

**Be sensible, be spiritual**  
by Jerry Wells, Entrust, South Carolina

The coronavirus COVID-19 has invaded the world and infected us all mentally, if not physically. As the pandemic has dominated our news, it has tended to dominate our minds, a domination that easily breeds fear and even panic.

**How should we as followers of Christ respond to this real and present crisis?**

Martin Luther's world of 1527 was engulfed in plague; he offered this word of practical advice.

*Very well, by God's decree the enemy has sent us poison and deadly offal. Therefore I shall ask God mercifully to protect us. Then I shall fumigate, help purify the air, administer medicine, and take it. I shall avoid places and persons where my presence is not needed in order not to become contaminated and thus perchance infect and pollute others, and so cause their death as a result of my negligence. If God should wish to take me, he will surely find me and I have done what he has expected of me and so I am not responsible for either my own death or the death of others. If my neighbor needs me, however, I shall not avoid place or person but will go freely ...*

*--"Whether One May Flee from a Deadly Plague," To the Reverend Doctor Johann Hess, pastor at Breslau, and to his fellow-servants of the gospel of Jesus Christ, Martin Luther*

**Who are you praying for just now, for protection?**

**Who else might God want you to pray for?**

**What do "fumigate, help purify the air, administer medicine and take it" look like for you these days, in practical ways?**

**What places is God calling you to "go freely" to, and what places is he calling you to avoid? Why? What are the benefits of obeying God in both scenarios?**

**Who might be your neighbor "who needs" you in this time?**

Hudson Taylor's China Inland Mission faced a crisis of another sort in the 1800s. Their flourishing work of evangelizing the interior of China was under threat of collapse. His colleagues were frantic and feared for the worst. Yet their leader was entirely at peace, going calmly and faithfully about his ministry. How could he be so calm? His answer:

*It doesn't matter, really, how great the pressure is; it only matters where the pressure lies. See that it never comes between you and the Lord—then, the greater the pressure, the more it presses you to His breast.*

“Hudson Taylor’s Spiritual Secret,” p. 127

**Just now, in what direction is the coronavirus pressing you?**

God intends it to press us more closely to himself where he can keep us in his “perfect peace” and where we can find grace to live practically, faithfully and fruitfully.

*But as for me, the nearness of God is my good;  
I have made the Lord GOD my refuge,  
That I may tell of all Your works.*  
Psalm 73:28

*Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace,  
whose mind is stayed on thee:  
because he trusteth in thee.*  
Isaiah 26:3

