

## Covid-19 and Sin

Welcome back. It is good to be in the same place and to see one another again, even though things are clearly different than before this pandemic took place. Now that we have begun assembling, where do we start?

During our time apart, I have tried to present lessons that help us as we deal with the covid-19 pandemic. Hopefully, these have been encouraging during these trying times. So today, as we begin assembling together again, I want to present another lesson that addresses what is happening. This is a lesson I have borrowed from Joshua, my son. He presented this the first Sunday the brethren in Johnson City, Tennessee began assembling together as well. It deals with some lessons we can learn from this virus as it relates to sin. Because of time limitations, I may present a second lesson next week. So let's get started.

### I. This virus is like sin

- a. Many terms can be used to describe it - dangerous and bad, and it can be deadly. It does widespread damage, is difficult to control and even more difficult to stop. The effect that it has is unpredictable – with anything from the symptoms of a mild flu to severe respiratory problems that can even lead to death. It lingers on in many.  
Also, consider that how you react can affect others – both physically and in so many other ways. In fact, in one way or another, this virus has affected EVERYONE.  
Furthermore, you need help to get rid of it when you catch it.
- b. Sin is equally dangerous and deadly. It is a plague in your life that will kill your soul - Romans 6:23. IT will result in separation from God and if not taken care of it has eternal consequences.  
But it also has human and worldly consequences – consider the ugliness we see around us because of sin – violence, criminal activity, hateful attitudes, filthy words, men hating and abusing each other, etc. Sin has done so much damage throughout every age of history, even now. JUST LIKE this virus has impacted the whole world, so has sin.
- c. Sin impacts us all - AND just as this virus has impacted EVERYONE in some way, so sin has impacted us all. In fact, everyone of an accountable age has sinned (Romans 3:23, 1 John 1:8, Galatians 3:22 – the scripture has confined all under sin) and as such is due the consequences of his actions.
- d. Its effect is unpredictable –We don't know where this virus is or even if we have it until it begins doing its damage.  
The same is true with sin. While many sins are evident, others are subtle. You never know how sin is going to impact you. It may be a momentary lapse that you take care of and move on, or it may result in lasting consequences. Sin can be deceptive, just like this virus. Romans 7:11, Hebrews 3:13.
- e. We need to take care of our sins – just as we need to take care of covid-19, when (and if) we get it OR as society in general, so we need to take care of sin in our lives.  
And we have at our disposal, everything we need to take care of our sins:
  - i. We have God's word (Romans 1:16, 2 Timothy 3:15). Therein we find all we need to know about sin and how to take care of it.

- ii. We have the sacrifice of Jesus – this is God’s part in our salvation. Ephesians 2:8. Revelation 1:5 – Jesus washed us from our sins in His own blood. Titus 2:14 speaks of how He gave Himself for us that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people.
  - iii. We have obedient faith – our response to God’s grace (Ephesians 2:8-9). While God has done His part, we must come in contact with His blood by obeying the gospel – Romans 6:3-4, Galatians 3:27, Acts 2:38 – remission of sins, etc. AND, even when we give into sin as Christians, we need to take care of those sins – 1 John 1:7-9.
- f. Thus in diseases like this, we can see how helps us better understand sin.

## II. How do we prevent sin?

- a. This virus requires various measures to prevent and deal with it. Sometimes drastic, while others involve lifestyle changes for the foreseeable future. We’ve been introduced to new terms like **social distancing, sheltering in place, quarantine and flattening the curve**, etc. AND we are being asked to wear masks, limit personal contact with others, order takeout and frequent sanitization.  
In our assembly, you can see that we have taken several measures to minimize the potential for getting this disease. We are following guidelines that permit us to lawfully assemble. There is great debate over how much we should be doing and whether we are going “overboard” and frustration by many over the rules put in place, and that is fine – good discussion is healthy, provided it is done in a godly and respectful way. As Christians, when possible, we need to follow the law whether we like it or not (cf. Romans 13:1-7, 1 Peter 2:13-17 – LET’S READ THIS).  
This is all done with a realization that this disease is serious, and we are hoping to stop or at least contain it by taking these measures. The goal is cleanliness
- b. Take steps to prevent sin – This is a major emphasis of the New Testament.
  - i. **As Christians, we are to be separate.** When you become a Christian, you have put off the old man of sin and are now a new creation. We are no longer walking as we used to (1 Corinthians 6:9-11, 1 Peter 4:1-3 – we no longer live the rest of our time in the flesh fulfilling our lusts and have spent enough of our past lifetime walking that way, but no more!)
  - ii. **We are not to put ourselves at a disadvantage with the world** – 2 Corinthians 6:14-17. This means we avoid places and things that might tempt us to sin. Ephesians 5:11 calls for us to have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness... Consider the context leading up to this in Ephesians 5:1-11, esp. vs. 7 – do not be partakers with them.  
Ephesians 6:10-18, esp. vs. 10-13 – we need to arm ourselves so that Satan cannot
  - iii. **Avoid that which tempts you** -There are groups that are more susceptible to getting this virus (the elderly, those with underlying health conditions, etc.) and thus they must take extra precautions because of the increased danger of death.  
With Christians, we must give beware of those things that tempt us and avoid them. Most of us have some sort of weakness that we need to overcome.

Paul told Timothy, to flee youthful lusts (2 Timothy 2:22).

Matthew 5:29-30 – take drastic measures to get better and remove the cancer of sin.

Put on the Lord and make no provisions for the flesh – Romans 13:12

**Don't take sin lightly** - many take the danger of this virus lightly or believe that we are overreacting or think it should be handled differently. Many who do this will get away with that and avoid contracting the virus.

BUT, we can NEVER the case with sin, we cannot be flippant about sin. If we toy with sin, it WILL catch you. That is why we take measures to avoid temptations.

- c. The need for cleanliness to prevent sin – Christ gave Himself to redeem us and purify for Himself His own special people (Titus 2:14)

One of the ways we prevent sin is by living pure lives. Biblical purity is continually emphasized –

James 4:8 we are called upon to purify our hearts and souls (1 Peter 1:22)

1 John 3:3, because of the hope we have of being with and like our Lord, we purify ourselves even as He is pure. And of course, we are to have a pure heart ( Matthew 5:8, 1 Timothy 1:5, 2 Timothy 2:22).

**God has always demanded purity** – the book of *Leviticus* was written to describe how Israel would be pure for God. The priesthood was to be pure, and the people were to live pure and separate lives.

Friends, this is the key to preventing sin from taking over our lives.

- d. AND do not forget, that when we DO sin – we take care of those sins – Just as you would take steps if you go the virus to get better, so when we have sin in our lives, we take whatever steps we need to, to get rid of it - 1 John 1:7-9, Acts 8:22.

And thus we can see how sin is like this virus in many ways. But the virus is temporary and in time will pass. And for most, even if we catch it, it will run its course and we will move on with our lives (though for some it is deadly or does permanent damage).

But not so with sin, IF we do not take care of it, it WILL lead to eternal condemnation and it will NOT go away. That is why we MUST take care of our sins. If you have not done so, let me urge you to take care of them today. If you have not named the name of Jesus, surrender to Him right now. Or if you returned to a sinful life, repent of that and be restored to Him. We are here to help you in any way that we can. Think about it.

