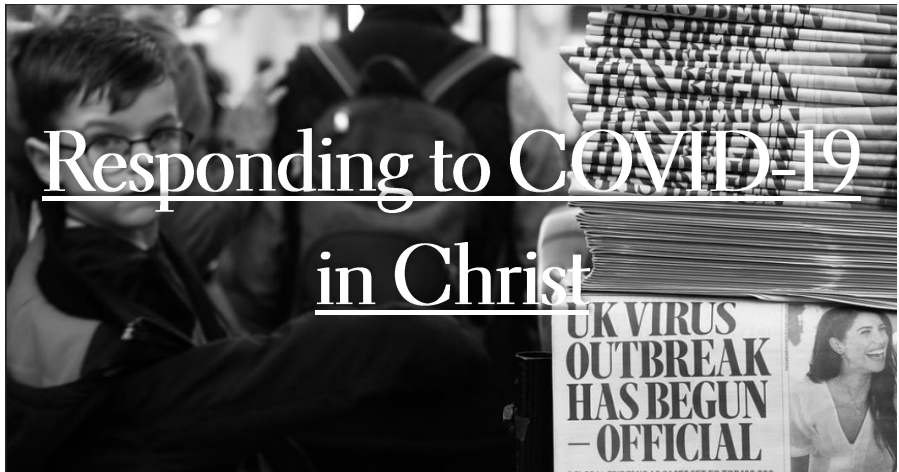
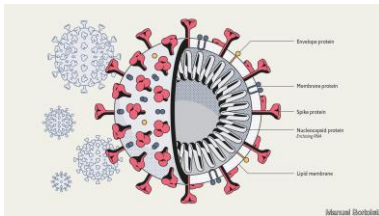




Responding to COVID-19 in Christ

SARS-CoV-2

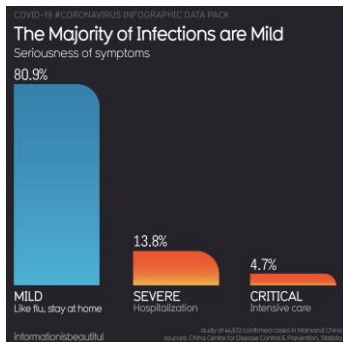


Emerged in humans in China in 2019

Causes Covid-19

As of March 12th there are 125,000 confirmed cases of Covid-19 worldwide, 80,981 of which are in China.

4600 worldwide deaths, 3173 in China .



AGE	DEATH RATE confirmed cases	DEATH RATE all cases
80+ years old	21.9%	14.8%
70-79 years old		8.0%
60-69 years old		3.6%
50-59 years old		1.3%
40-49 years old		0.4%
30-39 years old		0.2%
20-29 years old		0.2%
10-19 years old		0.2%
0-9 years old		no fatalities



A Theology of COVID-19...

Death is an enemy...

When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come along with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in spirit and troubled. “Where have you laid him?” he asked.

“Come and see, Lord,” they replied.

Jesus wept.

Then the Jews said, “See how he loved him!” – John 11:33-35

...yet death is inevitable.

War threatens us with death and pain. No man – and specially no Christian who remembers Gethsemane – need try to attain a stoic indifference about these things; but we can guard against the illusions of the imagination...What does war do to death? It certainly does not make it more frequent; 100 per cent of us die, and the percentage cannot be increased. It puts several deaths earlier; but I hardly suppose that that is what we fear. Certainly when the moment comes, it will make little difference how many years we have behind us...Yet war does do something to death. It forces us to remember it. The only reason why the cancer at sixty or the paralysis at seventy-five do not bother us is that we forget them. War makes death real to us; and that would have been regarded as one of its blessings by most of the great Christians of the past. They thought it good for us to be always aware of our mortality. I am inclined to think they were right.’ C.S. Lewis, *Learning in War-time*.





Idols cannot save... but God is Sovereign.

'I form the light and create darkness, I bring prosperity and create disaster; I, the Lord, do all these things.' Isaiah 45:7

'Ignorant are those who carry about idols of wood, who pray to gods that cannot save...' Isaiah 45:2

'... there is no God apart from me,
a righteous God and a Saviour;
there is none but me.
"Turn to me and be saved,
all you ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is no other.' Isaiah 45:22



**The
Heidelberg
Catechism**

27. Q. What do you understand by the providence of God?
A. God's providence is his almighty and ever present power,¹ whereby, as with his hand, he still upholds heaven and earth and all creatures,² and so governs them that leaf and blade, rain and drought, fruitful and barren years, food and drink, health and sickness, riches and poverty,³ indeed, all things, come to us not by chance⁴ but by his fatherly hand.⁵

¹Jer 23:23, 24; Acts 17:24-28.

²Heb 1:3.

³Jer 5:24; Acts 14:15-17; Jn 9:3; Prov 22:2.

⁴Prov 16:33.

⁵Mt 10:29.

28. Q. What does it benefit us to know that God has created all things and still upholds them by his providence?
A. We can be patient in adversity,¹ thankful in prosperity,² and with a view to the future we can have a firm confidence in our faithful God and Father that no creature shall separate us from his love;³ for all creatures are so completely in his hand that without his will they cannot so much as move.⁴

1.Job 1:21, 22; Ps 39:10; Jas 1:3.

2.Deut 8:10; 1 Thess 5:18.

3.Ps 55:22; Rom 5:3-5; 8:38, 39.

4.Job 1:12; 2:6; Prov 21:1; Acts 17:24-28.

... therefore, we have an Eternal Hope

'Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade. This inheritance is kept in heaven for you, who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time.' 1 Peter 1:3-5

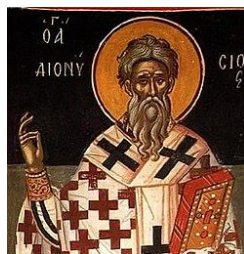


'We account paradise our country, we have already begun to look upon the patriarchs as our parents. A great number of our dear ones there await us, parents, brothers, children; a dense and copious throng longs for us, already secure in their safety but still anxious for our salvation. How great a joy it is both for them and for us in common to come into their sight and embrace! What pleasure there in the heavenly kingdom without fear of death, and with an eternity of life the highest possible and everlasting happiness. . . . there the glorious choir of apostles, there the throng of exultant prophets, there the innumerable multitude of martyrs wearing crowns on account of the glory and victory of their struggle and passion . . . the merciful enjoying their reward who have performed works of justice by giving food and alms to the poor, who in observing the precepts of the Lord have transferred their earthly patrimony to the treasures of heaven!' Cyprian, *On Mortality*

... which means we can love without fear.

For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline. 2 Tim 1:7

"Most of our brother Christians showed unbounded love and loyalty, never sparing themselves and thinking only of one another. Heedless of danger, they took charge of the sick, attending to their every need and ministering to them in Christ, and with them departed this life serenely happy; for they were infected by others with the disease, drawing on themselves the sickness of their neighbors and cheerfully accepting their pains. Many, in nursing and curing others, transferred their death to themselves and died in their stead. . . ." Dionysius of Alexandria

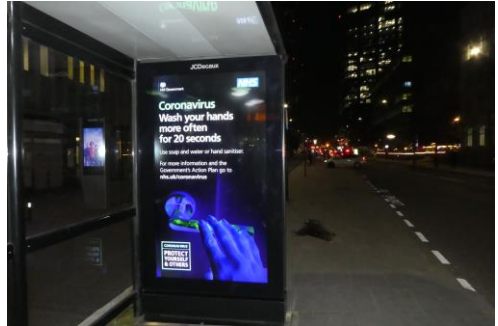




What does love look like in the face of COVID-19?

“Of all the commandments, which is the most important?”

“The most important one,” answered Jesus, “is this: ‘Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’ The second is this: ‘Love your neighbour as yourself. There is no commandment greater than these.’” Mark 12:28-31



- Worship
- Pray
- Prevent
- Isolate
- Care

‘God has created medicines and provided us with intelligence to guard and take good care of the body so that we can live in good health. If one makes no use of intelligence or medicine when he could do so without detriment to his neighbour, such a person injures his body and must beware lest he become a suicide in God’s eyes. It is even more shameful for a person to pay no heed to his own body and to fail to protect it against the plague the best he is able, and then to infect and poison others who might have remained alive if he had taken care of his body as he should have. He is thus responsible before God for his neighbour’s death and is a murderer many times over. No, my dear friends, that is no good. Use medicine; take potions which can help you; fumigate house, yard, and street; shun persons and places wherever your neighbour does not need your presence or has recovered, and act like a man who wants to help put out the burning city.’ Martin Luther *Whether One May Flee from a Deadly Plague*

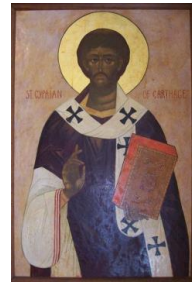


It is possible to die well in Christ.

Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints. Psalm 116:15

For I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time for my departure is near. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day—and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing. 2 Tim 4:6-8

‘Beloved brethren, with sound mind, with firm faith, with rugged virtue, let us be ready for every manifestation of God’s will; freed from the terror of death, let us think of the immortality which follows.’ Cyprian, *On Mortality*



‘When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. Then he placed his right hand on me and said: “Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last. I am the Living One; I was dead, and now look, I am alive for ever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades.” Revelation 1:17-18

How can we use the Coronavirus outbreak to grow closer to God?

How can we love our neighbour well over the next few months?

How can we prepare for the possibility of self-isolation, physically, mentally and spiritually?

How can we demonstrate our hope to our friends and neighbours around us?



Notes

1. On Jordan's stormy banks I stand,
And cast a wishful eye
To Canaan's fair and happy land,
Where my possessions lie.

2. All other those wide extended plains,
Shines one eternal day;
There God the Son forever reigns,
And scatters night away.

Chorus: I am bound (I am bound)
I am bound (I am bound)
I am bound for promised land,
I am bound (I am bound)
I am bound (I am bound)
I am bound for promised land.

3. No chilling winds nor poisonous breath
Can reach that healthful shore;
Sickness, sorrow, pain and death,
Are felt and feared no more. (Repeat
chorus)

4. When shall I reach that happy place,
And be forever blessed?
When shall I see my Father's face,
And in His bosom rest? (Repeat chorus)

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Prayer List

Psalm 121

A song of ascents.

¹I lift up my eyes to the mountains —
where does my help come from?

²My help comes from the LORD,
the Maker of heaven and earth.

³He will not let your foot slip —
he who watches over you will not slumber;

⁴indeed, he who watches over Israel
will neither slumber nor sleep.

⁵The LORD watches over you —
the LORD is your shade at your right hand;

⁶the sun will not harm you by day,
nor the moon by night.

⁷The LORD will keep you from all harm —
he will watch over your life;

⁸the LORD will watch over your coming and
going

both now and forevermore.