

## **Detailed Notes: COV003**

### **The danger of a false sense of well-being and security**

22.5.20

Dear brethren,

#### **This period is a helpful time for men to pause and reflect**

What are we striving for in life?

What should we be striving for?

What is truly valuable?

What is the meaning of life?

Many things people in this world hold dear, take so long and strive so hard to work towards, attain - can be threatened, seriously eroded, disappear

- health, business, career, wealth, reputation, status in life → sense of helplessness, hopelessness.

#### **Some basic questions**

1. Is life so fragile?
2. During our time on earth, can men lay strong foundations and build on things that cannot be shaken and will endure?
3. Are we subject to circumstances and events beyond our control that can hurt and harm us and even destroy our lives?

The tiny, little virus seems to tell us the answers to the three questions are: yes, no and yes.

Not only non-believers may feel this way

- even Christians may feel this way
- fear, worry, anxiety

- no true sense of peace, security and well-being.

On the other hand, there are professing Christians who say it should not be this way – this is not consistent with the truth – and they wrongly think they can have joy, peace, security and well-being – because they trust God and God's promises in the Scriptures

- even more so when they have been doing many things expected of Christians
- attending Christian meetings – worship service, prayer meetings, fellowship meetings, praying, reading the Scriptures, giving...

They may have a **false sense of peace, security and well-being** – often facilitated by what they have been taught, what they read – including exhortations they hear during this period

- many professing Christians like to hear such messages
- have faith in God – trust God – the answer to and resolution of all our fears, worries and anxiety
- and claim our peace, security and well-being which the Lord has promised us
- there are many verses/passages that seem to say so.

Note

There is a false sense of peace, security and well-being that the Scriptures tells us can be harmful and damaging to our lives – **relevant to non-Christians and Christians.**

I now wish to consider with you the issue of

**the danger of a false sense of well-being and security**

- the false sense that all is well
- when in reality it is not so
- when there is significant lack of spiritual health, life and vitality
- the Lord is not pleased
- the people may even be facing the impending judgement and wrath of God.

Such false sense of assurance can be contributed by the sense that being God's people, there will be God's abiding love, presence, security and well-being and a future to look forward to.

It is a major issue of deep concern as we approach nearness of the Second Coming of Christ

- but this is not a new issue
- it was an issue in N.T. times
- the Lord Jesus and the apostle Paul addressed this issue.

It has been a lively issue throughout church history

- it is a significant issue today
- will be increasingly relevant as we approach the Second Coming of Christ.

**What I am sharing is relevant for our own lives,**

(the underlying principles are relevant to different ones in different ways)

**and also can help us understand and discern what is going on, and how to pray meaningfully for the people of the world, professing Christians and the universal church.**

When I use the expression **professing Christians**, I am referring to those who consider themselves Christians

- they may or may not be born again
- they may or may not be in God's kingdom.

Even during **O.T. times, various prophets addressed this issue – as an important issue**

**Jer 6:13,14** context: v.8-15

**Jeremiah 6:8–10, 12-15**

**8** “Be warned, O **Jerusalem**, Or I shall be alienated from you, And make you a desolation, A land not inhabited.”

**9** Thus says the LORD of hosts, "They will thoroughly glean as the vine the remnant of Israel; Pass your hand again like a grape gatherer Over the branches."

**10** To whom shall I speak and give warning That they may hear? Behold, their ears are closed And they cannot listen. Behold, the word of the LORD has become a reproach to them; They have no delight in it.

**12** "Their houses shall be turned over to others, Their fields and their wives together; For I will stretch out My hand Against the inhabitants of the land," declares the LORD.

**13** "For from the least of them even to the greatest of them, Everyone is greedy for gain, And from the prophet even to the priest Everyone deals falsely.

**14** "They have healed the brokenness of My people superficially, **Saying, 'Peace, peace,' But there is no peace.**

**15** "Were they ashamed because of the abomination they have done? They were not even ashamed at all; They did not even know how to blush. Therefore they shall fall among those who fall; At the time that I punish them, They shall be cast down," says the LORD.

### **Jer 6:13,14**

Even religious leaders - priests and prophets not faithful  
- in life and preaching/teaching

'Peace, peace' (Shalom) i.e. well-being and security

- promoting/enhancing false sense of well-being and complacency
- not conducive for true repentance
- but there is no peace
- instead there will be judgement and punishment:  
**v12,15**
- the people and the prophets.

## Similar words and meaning in the following passages

### Jeremiah 8:10–11

**10** “Therefore I will give their wives to others, Their fields to new owners; Because from the least even to the greatest Everyone is greedy for gain;  
From the prophet even to the priest Everyone practices deceit.  
**11** “They heal the brokenness of the daughter of My people superficially, Saying, ‘Peace, peace,’ But there is no peace.

### Jeremiah 14:13–16

**13** But, “Ah, Lord GOD!” I said, “Look, **the prophets** are telling them, ‘You will not see the sword nor will you have famine, but I will give you lasting peace in this place.’ ”

**14** Then the LORD said to me, “The prophets are **propheying falsehood in My name**. I have neither sent them nor commanded them nor spoken to them; they are propheying to you a false vision, divination, futility and the deception of their own minds.

**15** “Therefore thus says the LORD concerning the prophets who are propheying in My name, although it was not I who sent them—yet they keep saying, ‘There will be no sword or famine in this land’—by sword and famine those prophets shall meet their end!

*(preachers and teachers will face a stricter judgement)*

**16** “**The people** also to whom they are propheying will be thrown out into the streets of Jerusalem because of the famine and the sword; and there will be no one to bury them—neither them, nor their wives, nor their sons, nor their daughters—for I will pour out their own wickedness on them.

## Failure to expose iniquity

### Lamentations 2:14

Your prophets have seen for you

False and foolish visions;

And **they have not exposed your iniquity**

So as to restore you from captivity,

**But they have seen for you false and misleading oracles.**

## **Ezekiel 13:10**

“It is definitely because they have misled My people by saying, ‘Peace!’ when there is no peace. And when anyone builds a wall, behold, they plaster it over with whitewash;

Before the land was conquered and the people exiled, there was a false sense of well-being and security amongst the Israelites because they were God’s people and the various outward forms and activities were in place.

They looked forward to the Day of the Lord as they observed the various festivals, temple worship, sacrifices and offerings.

In that context the Lord sent **Amos** with a devastating message directly contrary to their **false expectations**.

### **Amos 5:18, 21–24**

**18** Alas, you who are longing for the day of the LORD,  
For what purpose will the day of the LORD be to you?  
It will be darkness and not light;

*(// looking forward to the Second Coming of Christ without proper basis – the apostle John exhorts us to abide in Christ so that we can have proper basis for confidence and not shrink away in shame at His coming: 1 John 2.28)*

**21** “I hate, I reject your festivals,

Nor do I delight in your solemn assemblies.

**22** “Even though you offer up to Me burnt offerings and your grain offerings, I will not accept them;

And I will not even look at the peace offerings of your fatlings.  
*(not wrong in themselves)*

**23** “Take away from Me the noise of your songs;  
I will not even listen to the sound of your harps.

**24** “But let justice roll down like waters

And righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.

*(what God was looking for – heart right, life right)*

God was displeased because  
**their hearts/lives were not right.**

Context: **v.10,12,14**

### **Amos 5:10–14**

10 They hate him who reproves in the gate,  
And they abhor him who speaks with integrity.

11 Therefore because you impose heavy rent on the poor And exact a tribute of grain from them, Though you have built houses of well-hewn stone, Yet you will not live in them; You have planted pleasant vineyards, yet you will not drink their wine.

12 For I know your **transgressions** are many and your sins are great, You who distress the righteous and accept bribes And turn aside the poor in the gate.

13 Therefore at such a time the prudent person keeps silent, for it is an evil time.

14 **Seek good and not evil**, that you may live; And thus may the LORD God of hosts be with you, Just as you have said!

Their **false confidence** and sense of security and well-being because they were God's chosen people, dwelling in the promised land in the midst of which was the temple was shattered by God's judgement

- land conquered, plundered, taken over, temple destroyed, many killed or exiled.

Ponder: **the 'unthinkable' has happened.**

What can we learn?

The Scriptures are written for our instruction.

The problem has persisted over the years.

### **During New Testament times**

There were the **scribes and Pharisees**

- the religious leaders of the day
- their false sense of righteousness and spirituality
- and false confidence in their religious observances
- their long prayers, fasting, tithing and 'knowledge'

- but in reality they were under the wrath of God
- on whom the Lord Jesus pronounced woes
- and described them as whitewashed tombs
- poor examples and negative influence
- for which they will be held accountable.

**Significance of the issue is heightened as we approach nearness of the Second Coming of Christ**

- with reference to which the apostle **Paul** wrote:

**1 Thessalonians 5:2–6**

**2** For you yourselves know full well that the day of the Lord will come just like a thief in the night.

**3** While they are saying, “Peace and safety!”

then destruction will come upon them suddenly like labor pains upon a woman with child, and they will not escape.

**4** But you, brethren, are not in darkness, that the day would overtake you like a thief;

**5** for you are all sons of light and sons of day.

We are not of night nor of darkness;

**6** so then let us not sleep as others do, but let us be alert and sober.

**v.3:** ‘While they are saying...’

‘they’ can refer to people of the world, nominal Christians, those who profess to be believers but never experienced new life in Christ.

What Paul is saying is also relevant to believers whose hearts have been drawn into the world

- all who have a false sense of well-being and security
- but in reality they are not ready to meet the Lord.

**v.4- 6:** But you brethren..... should not be like that

- do not sleep but be alert and sober.



## **Pay heed to the words of the Lord Jesus**

‘However, when the Son of Man comes, will He find **faith** on the earth?’: **Luke 18:8**

True faith important – not just activities and outward forms

- not just professions of the lips
- true faith means living out the truths revealed in the Scriptures
- true faith implies healthy relationship with God
- obedience to God
- key issue → faithfulness – to God and the will of God.

‘most people's **love** will grow cold’: **Matt 24:12**

What God looks for:

quality of love: for God, man, truth

- moral issue – condition of our heart.

**In the context of testing, trials, difficulties and pressures, the true quality of love and life of a person is revealed.**

Who will pass the test?

Not those whose lives merely appear to be good outwardly but those who have developed **true inward qualities**.

Believers - especially in the last days - need to hearken to **the words of the Lord Jesus to the church in Sardis**

- issue relevant not just at personal level but corporately
- whole congregation can be affected – generally.

### **Revelation 3:1–6**

**1** “To the angel of the church in Sardis write: He who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars, says this:

‘I know your deeds, that **you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead.**

**2** ‘**Wake up**, and strengthen the things that remain, which were about to die; for I have not found your deeds completed in the sight of My God.

**3** 'So remember what you have received and heard; and keep it, and repent. Therefore if you do not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what hour I will come to you.

**4** 'But you have a few people in Sardis who have not soiled their garments; and they will walk with Me in white, for they are worthy.

**5** '**He who overcomes** will thus be clothed in white garments; and I will not erase his name from the book of life, and I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels.

**6** 'He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.'

**v.1:** deeds, name that you are alive but dead – appear to be doing well – even to others – outward appearance

- but in reality not so – dead – spiritually dead.

Note: **spiritual deadness or life the key issue.**

- not just whether there is life but how much/quality
- we need to **nurture our spiritual life**
- **in the Lord and in the truth**
- we can find this kind of spiritual life in the Lord Jesus:  
**John 1:4**
- we need to continually draw life from Him and grow in Him by abiding in Him and He in us: **John 15:4-5**

→ **true peace, security, well-being and fruitfulness.**

**v.2:** Wake up – need to wake up – from spiritual complacency

- from false sense that they were alright, doing well.

'**Wake up**' – this 1st step of recognition and acknowledgement they are not alright is crucial and needful before corrective measures in verses 2 and 3 can properly take place

→ proper outworking.

**v.3:** they have been taught, learned in the past

- but not working out in reality - from the heart – with life
- failure to keep what they have been taught.

Perhaps at one time they were working out but failure to persevere.

**Q: Is this true of any one of us?**

- heard, understood but poor in outworking
- in heart, life and reality.

**Complacent?**

- check it before it degenerates further
- we may have responded well to the Lord in the past but no longer true – yet still in state of complacency.

**Note:**

**It is very helpful and important to learn much truth**

- sound, wholesome understanding of the truths
- grounded in what God has revealed in the Scriptures
- on the basis of which we can exercise true faith
  
- but in the end what is crucial is not how much truth we have heard or understood but to what degree we have absorbed them into our hearts and faithfully living out the truth
- to what degree truth is being manifested in our lives and worked out in our lives.

1<sup>st</sup> need to recognise, acknowledge, where we have failed, our deficiencies – wake up.

Then - repent and take corrective steps

- and live out the truth.

**Make sure we are not living under a false sense of peace and well-being** - not consistent with the true state of affairs

- serious matter.

**Warning:** Therefore if you do not wake up...

- not all will heed the Lord's call to wake up

'Come like a thief' alludes to 2<sup>nd</sup> Coming.

**v.4:** Not all in the church of Sardis were like that

- having a name that they are alive but dead:

'you have a few people in Sardis who have not soiled their garments; and they will walk with Me in white, for they are worthy'.

**v.5: encouragement – to overcome**

- with spiritual, eternal, heavenly implications
- all can respond well to the call to overcome.

**v.6:** 'He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches'

- **important to hear well – pay heed – serious matter.**

I will end this sharing with these words of the Lord Jesus:

**Rev. 3: 5-6**

**5** 'He who overcomes will thus be clothed in white garments; and I will not erase his name from the book of life, and I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels.

**6** 'He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.'

**The resources are available to enable us to live an overcoming life.**

May the Lord help each one of us to go through this period meaningfully - and equip us to live overcoming lives

- at a personal level and together in the expression of church life.

In fellowship,  
Kou