



# **THE LORD IS OUR COMPANION**

## *A Message from the Quorum of Twelve Apostles*

Over the past few months, our nation and the entire world have been living through a crisis caused by a disease known as the coronavirus. Much has been written and said about this disease – what caused it, how to prevent catching it, how to not help spread it, etc. So, it is not the intent of this article to provide further detail about this disease as the same information can be found elsewhere and it will be much more current than what is known at the time this article is being written.

Rather, we would like to share some counsel as to how to get through a situation such as this as the people of God – whether this crisis in particular or any similar one that may come in the future. Even in a situation as extreme as this has been, where we have found ourselves physically separated from each other, we can take comfort in knowing that God is with us. To paraphrase the psalm: The Lord is my companion, I shall not be alone.

### **The Righteous Need Not Fear**

No matter how bleak things may appear, we can be assured that God is in control of the situation. There is nothing that can occur that would be too much for God to handle. So, if you believe in God and you are serving God righteously, you have no need to fear.

By saying that “the righteous need not fear” (1 Nephi 22:17), are we saying that anybody who serves God will not get the disease or be affected by whatever the crisis is? No, each of us is living in the flesh so we’re all subject to the perils of life and some number of us could possibly be affected. In fact, it is worth noting that the declaration to live without fear is made in the midst of expounding latter-day prophecies concerning Israel and God’s plan to resolve unrighteousness. As Saints, we should be aware and prepared for disruptions. However, we still don’t need to fear. Here’s why:

### **We are blessed with God’s protection**

Whether God chooses to preserve us in our mortality or to simply embrace our souls, we can be courageous through His power. When we are working for the Lord, we can be confident of His protection. For example, it’s been our experience that ministers

typically don't get sick as a result of anointing the sick. So, even as we observe the recommendations and edicts of the government and health experts, we should not totally forget about the work of the Lord. Don't take unnecessary risks but don't live in fear either – God is with us.

### **We have an additional resource when we are sick**

If we happen to get sick, we usually have access to medical attention which helps the large majority of people to recover. God does work through doctors and medical staff, inspiring them with the knowledge they need to help people. However, beyond this temporal help, we can look to the Lord directly and seek healing from Him. “And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up;...The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much” (James 5:15-16).

### **Even in the worst case, we don't need to fear**

We of course don't want this to happen to any of us but, even if we were to be facing death, we wouldn't face it with “that awful fear of death which fills the breasts of all the wicked” (Mormon 6:7) but rather with the peace and confidence of knowing that we are on our way to the paradise of God (where we all hope to be someday).

### **The Work of the Lord Cannot Be Stopped**

The recent crisis has affected many businesses – some have had to close and some have had to lay off workers. As a result, many people are out of work. However, the Church remains open for business. Even while our physical meeting places are unavailable to us, the work of the Lord goes on because His spirit dwells within us – we are the temple of God, we are God's building (see 1 Corinthians 3, Alma 32).

It has been gratifying to see many branches of the Church using current technological tools to hold Sunday services and midweek scripture studies with everyone participating from their respective homes. Reports indicate that the attendance at these meetings has been very high. Many first-time visitors are even attending and being exposed to the restored gospel. So, the work of the Lord moves on, regardless of the circumstances, because God is with us.

In addition to attending virtual church meetings, there are other spiritual activities that we can be doing on our own. We often say we're “too busy” to do these types of things. So, when we have unexpectedly available time, let's be prayerful and allow the spirit of God to inspire us to continue with the work of the Lord within us. Here are some examples of spiritual activities that can be considered even while confined to our homes:

- Spend time in fasting and prayer
- Study a passage of scripture on your own or with your family
- Watch some faith-based or scripture-based movies

- Watch recorded sermons or scripture lessons
- Call some brothers and sisters on the phone to uplift them

Perhaps after doing any of the above or other spiritual activities on an extended basis, you may find a way to incorporate some of them into your regular schedule even when the crisis is over. You can be another example of the Lord accomplishing His work during a challenging time.

### **God Doesn't Want Us to be Alone**

At the beginning of the Bible, God created more than one person because He observed that "it is not good that the man should be alone" (Genesis 2:18). Although we typically use this verse in reference to marriage, it can also be applied generally to observe that people were not created with the intention that they would be totally alone in life.

While it's true we are never completely alone with the Lord as our companion, it should also be observed that God has given us each other so that we will not be alone. As a result, even though we have seen how we can function as a church without being physically together, we should not adapt to that as the new normal way of life.

Although we can hold a church service with everyone at home, we have seen that it is only a meager substitute for meeting in person. Although we can speak to each other and see each other with our electronic devices, it's not the same as being in each other's presence. When in-person church meetings resume (if they haven't already by the time this is published), we would encourage all to go and be a blessing to your brothers and sisters rather than adapting the more self-centered position of just personally receiving the preached message at home.

And, with all due respect to how the concept of "social distancing" appears to have slowed the spread of the coronavirus, that should not be the new normal either when the crisis is past. Especially when we are together in church, we should long to greet each other in the way we are accustomed to. If anything, we should be even more excited to see and greet each other after many weeks of being apart.

### **In Conclusion**

So, in the face of a threat such as this (or anything similar that comes in the future), be wise and take appropriate precautions but don't live in fear. Draw closer to God. The Lord is your companion so you're not alone. Feel His protection about you.

Continue in whatever work of the Lord you are called to do. God will bless our efforts regardless of the circumstances. Also, the way we live our lives in a time of crisis demonstrates who we are as people of God, allowing others to see that we have something that they should desire.

And finally, always remember that you are not alone. Not only is God with you but you are also part of the body of Christ in The Church of Jesus Christ. Embrace each other (figuratively and physically) as we work together to build the kingdom of God in the latter days.

In the Love of God,

The Quorum of Twelve Apostles

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