

Engage

Thursday 18 March 2021

God, COVID-19 and us

Thinking Christianly about the pandemic

During these studies we have been looking at some of the questions raised by the COVID-19 pandemic and how, as followers of Christ, we respond. As a framework for our thoughts we will be using Tom Wright's book, *God and the Pandemic* (SPCK, 2020). For a brief introduction see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F7IToM-hFEo> or, if you have a bit more time, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mqV8igW9COg&t=237s>.

Listening to early Christians (Reading the New Testament)

Read Matthew 5: 3-12; Romans 8

1. It has been said that God always wants to work in his world through loyal human beings and this is part of the point of being made in God's image (Genesis 1:26–28). Why do you think that God wants us to participate in his mission?
2. Read John 20:21 and then discuss where you think Jesus is sending us today and what he expects us to do. Give specific examples of where and what Jesus expects us to go and do.
3. Read the Beatitudes (Matthew 5:3–12) and discuss how each blessing recounted by Jesus can serve to meet the needs that people may not have attended to.
4. Read Romans 8:37–39. Take a moment to contemplate God's love and take comfort in the promise that nothing can separate us from his love. Then, list out the worries and anxiety that you may be facing today. Once your list is made, read it aloud, knowing that nothing will be able to separate us from the love of God in King Jesus our Lord.
5. What is "the groaning of the world?" Why do you think that the world is groaning? Do you think that the pandemic is one of the ways that the world groans?
6. When the world is going through convulsions, the followers of Jesus are called to be people of prayer at the place where the world is in pain. How does Romans 8:22–27 help us to pray? Give specific examples of how we can pray for the world, as we share the same groaning.
7. Romans 8:28 states that in all things God works together with those who love him. You are a co-worker of a God who not only helps those who are suffering, but are also part of God's saving purpose for his suffering world. In what ways does this passage inspire you to participate in ministry, spend time in prayer and in God's word, and care for those who are marginalized?

Next time: A Christian response?