

Corona Crisis – A Call to Turn Back to God!

By Dr. Lothar Gassmann, Pforzheim (Germany)¹

Jesus Christ predicted that in the last the days, there will be all kinds of plagues and catastrophes. He said in Luke 21:9–11,²

“But when you hear of wars and commotions, do not be terrified; for these things must come to pass first, but the end will not come immediately.” Then He said to them, “Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be great earthquakes in various places, and famines and pestilences; and there will be fearful sights and great signs from heaven.”

It will be a time when humanity will become even more godless. Many will think only of themselves and their pleasure. Unbelief, anti-biblical heresies and anti-Christian laws will increase and spread.

Many Christians have long been asking themselves: *With these developments that Jesus describes, how long will God remain silent? How long will He bear with the blasphemy of His holy Name and the disregard of His commandments?*

Has God’s patience ended now?

The year 2020 began with huge bushfires in Australia and terrible swarms of locusts in Africa. Then followed the worldwide spread of the coronavirus Covid-19.

The fear of the spread of this certainly dangerous virus has led almost worldwide to measures, as we have never seen since World War II: assemblies banned, schools closed, lock-down, massive paralyzation of economies.

The ban on assemblies also affected public worship – something that has never been before in this way, even in times of war.

Corona – this word represents a crisis never experienced before in our generation! At the same time, many Christians consider it to be a time of God clearly speaking in the last days, a clear (perhaps final) call to repentance. This is my view, too.

But I believe there is also good news: *This crisis can also become an opportunity* – at least in three ways:

1. An opportunity for our people and the peoples of the world
2. An opportunity for our families
3. An opportunity for evangelism and Christian mission

¹ This article is based on a livestream sermon on 29 March 2020, when the Corona pandemic paralyzed public life almost worldwide and triggered a gigantic, worldwide economic crisis.

² All Bible quotations are taken from the New King James Version as given on www.biblegateway.com.

1. An Opportunity for Our People and the Peoples of the World

Our Holy God says in 2 Chronicles 7:13–15,

“When I shut up heaven and there is no rain, or command the locusts to devour the land, or send pestilence among My people, if My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land. Now My eyes will be open and My ears attentive to prayer made in this place.”

This is what God said to King Solomon in about 950 B.C. at the dedication of the Temple in Jerusalem. But I believe this message from God is also valid for *every* time in history, even for us today!

God sends judgments such as drought, locusts and epidemics, so that people may be urged to search their souls, reflect on and recognize their wrong ways, and turn to the living God. If they do so, God will be merciful to them. If they do not, then God’s judgment will continue until complete destruction.

Repeatedly God sent prophets who called the people of Israel to repent. As a climax, He sent His Son Jesus Christ, who on Calvary gave His life on the cross to atone for our sins.

Whoever repents and turns to God and in faith accepts Jesus Christ into his heart trusting in Him as Savior and Lord, he will be saved. But whoever rejects Jesus Christ and His work of redemption through His death and resurrection will be eternally lost.

Even today, the call to repentance resounds in power and clarity. Recently, a neighbor told me over the fence – and I did not know whether he was a believer: “God has allowed this plague to happen because people refuse to regard him.” “Very true!”, I agreed.

Currently, many are thinking about how quickly life can change, and they wonder what might be the driving forces behind the crises that are coming so quickly. Conspiracy theories are spreading; they may contain a grain of truth, or even much truth, but they should not be blindly accepted, just as with discernment one should keep up with official reports in the news.

*As Christians, we have a fixed standard on which we can rely – the Bible, the Word of God. When reading the Bible, we can see Jesus Christ as the living Word of God. Whatever we experience now in these end times is foretold in the Bible. The Bible tells us that it will become even worse, when the judgments of the seals, trumpets, thunders and bowls of wrath break loose on the world.*³

But even in the midst of these very last judgments, the call of God resounds:

*“Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come; and worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water.”*⁴

Will the people in our country and in the other countries of the world hear this call, and take heed of it? Even the politicians, judges, economists and journalists who, through godless politics, anti-Christian laws, the chasing for more and more money and power, and manipulative reporting have led our country to the edge of the abyss? Or will the Word of God in Revelation 9:20–21 be fulfilled now:

³ The Bible: Revelation, chapters 6–19.

⁴ The Bible: Revelation, chapter 14, verse 7.

But the rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands, that they should not worship demons, and idols of gold, silver, brass, stone, and wood, which can neither see nor hear nor walk. And they did not repent of their murders or their sorceries or their sexual immorality or their thefts.

May the Lord God grant that many more people will turn to Him, the living God of the Bible, and receive Jesus Christ, the Son of God, into their hearts as their Lord and Savior!

May God grant that the godless laws of the last months, years and decades be repealed, such as the almost complete abolition of abortion and active euthanasia in our country, the permission of blasphemy, pornography, drug abuse, idolatry, occultism and so-called “marriage for all.” If such is revoked, then God will perhaps once again be merciful to our country and people and withhold His judgments!

Meanwhile, many are calling for the (re)introduction of a Day of Repentance and Prayer for our country. I fully agree; yet *every* day of our lives should be a day of repentance and prayer!

Let us all – personally, every single one – be prepared to encounter the living God any time. This can be achieved by letting our hearts be cleansed by the blood of Jesus Christ and by following Him in faith and obedience.

2. An Opportunity for Our Families

The Corona crisis is also an opportunity for our families. Some of us may ask: “How is that?”

Well, in these days (March 2020) public life has been almost completely paralyzed. In many countries, people have been urged or even required by their governments to stay home to avoid infection. Meeting with strangers, even with relatives, is very limited now. People are spending all their time almost exclusively with their own family.

We have never had such a situation before! How are we going to make use from it?

I said to my wife and to our children in their late teens: „See, it can be very tiring to be together so closely all the time without contact with other people. But it may also be an opportunity! It depends on how we handle it.“

The first few days with the family only were unusual, but also a good training ground for living together.

Upon the first family “crash,” we summoned a family council, prayed, and then openly addressed all the problems we saw. Each one of us said what they wanted to improve – and afterwards it *really* got better! We are not drifting apart in this crisis, but, as a family, we are growing together even more.

I wish the same for all other families. Pray together and talk to each other! Work through all the questions and problems that may have been swept under the carpet for a long time! Now you have a lot of time to, as a family, get to know and love each other better.

But what about those who are alone and have no family? It would be good for such people to know friendly people with whom they can keep contact. Especially within Christian churches! No one should be lonely and abandoned.

And if someone gets ill, we want to take care of him. Even if you are not allowed to enter the house or apartment because of the danger of infection, you still can leave outside the door something helpful, e.g. food, medication, or a book that strengthens one's faith. Please do not forget our old and sick neighbors!

Above all, let us pray for each other and not leave our church family, even if, due to assembly bans, currently they are only available on livestream, telephone or email. The pews or chairs in our churches are empty, but in Jesus Christ, as a church we are all connected with each other.

3. An Opportunity for Evangelism and Christian Mission

The Corona crisis is also an opportunity for mission and evangelism. Never are people more open to the gospel than in times of crisis. Now we have a time of crisis such as never has been seen since World War II, with many people fearing death and with drastic restriction on private life.

Many people are now asking themselves: *What is the point of my life if everything is collapsing so fast? Why does God allow epidemics and catastrophes? Where will I go after death?*

Due to the bans, church meetings, public outreaches and evangelistic campaigns are currently not possible. But what is possible and required is the passing on of the Good News of Jesus Christ from one to one. This can be done by telephone or Internet – and by giving out good Christian tracts or leaflets in your neighborhood (personally, or in mailboxes if local laws permit) and beyond.

People are seeking answers and guidance – and who should give it to them, if not we Christians?!

We have the Bible, God's Word, and in it we ourselves find vital information. It is our privilege to pass it on to our neighbors also.

Dear brothers and sisters: *Do not be silent now, but speak up! Pass on the gospel of God's saving love in the ways that are currently possible. The Lord bless you as you do so!*

Summary

The current Corona crisis is an opportunity for our people, for our families, and for mission and evangelism.

Pray for our people, that many individuals – and especially those in positions of responsibility – will turn to God again, asking Him for forgiveness, and that this will result in changes to the godless laws.

Pray for our families, that by coming together again more closely we may grow together into a community of love.

Pray for evangelism and mission, that we not forget the people around us but tell them the Good News of salvation through Jesus Christ right now.

May God bless you and keep you! Yours, Lothar Gassmann www.L-Gassmann.de

Where Can I Find Help from Fear of Corona?⁵

Let me explain briefly, why I am not afraid of the Corona virus and other epidemics and where I find help.

I am now over 60 years old and therefore belong to the particularly vulnerable risk group. Nevertheless, I am not afraid of Corona.

“Why not?” you may ask.

Well, of course I observe the general rules of conduct: I am careful, and like any reasonable, conscientious person, I do everything to avoid infecting others and myself! I stick to the rules of hygiene, wash my hands, keep distance etc. This I recommend to you as well!

But what if I get “Corona” anyway?

Then I know that my life is in God’s hands! I will die not one day earlier than God allows. It is in God’s hand whether I get well again or whether He calls me home to Heaven for eternal fellowship with Him.

About Heaven, the Bible says: *And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.*⁶

Jesus Christ, the Son of God, says: *“In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.”*⁷

When I was 18 years old, I made a conscious decision to trust in Jesus Christ. I asked Him to forgive me all my guilt and sins and come into my life as Lord.

Since then, Jesus Christ has dwelt in me by His Holy Spirit and I am His child. Day by day, I follow Him and I serve Him.

He holds me firmly by His hand and He has promised to bring me to the goal, to His heavenly glory, if I remain faithful to Him.

The Bible tells us God’s promise: *For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*⁸

Therefore, no virus, no disease and no death can separate us from this love of God if we belong to Jesus Christ and continue to trust in Him!

That is what I am counting on. In this, I trust in health and in sickness, in life and in death.

Dear reader, do you have this hope, too? Do you know where you will go after you die? To Heaven or to Hell? To the place of eternal joy or to the fire of eternal torment?

No one can be saved and go to Heaven by their own efforts. Each one needs the forgiveness of sins and the purification of heart available only through God’s Son, Jesus Christ.

⁵ The German original is available free of charge for distribution on PDF and as print: www.lukas-schriftenmission.com.

⁶ The Bible: Revelation, chapter 21, verse 4.

⁷ The Bible: Gospel of John, chapter 16, verse 33.

⁸ The Bible: Letter to the Romans, chapter 8, verses 38–39.

I beg you too, please grasp the outstretched hand of God! He wants every person to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth. Make a conscious decision to trust in Jesus Christ today!

How to do that? Jesus is still knocking on the door of human hearts and wants to be let in. If you agree, then say, “Yes, Lord Jesus, come into my heart.” Confess to God your sins and your failures. Trust that He died on the cross for your sins and rose from the dead to give you eternal life. Receive Jesus Christ into your heart and He will give you a renewed spirit. Through faith in Him, you will find true meaning in life and will be able to experience security in all situations of life, even in the midst of epidemics and catastrophes.

The Bible says: *For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.*⁹

You may receive Jesus Christ into your heart by, for example, saying the following prayer seriously and from all your heart:

“Dear Lord Jesus Christ! Until now, I have lived without You. I am afraid. I do not know where I will be after death. But now I trust in You, in Your work on the cross and in Your resurrection. Cleanse my heart from all sin and impurity. Forgive my sins. Come into my life through Your Holy Spirit. Give me security, so that I do not need to be afraid in the midst of the catastrophes of this world and know for certain that after death I will enter Your wonderful Kingdom of Heaven. With Your help, I will serve You all my life. Amen.”

What next:

Read the Bible, God’s word, every day.

Pray to God in the name of Jesus Christ.

Look for a Bible-believing church in your area where God’s Word is taught as the highest authority.

God bless you!

Dr. Lothar Gassmann

www.L-Gassmann.de

⁹ The Bible: Gospel of John, chapter 3, verse 16.