

Abraham and Jonah. We must pray for God's mercy upon this city, and bring peace upon this city through our prayers and testimony.

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Fourth Baptist Church

I believe this is the command of God calling those of us living in Wuhan. We are to seek peace for this city, seek peace for those who are afflicted with this illness, seek peace for the medical personnel struggling on the front lines, seek peace for every government official at every level, seek peace for all the people of Wuhan! And we can through online networks guide and comfort our friends and loved ones with the gospel, reminding them that our lives are not in our own hands, and to entrust their lives to God who is faithful and true.

The past few days I have received many inquiries from foreign pastors. They and the whole church are concerned for this city, even more for us; and confronting this epidemic, seek to serve the city with us.

Thus, I especially ask them to turn their eyes upon Jesus. And do not be concerned with my welfare, nor be agitated or fearful, but pray in the name of Jesus. Good hearted people are through their actions serving this city, especially the medical personnel who are risking their own lives. If they can take on such worldly responsibilities, how can we not more readily take on spiritual responsibilities!

If you do not feel a responsibility to pray, ask the Lord for a loving soul, an earnestly prayerful heart; if you are not crying, ask the Lord for tears. Because we surely know that only through the hope of the Lord's mercy will this city be saved.

A Wuhan Pastor
January 23, 2020

Pray in this Way

2 Thessalonians 3:1-5

How do we pray for missionaries and fellow believers around the world?

- I. Pray that the _____ will spread _____ (1).
- II. Pray that _____ will be _____ (1a, 2).
- III. Pray that _____ will stand _____ (3-5).

Brothers and sisters, peace be upon you:

During these past days the Wuhan pneumonia [virus] has been at the center of my thoughts and life. [I am] always watching the latest news, and always thinking about how our family and the church should face this.

As for family, I have gathered masks and foodstuffs and have ventured out of doors as little as possible. When venturing out in public I have worn a mask, but as for the rest, I have placed it in the Lord's hands.

As for the church, the safety of the congregation, a faithful witness, the possibility that members could contract the illness, have all become a great area of struggle. It is readily apparent that we are facing a test of our faith.

The situation is so critical, yet [we are] trusting in the Lord's promises, that his thoughts toward us are of peace, and not evil (Jeremiah. 29:11), and that he allows for a time of testing, not to destroy us, but to establish us. Therefore, Christians are not only to suffer with the people of this city, but we have a responsibility to pray for those in this city who are fearful, and to bring to them the peace of Christ.

First, we are to seek the peace of Christ to reign in their hearts (Hebrews 3:15). Christ has already given us his peace, but his peace is not to remove us from disaster and death, but rather to have peace in the midst of disaster and death, because Christ has already overcome these things (John 14:27, 16:33). Otherwise we have not believed in the gospel of peace (Ephesians 6:15), and, with the world, would be terrified of pestilence, and lose hope in the face of death.

Why do only Christians have this peace? Because of sin, humans deserve the trials and tribulations that come upon them, Jehovah says: the wicked have no peace (Isaiah 48:22). We were all sinners, but Christ, because of faith, took our penalty and gave us his peace. Therefore Paul says, who can bring a charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies (Romans 8:33). Christians may with the world face the same tribulations, but such tribulations are no longer punishment, but a new opportunity to grow nearer to the Almighty, to purify our souls, and an opportunity to proclaim the gospel.

In other words, when disaster strikes us, it is but a form of God's love. And, as Paul firmly believed, "who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger or sword? . . . in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loves us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 8:35-39).

Spoken for today, Wuhan's pestilence cannot separate us from the love of Christ; this love is in our Lord Jesus Christ. These words are so comforting for us, we have already become one body with Christ. We have a part in his sufferings, and we have a part in his glory, all of Christ's is ours, and our all is Christ's. Therefore, Christ is with us as we face the pestilence in this city; the pestilence cannot harm us. If we die in the pestilence, it is an opportunity to witness to Christ, and even more to enter into his glory.

Thus, my brothers and sisters, I encourage you to be strong in Christ's love. If we more deeply experience death in this pestilence, understanding the gospel, we may more deeply experience Christ's love, and grow ever nearer to God. Our Lord Jesus through faith experienced an incomparable suffering of death, yet God raised him from the dead, and sat him at his right hand (Acts 2:32-36).

If in reading these truths you still have no peace, I encourage you to diligently read the above cited scripture and call on the Lord to give you insight until the peace of Christ reigns in your heart. You must know, that this is not just an observable disaster, but even more it is a spiritual struggle. You should first wage a battle for your heart, and secondarily battle for the soul of this city.

We earnestly hope that you would know that not a sparrow falls without the will of the Father (Matthew 10:29). With so many souls facing pestilence, can it be outside God's will? All that we are experiencing, is it not like Abraham facing Sodom, and Jonah facing Nineveh?

If God, because of a righteous man withheld judgment on Sodom, or because of 120,000 who didn't know their left hand from their right, withheld destruction, what of the city of Wuhan in which we live? We are clearly the righteous in this city, far more than a single righteous person there are thousands and thousands of us. Yet, may we like Lot be grieved over all those in this city (1 Peter 2:7), and like Abraham who earnestly prayed for Sodom (Genesis 18:23-33). You see, Jonah with difficulty proclaimed the gospel to Nineveh, and Nineveh repented and was saved. We are this city's