

Wil Owens
A Christian View of Quarantine; Romans 13:1-7
GPBC
4.5.20

Introduction – A few weeks ago I preached a message titled “A Christian View of COVID 19”. Today, because of COVID 19, we look at a Christian View of Quarantine. Before COVID 19 I had never personally heard the phrase social distancing. It may have been out there somewhere, but I had never heard it. Today it is a common phrase in the entire world. Social distancing.

As you know our President and his task force have urged Americans to practice social distancing at least until April 30 to help stop the spread and decrease the fatality rate of the coronavirus. Our local, state, and national governments have requested that we only leave the house for necessary reasons and that no one meet in groups of more than 10. That means, our government is asking us as the church of the Lord Jesus Christ, not to meet together. By ordinance they have warned us not to meet together. And yet the Bible says we are not to neglect meeting together. If we don’t meet together through April 30, we will pass by the highest date on the Christian calendar without meeting to worship. Easter, the day we celebrate the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, will come and go with empty churches. What are we to do?

That’s why I thought we would do well to look to God’s Word today for a Christian view of quarantine. Here are 5 ways to respond with a balanced, biblical view of quarantine. Here’s what we’re going to do.

- I. Submitting to Our Governing Authorities
 - a. Read Romans 13:1.
 - i. The Bible is clear that God has placed governing authorities over us for our good, and we are doing good and honoring God when we submit to the authorities God has placed over our lives.
 - ii. When our government places restrictions on us for our good and the safety and well-being of others, we are to submit to them out of honor to the Lord.
 - iii. Keeping a distance of 6 feet from others, staying home as much as possible, not gathering in groups larger than 10 are all

meant for our good and the good of others. So as Christians, we obey.

- iv. We don't make excuses. We don't intentionally break these restrictions and put ourselves and others at risk just because we want to do something or we're bored. And we certainly don't twist the Scripture in order to justify our rebellion of God-given authority.
- b. Now with that being said, given almost any other context, we would not allow the government to tell the church we cannot assemble. If it's for public health and safety, that's one thing; if it's because of our beliefs and doctrine, that's quite another. In that case, and one day we may face this scenario, we will not cancel our services and go online. We will meet together and worship.
 - i. Remember in Acts 5 when the senate council had Peter and the apostles arrested for preaching the gospel and charged them to cease filling Jerusalem with their teaching, Peter replied, "We must obey God rather than men."
- c. So when our governing authorities are seeking our good, we obey them. However, if they ever charge us to violate our faith, we obey God.
- d. So yes we're going to miss having a celebration on Easter day, but that doesn't mean we're not going to celebrate. As soon as we are allowed to meet together again, we are going to rejoice in the resurrection!

II. Loving Our Neighbor

- a. Beyond submitting to our governing authorities, since this is a public health and safety issue, and especially since this virus is especially deadly to some in our community, we follow these restrictions because we love our neighbor.
- b. We submit to our authorities because we love God. We practice social distancing during this outbreak because we love our neighbor.
- c. Jesus said those are the two greatest commandments. That second one first appears in Leviticus 19:18. You shall love your neighbor as yourself. I wouldn't want someone to unintentionally spread the virus to me, so then I don't want to unintentionally spread it to someone else. Jesus made clear in the NT, everyone is our neighbor.

- d. So we keep our distance and stay home and worship online during this time because we love our neighbor.
- e. You may have known that love your neighbor first appears in Leviticus, but did you also know that the first quarantine ordinance also first appears in Leviticus?
 - i. In Lev 13 if someone was suspected of having leprosy, they were quarantined from the rest of the people for 7 days and then re-examined. The laws concerning how to handle someone with leprosy were put in place for the safety and health of the whole people of Israel. You see, just like COVID 19, there was no cure, there was no vaccine for leprosy.
 - ii. So social distancing and shelter in place have actually been around for a long time when it comes to the welfare of the general public.

III. Focusing on Our Family

- a. One benefit of quarantine is that it has cut a lot of the busyness out of our lives. We had grown too busy. We were so busy that we rarely, if ever, sat down together as a family to eat a meal and have a good conversation. We were too busy going to the next event. Rushing to this outing, going to this sporting event, meeting this group. Families barely passed one another in the door coming and going.
- b. And now all of a sudden, we are home, all of us are home, and there's nowhere to go, and some of us don't know what to do because we don't have anywhere to go and nothing to do.
- c. If God is doing anything in this outbreak, He is giving us time to devote to our families.
- d. I know some of you moms were thrust into homeschooling these days not of your own choosing, and it has stretched you to be the teacher at home. But let me encourage you with this, I speak for my wife when I say, I know it can be frustrating and challenging and makes you wonder if your teaching well and your child is learning, but know this, your children will never forget these days they had with mom at home.
- e. Quarantine affords us the opportunity to bring back some good things we've let drift away. Bring back family meals. Bring back family devotions. Bring back family game night and family movie night. Play

games together. Pray together. Sit down and have those serious, heartfelt, hard discussions. Spend these days focusing on family. One day we'll look back and be thankful for a season of quarantine.

- f. In Deut 6, after the command to love the Lord with all our heart, v7 says, "teach these things diligently to your children, talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise."

IV. Renewing Our Faith

- a. Busyness not only robbed us of family time, it often robbed us of time with God. What are we going to do with all this time on our hands?
- b. Let me encourage us all not to waste it all on binge watching shows on Netflix that won't count for nothing in eternity.
- c. Now is the best time to build healthy, godly, holy disciplines in our lives. Schedule that time to read the Bible, and memorize those treasure verses, and spend time in prayer.
- d. Soak up every online sermon. Not just Sunday mornings. Your Sunday evenings and Wednesday evenings are wide open now. Tune in and fill your heart and soul with the Word. Establish a new priority on worship. If one time of worship blesses your soul and feeds your faith, imagine your life and your week and your home if you were worshipping twice a week, or even three times a week!
- e. Let's use this time wisely to build healthy, holy disciples in our lives that will strengthen our faith and increase our joy in the Lord.

V. Counting Our Blessings

- a. We are having to learn these days to give up things, and when we are forced to give up things and plans and trips and fun, it usually doesn't settle well with us. We're prone to whine and complain and grumble.
- b. Let's be different than that. Let's be better than that. Let's not get on social media and gripe about how hard it is to shelter in place.
- c. Rather, let's get on social media and in the middle of giving up things, let's give thanks! We have far more than we've given up!
- d. God has given us life and health and salvation and loved ones and a church family and His Word and His Spirit and His Son. Praise Him.
- e. In everything give thanks, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus!