prophets will arise and will mislead many.

God is sovereign does not mean He is pleased with all that is taking place in this world

- The **lifestyles** of many are very displeasing to God
- many grow up immersed in a culture of preoccupation with material wealth, indulgence in the desires of the flesh, exaltation of self-confidence, personal ambitions, fame, pride, arrogance, promiscuity, godlessness

What is abhorrent to God e.g. LGBTQ (**Rom. 1:18,26,27; 1 Cor. 6:9-11**) lifestyle is being propagated, promoted as expressions of human right to choose the lifestyle one pleases

- nothing wrong - liberation

- ‘politically correct’ – stand of many in the news media
- any comments, stand against it is more than frowned upon – dismissed as narrowminded, bigoted, not respecting the rights of others
- especially in affluent ‘Christian’ countries – U.S.A., Europe...
- has actually crept into the church – even gay pastors and bishops in ‘Christian’ congregations.

The apostle Paul tells us in:

2 Timothy 3:1–5

1 But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come.

2 For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy,

3 unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good,

4 treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God,

5 holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power; Avoid such men as these.

Q1. In allowing COVID-19 and other calamities to take place,

is God trying to communicate something to mankind?

Q2. Is God seeking to accomplish something?

I will now share some of:

My reflections – on the basis of biblical revelation and looking to the Lord to understand what is going on

Answer is: Yes – to both questions.

1. God has important things He wants to communicate to mankind
 - urgent need to repent and change
 - **before it is too late.**

God is a God of compassion, mercy and grace

- but the Scriptures also tells us that the unrepentant and those who harden their hearts will face the wrath and judgement of God.
2. There are positive things God wants to bring about/accomplish
 - which are far more significant than all the terrible things that have been taking place all over the world
 - and what looms ahead
 - but it is not good news for all
 - not all will emerge from it all better off.

How man responds to what God wants to bring about and accomplish is crucial.

Note:

- God has different things He wants to say and different things He wants to bring about in different groups of people, different countries
 - and in the lives of different individuals
 - **tailored specifically for each individual.**

Two broad categories

- The world/trends in the fallen world, unbelievers
- Believers

The world/trends in the fallen world

There is a need to pause – there is time/opportunity to pause and consider/reflect

- many things are not going on well.

What is wrong?

What needs to change?

There is urgent need for reversal of the serious negative trends in society

E.g. LGBTQ issues

greed, covetousness and preoccupation with material wealth, personal ambitions, fame, pride, arrogance, self-confidence, promiscuity
godlessness.

Unbelievers

God does not want any to perish but for all to come to repentance: **1 Pet. 3:9**

- salvation through repentance and faith in Christ.

Believers should **pray** that unbelievers - in the midst of the terrifying things taking place and what looms ahead

- may pause and reflect over:
 - What is the meaning of what has been taking place?
 - What is the meaning of life?
 - Is life all about making money, confidence in the strenuous efforts to keep oneself healthy and wealthy?
- they can all disappear so quickly and in their place: fear, worry, sense of helplessness, hopelessness and anxiety.
- Is there more to life?

- Can there be true, abiding joy, fulfilment, peace and security?
- Is there true meaning and richness of life that transcends the visible, temporal realm?

Let us **pray earnestly** for all unbelievers to be receptive to what God has to say to them:

Repent and find the true meaning and fullness of life which God has provided for us in Christ – in God's kingdom.

Let us be sensitive to God's leading and opportunities to speak to/in any way help unbelievers move in that direction.

Believers

What has been taking place in this world, especially COVID-19, **can help believers to be more conscious of the times we are living in** – many indications we are nearing the Second Coming of Christ

- **need to concentrate on what truly matters**
- **what is of eternal value and significance**
- the things of God's kingdom
- seek first the kingdom of God
- rather than preoccupied with the material, visible, temporal world

- not to be distracted by the affairs of this life
- not to succumb to the attacks and temptations of the evil one

- not to be complacent

- need to be more earnest in **seeking God**
- deepening our knowledge of God and His ways
- **what is in His heart**
- **His plan and purposes** and how He wants His purposes to be accomplished

- **the role of the church**
 - the part He desires us to fulfil
 - be strong in the Lord
 - **committed** to Him and His will
 - **participate effectively** in the outworking of God's purposes
- in our **personal** lives and together in **church life**

Our context

- We are thankful that over the years **the Lord has been pleased to show us what has been in His heart** before the foundation of the world and **how He desires His purposes to be accomplished**
- Let us make good use of this period to **equip ourselves** and be more ready to live well for Him
- Each one of us **seeking** the Lord and **deepening** our personal knowledge of Him and commitment to Him
- lay a **good, strong foundation**
 - **in the Lord and in the truths He has revealed in the Scriptures**
- **good grasp** of the foundational truths
 - the resources are available
- **Deeply convicted and committed** to what He has shown us
- **the centrality of the role of effective outworking of church life** in the fulfilment of God's purposes
- **how church life ought to function**
- **commitment** to work at it
- **God's work must be done in God's way, with God's enabling**

→ **not easily deterred, distracted** or in any way **succumb** to the wiles and attacks of the evil one

- **equipped**, ready for what lies ahead
- to face difficult, challenging times.

Our goal is not just to be able to survive

- keep our nose above the water
- but **fare well and fulfil the part God desires of us** in the advancement of God's kingdom
- there are far-reaching implications of eternal significance.

Concluding remarks

The evil one and the forces of darkness are actively at work during this period – to promote fear, worry, anxiety, misery, frustration and destruction.

God's people must learn to take our stand

- to submit to God - and resist, counter the attacks and wiles of the evil one.

We need to pray to God for protection and ask Him to help us discern the attacks and wiles of the evil one

- and how to counter them.

Beyond that, we want to fare well and participate effectively in the fulfilment of God's purposes.

God is sovereign and kind – **but it does not mean all will emerge better off**

- the appropriate response on our part is crucial.

Strong affirmations of **faith** in God is not meaningful

- unless it is grounded in **appropriate response** to sound understanding of the **truths** God has revealed in the Scriptures.

Not all **assurances** to allay our fears and anxiety are helpful. Sometimes they can be detrimental to our spiritual health

- when they are not grounded in truth.

Recently, during this COVID19 pandemic, I happen to come across a video clip on the internet - showing the preaching of a well-known preacher - who declared that on the basis of the assurance from God in the Scriptures:

"no virus can come near you".

Interestingly, he quoted from the same psalm the evil one quoted from - in his temptation of the Lord Jesus recorded in Matt. 4. He draws large crowds and his preaching/teaching influence many.

Two key areas to work at so that we can **emerge stronger** after COVID-19:

- **A good, strong personal foundation** in the Lord and in the truth
- **A good grasp, understanding, and commitment to the outworking of church life** as revealed in the Scriptures

When these two areas are going on well, it will provide a conducive context and framework within which all the positive areas that are important to God can flourish – including:

- meaningful expressions of love and worship of God
- continuing growth in moral and spiritual stature and increasingly conformed to the image of Christ
- effective prayer
- good fellowship
- service truly pleasing to God

- increasingly meaningful expressions of church life
- functioning in the way God desires of us.

Let us **commit ourselves** to spend our time meaningfully in this direction - towards fulfilling these goals during this period

- as the Lord desires of us
- **each one and together** in the outworking of church life.

As we do so, we can meaningfully affirm **Rom. 8:28**

- that God causes all things to work together for good
- to those who love God and are committed to work out God's purposes - as He desires of us.

In fellowship,
Kou