

# Theologically Reflecting on Coronavirus

March 18, 2020

What a unique moment in time for us. All of the cliches have been said, and after we've heard it all, we need to take time to reflect on what does this all *mean*? After all, that's what theology is about. It's about our account of who God is, what God is doing in our world, and what that means for us.

But that introduces some hard questions. Where is God in all of this? Do we classify COVID-19 in the same way as natural disasters? What is God up to in this time and what as the church do we have to say?

**As Reformed people we must turn to Scripture as our first instinct.** And when we turn there, we will find that the people of the Old and New Testament were very familiar with what we are going through. Disease was a common factor in life in the ancient world, especially in major cities. And the Bible has something of an ambiguous perspective on this. God is often seen as the cause of such things. Thank goodness I haven't heard the same kind of elementary theology from the fringes saying "God has done this because of this or that group's sin" as has happened in other times of natural disaster. But at the same time, can we simply give a message of comfort?

After surveying the texts of Scripture that deal with the realities of living with death and disease one passage stuck out to me. In Leviticus 14, God says that he will cause disease as a normal part of life, but the priests are required to deal with it anyway. As the Creator, God is in control. God is sovereign. God is not surprised. And we, as creatures, are subject to many forces outside of our control. Disease is an effect of sin, but it cannot be directly linked to personal or corporate sins without a special word from God. Often, it's just a fact of creaturely life. But God has a pastoral task for us regardless. Whether it is care for the ill (in appropriately protected/distanced ways), or care for those who will be,

But God doesn't just command us to do this, **our God leads from the front**. In Jesus Christ, God came to be with his people in the midst of their trials. Jesus suffered crucifixion and death. He cried over the death of his friend Lazarus. He healed many and gave hope. Jesus is our great shepherd, our king who leads by example. People in his day, as in our own, have every reason to have the fear of God in them. And yet, we serve a God who meets us in that fear and walks with us through it.

This is a time for the church to reveal the kingdom of God to the world, to take up the leadership in this. We do not fear as those who have no hope. In the face of financial ruin, the unknown, or even illness and death, we have confidence that God is not only on his throne, but also in our very midst, empowering us with the Holy Spirit to show a frightened world what the peace that passes understanding means.

ECO's theology teams will be updating this blog with further reflections in this time. I am impressed by so many creative ideas that are flowing in this time. Although some of us in smaller churches and church plants face real challenges to the future viability of our ministries and dreams, the creative ideas of how we can all sacrifice of ourselves is a great witness to the enduring power of the presence of the Holy Spirit among us.

Please subscribe to this page for updates, as we tackle questions of what being the church means when we cannot meet in person

Rev. Dr. Gregory Wagenfuhr,

ECO Theology Coordinator



PREVIOUS

**Live-Streaming Communion?**

© 2020 ECO THEOLOGY

5638 Hollister Ave Suite #210  
Goleta, CA 93117

(855) 326-3268  
[office@eco-pres.org](mailto:office@eco-pres.org)

ABOUT

STC Members  
Theology Task Force  
Members

PUBLICATIONS

Confessional Standards  
ECO Constitution  
Baptism  
Gender in Christ