



CORNERSTONE

Friday, March 13, 2020

Dear Cornerstone Family,

“What seems like a crisis for us is an opportunity for Jesus.”

Two Sundays ago, that sentence was one of my points as I taught through John 2 where Jesus turned the water into wine. Little did I know that those words would become a truth we would all need to cling to immediately.

As you are likely already aware, we’re facing new opportunities and challenges with the spread of COVID-19 (also known as the Coronavirus). Across our country and around the world, travel is being limited, public gatherings are being canceled, schools are being closed, and unprecedented plans are underway to both get a handle on this crisis and prevent the further spread of this disease.

We wanted you to be aware of what Cornerstone Church is doing and what you can do too. Our response is not based upon fear, panic, or a rush to just do something. We’ve studied the best information we can find from trusted leaders at organizations like the Centers for Disease Control and the Arizona Department of Health. We’ve sought counsel from trusted leaders across the country and discussed options with the leaders of other churches in Prescott. We’ve prayed for clarity and peace.

We anticipate that this will be the first of several updates we provide you about how Cornerstone is responding to new developments related to the coronavirus.

We’ve got a top 10 list of things you need to know!

1. Be proactive with your own health.

- Review the CDC guidelines about what you can do to protect yourself and your family, including hand-washing, cleaning and disinfecting, avoiding touching your face, and use of face-masks.
- Do what you can to build your baseline of health like drinking lots of water, getting plenty of sleep, eating healthy, exercising, and taking any prescribed medicine.
- Practice “social distancing” and avoiding close contact with people who are sick.
- Educate yourself on the symptoms of COVID-19/Coronavirus, along with the latest information on the most vulnerable groups to the virus.

2. Make decisions based upon facts and your faith in Christ, not fear.

- The Bible calls us to seek wise counsel when making decisions. Make sure your counsel includes reliable, trustworthy news sources.

- Expect and beware of inaccurate information. False news spreads fast during these times.
- Remember, the words of Jesus to his disciples during the Last Supper. "I am leaving you with a gift—peace of mind and heart. And the peace I give is a gift the world cannot give. So don't be troubled or afraid." (John 14:27 NLT)
- Fear is not your friend, but facts are. Even if the facts mean things are getting worse in the short-term, we need to embrace the truth. There is bondage in fear, but freedom in truth.
- We often say we believe God is sovereign, all-powerful, and in-charge of world events. This is our opportunity to put those statements into practice in a meaningful way.

3. Do what is loving for others.

- The challenge now is not just to look out for ourselves, but also to look out for others.
- You might not be particularly vulnerable to this virus, but those you love and know might. Actions shouldn't be based upon what's best for you, but what's best for others.
- As followers of Jesus, we're not called to self-preservation, but self-sacrificing love. We're most like Jesus when we give ourselves away.
- Don't turn inward out of fear, but look around you for people who need comfort, encouragement, and practical help.

4. Get prepared.

- While there have been no confirmed cases of the virus in our community, that may change. It's always wise to be prepared for the unexpected, not only to care for your family and friends but also to be a source of generosity towards others.
- But, don't hoard. We're already experiencing shortages of items like toilet paper, hand-sanitizer, soap, and cleaning wipes. Take what you need but leave something for others, especially those who can't afford to be as prepared as you. If you have more than you need, then look for others who have needs and share generously.

5. Stay updated with Cornerstone Church's plans.

- Our team has been praying, talking, researching, and exploring options over the last 48 hours. We've consulted the best available information from the Centers for Disease Control and the Arizona Department of Health. We've talked to church leaders in our area as well as consulted with church leaders across the country.

-Based upon the information we've received and after much prayer, we've decided to cancel in-person gatherings for the next two Sundays.

-On March 15 and March 22, you are invited to stream our worship experiences at prescottcornerstone.com/live.

- This decision was made based upon our desire to participate in "flattening the curve" (click the link to learn more) as CDC leaders and medical experts have encouraged. Our decision was also made based upon our concern for those in our church and community who are most vulnerable to this virus based upon their age and pre-existing health conditions.

6. Connect with your community group and other Jesus-following friends.

- Our church is built upon over 35 community groups which gather to share life, apply what God is teaching them, and to care for one another in moments of crisis.
- If you're in one of those groups, and you're healthy, we encourage you to contact your group leader and consider meeting together as you would be normally scheduled to.

- We'll be providing specific direction to our group leaders during this time and continuing to equip them to lead you to apply what you're learning through our sermons each week.
- We are postponing our group launch which was scheduled for Sunday, March 22. We will be updating you once that launch is rescheduled.

7. Look for more information about other events and upcoming services.

-We will be suspending our student ministry programming on Wednesday, March 18 at our Rosser campus.

- We will announce plans for future worship services and other programming on Sunday, March 22 during our worship services.
- Make sure you're following us on social media and subscribed to our email list. If you'd like to join our email list, send us a note at contact@prescottcornerstone.com.

8. Give generously.

- While we may not be meeting in person, our mission continues both in Prescott and around the world. If you typically give via an offering bucket on Sundays, you can give online anytime at this link.
- I've asked Pastor Clovis who leads our Missions Team to look for opportunities for us to give generously beyond our normal patterns during this season.
- We're also reaching out to our local and global partners for specific updates about their situations, so we can pray and support them.
- As we have more information in these areas, we'll share that with you promptly.

9. Pray faithfully.

- For your own mental, emotional, and spiritual health.
- For your perspective to be shaped more by God's peace than the latest piece of breaking news.
- For God's kingdom to advance during this time.
- For our leaders - both the President and his advisors - but also the leaders through the federal, state, and local governments who are the front lines of this crisis response.
- For our medical professionals, first responders, and educators.

10. Expect God to move in powerful ways.

- Dr. Rodney Stark is an expert on church history. He has written extensively about how the early Christians saw their churches explode in number and impact by how they responded to an epidemic during the 3rd century A.D. The claims of Jesus Christ became so compelling to the Roman culture through the selfless service and sacrifice followers of Jesus offered, especially in places where people were fleeing out of fear.
- If what I began this note with is true - what seems like a crisis to us is often an opportunity for Jesus - then expect God to maximize this opportunity. We need to expect God to give his church a platform to make Jesus look really compelling. To help people who were once far from Him to come home. To open people up to a relationship with Christ who weren't before. To expose the sources we've looked to for hope and meaning for the empty promises they offer.

Special Invitation

I look forward to “seeing” you online this Sunday. We’re pausing our Signs & Wonders series and I’m currently writing a special message to address this opportunity. Please invite your friends and family to watch the service with you and learn about the practical ways we can be hope dealers and difference makers when those around us are checking out and freaking out.

If you have needs or want to reach our team, you can email contact@prescottcornerstone.com and one of our team will respond promptly.

Please share this message with your family and friends who call our church home, as they may not be receiving our email updates or following us on social media.

In the meantime, we love you. We’re praying for you. Together, we will take our next step towards Jesus and trust Him with what we know and what we don’t.

Because He’s worthy and He’s got this.

Grateful for all of you,

Scott Savage
Lead Pastor